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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>GOVERNANCE WATCH</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Government Working</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Pakistan Shows Better Face in New Corruption Index .....	4
Move to Review 18 <sup>th</sup> Amendment .....	4
Population Survey: PM Gives Green Light for Sixth Census.....	5
Government Unveils Policy Framework to Regulate NGOs Activities .....	5
NGOs Say Government Trying To Muffle Civil Society Voices .....	7
District Governments Need Capacity Building to Handle Future Tasks .....	8
Turf War: Opposition Joins Hands to Keep Ruling Party Out.....	9
Government 'Apologizes' Over Nisar Remarks on PTI.....	10
Amended LG Ordinances Passed Amid Opposition Walkout .....	11
Government Throws Full Weight Behind Mily .....	12
<b>National Assembly &amp; Senate</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Mustafa Kamal Resigns From Senate .....	13
NA Resounds with Calls for Check on Inflation .....	14
Senators Walk Out Against Privatization.....	15
Senate Session: Almost 41% of Agenda Items Remained Unaddressed .....	15
<b>Provincial Assemblies</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Innovative Plans: K-P to Be the First to Have Human Rights Directorate.....	17
Right to Information Bill Tabled in PA .....	17
PA Adopts Right to Information Bill.....	19
Punjab Launches Land Record Computerization .....	19
Three Provincial Assembly Committees Elect Chairmen.....	21
<b>Judiciary</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Chief Justice Chaudhry to Pass Seat to Gentle Successor .....	22
Man, Who Redefined Judiciary, Exits.....	24
Government to Press Five Charges against Musharraf .....	24
Special Court Summons Musharraf on December 24 .....	26
Musharraf Wants Military Court to Hold His Trial for High Treason .....	26
General in the Dock: Musharraf in the Line of Fire .....	27
<b>BALUCHISTAN WATCH</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Governance Watch</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Balochistan Situation: Opposition to Devolution Putting Federation in Peril .....	29
<b>POLITICAL &amp; ELECTION WATCH</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Political Stakeholders &amp; Elections</b> .....	<b>30</b>
IHC Bars NADRA from Buying 20 Million Chips.....	30
ECP to Get NADRA's Control for Three Months .....	30
ECP to Start Training Returning Officers .....	32
ECP Excuses Itself from Thumbprint Verification .....	32
ECP's Assets List Reveals 'Billionaire Club' .....	33
<b>Political Parties</b> .....	<b>34</b>
Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML - N).....	34

Nisar Wants Poll Rigging Issue Resolved .....	34
<b>Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP)</b> .....	35
PPP to Sweep LG Polls, Says Khurshid .....	35
PPP Gives PML-N Three More Months to Deliver .....	35
<b>Pakistan Tehreek - e - Insaf (PTI)</b> .....	36
Angry PTI, JI Workers Block Road to Protest Arrests .....	36
<b>Other Political Parties</b> .....	36
JUI-F Bags Highest Number of Seats; PKMAP, NP Big Winners .....	36
<b>By-Elections &amp; Local Government Elections 2013</b> .....	37
LB Polls Ordinance for Islamabad May Come Anytime .....	37
Sindh Finally Gives Way To Jan 18 LG Polls .....	38
Balochistan LG Polls: Independent Candidates Establish Clear Lead .....	39
A Longer Wait: LG Polls May Face Further Delay as ANP Goes to Court .....	40
Sindh Government Not Willing to Budge on Demand for Polls in March .....	40
Re-Polling In 22 Constituencies of PK-81 Ordered .....	41
Dual Nationals Barred From Contesting LB Polls .....	41
ECP Issues Code of Conduct for Local Government Polls .....	42
Ji, PTI to Contest LG Polls under One Banner .....	43
3,500 Get Nomination Forms on First Day .....	43
Ceiling for Candidates' Poll Expenses Fixed in Sindh .....	44
The Devil Is In the Detail: Minister Spells Out Rules For Impending LG Polls .....	45
Tri-Party: 3 Opposition Parties Join Hands for Electoral Cooperation .....	46
LB Polls: Civil Society Asks ECP to Issue Gender Disaggregated Data .....	46
<b>HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH</b> .....	48
<b>Human Rights Related Issues</b> .....	48
Ulema of Different Sects Devise Code for Harmony .....	48
Religious Leaders for Implementation of Code of Conduct .....	48
Pakistan Wins Prestigious International HR Award .....	49
Use of Technology Urged To Increase Resilience of Disaster-Prone Communities .....	50
<b>GENDER WATCH</b> .....	52
<b>Violence against Women</b> .....	52
HEC Urged To Control Cybercrime against Women .....	52
NCSW Emphasizes Better Environment for Working Women .....	52
<b>SECTARIAN CRISES &amp; CONFLICT WATCH</b> .....	54
<b>Conflict &amp; Sectarian Crisis Incidents</b> .....	54
Security Briefs for the Month of December .....	54
<b>Analyses, Reports &amp; News</b> .....	56
Militants to Be Paid In Same Coin .....	56
<b>ECONOMIC WATCH</b> .....	57
<b>Facts &amp; Figures</b> .....	57
Dollar Will Be Brought Back To 98 Rupees: Dar .....	57
Trade Deficit Narrows .....	57
Reforms on Track: IMF Clears Release of Second \$550m Tranche .....	58
<b>DEVELOPMENT WATCH</b> .....	59
<b>Health Projects</b> .....	59
Health Reports/Controls .....	59
Pakistani Doctor Wins \$1m to Fight Child Deaths .....	59

<b>ENERGY CRISIS</b> .....	<b>60</b>
<b>Government's Role in Oil and Gas &amp; Energy Crisis</b> .....	<b>60</b>
Energy Solutions: Hydroelectric Power - The Way Forward .....	60
NEPRA Rejects Power Tariff Hike .....	61
SC Rejects 9pc Additional Tax on Gas Prices .....	61
Countrywide Load Shedding To Increase .....	63
Energy Trade: Pakistan Moves Closer To Electricity Import from India .....	64
PESCO Transfer Plan Stokes Plea For More Concessions .....	65
<b>REGIONAL WATCH</b> .....	<b>66</b>
<b>Pakistan &amp; United States</b> .....	<b>66</b>
Strategic Dialogue with US to Resume in Feb: Aziz .....	66
International Law Compliance: UN Adopts Resolution against Use of Drones .....	67
No Reimbursements if US Supplies Disrupted .....	68
<b>Pakistan &amp; India</b> .....	<b>69</b>
Manufacturers' Concern at MFN Status to India .....	69
Experts Call for Ending Proxies in Afghanistan, Resumption of Pak-India Talks .....	69
No Option but Talks with Pakistan .....	71
India's Elections .....	71
Ruling Congress Wiped Out, BJP Gains Thumping Victory .....	71
<b>Pakistan &amp; Bangladesh</b> .....	<b>73</b>
Anti-Pakistan Protests Continue In Bangladesh .....	73
Bangladesh Announces Three-Day Protest Against Pakistan .....	73
Bangladesh to Deploy Military to Stem Poll Violence .....	74
Bangladesh Polls .....	74
Bangladesh Opposition to Boycott Jan 5 Polls .....	74
Another Bangladesh Party Boycotts Polls As Death Toll Mounts .....	75
Jamaat Leader Hanged in Dhaka .....	76
Bangladesh Deploys Military in Election Countdown .....	76
Bangladesh Opposition Calls Mass March To Derail Polls .....	77
<b>Pakistan &amp; Afghanistan</b> .....	<b>78</b>
Nascent Peace Process: Afghan Taliban Not Willing To Talk .....	78
First Option, Dialogue: Top Security Forum Endorses Taliban Talks .....	79

**GOVERNANCE WATCH****Government Working****Pakistan Shows Better Face in New Corruption Index**

Corruption in Pakistan has declined considerably as the country has improved its position by several points in the global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) report of Transparency International, to be announced worldwide. According to diplomatic sources, the Transparency International CPI report for 2013 brings good news for Pakistan, which earlier this year had witnessed the voting out of the PPP government considered the most corrupt in the history of Pakistan. The sources said that the Transparency International CPI report would be announced globally by its country representatives showing the list of the most corrupt and least corrupt countries in the 2013. Pakistan, whose ranking on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) had gone from 42nd most corrupt country in 2011 to 33rd in 2012 during the PPP government, has improved by around 10 points in 2013. Last year Pakistan had also been declared the seventh most corrupt country out of 97 in the Rule of Law Index of 2012. The 2013 CPI report would, however, be a matter of great satisfaction for the PML-N government at the Centre and PTI government in the KP - the two political parties which after coming into power have not yet shown any sign of corruption that was rampant during the last PPP government at the Centre and ANP government in the KP. Although, the present rulers have yet to do a lot to weed out the corrupt and punish those who had plundered the nation's wealth, it goes to their credit that no major corruption case during their rule has surfaced as yet.

In terms of corruption, there is also no denying the fact that the Nawaz Sharif government is much better than the last PPP government; there is no comparison between the PTI government in the KP and its ANP predecessor. The same is the case of Dr Malik's government in Balochistan whereas this is also a fact that the Qaim Ali Shah's present government in Sindh is better than his previous rule. Early this year, the Transparency International in its Global Corruption Barometer 2013 report had said that Pakistan's religious bodies, military and media respectively had been found as the three least corrupt institutions in the list of 12 organizations. The same report had said that the most corrupt in Pakistan were from the government and politics. According to the last government's own chairman NAB, sacked by the apex court for having been illegally appointed, corruption of more than Rs8 billion takes place daily in Pakistan. It is said that a considerable share of this massive corruption is contributed by the oil mafia, federal tax authorities and others.

**The News - December 03, 2013**

**Move to Review 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment**

Not satisfied with some provisions of the 18th Amendment, the government and opposition parties are getting in touch to revive the parliamentary committee which had worked out proposals to amend the constitution. Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Syed Khursheed Shah discussed with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar the possibilities of reviving the committee and setting its terms of reference. According to sources, they agreed that parties with representation in parliament would be approached to seek fresh nominations from them for the committee. Declining to give details, the sources said that education and health sectors might be taken back from provinces and given to the federation in view of difficulties being faced by

foreign donors and investors while negotiating with different provincial authorities unlike in the past when they had to deal only with the federal government. There were also problems in fixing uniform prices of medicines and implementing some important bylaws.

**Dawn - December 02, 2013**

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### **Population Survey: PM Gives Green Light for Sixth Census**

It took the administration a decade and a half to call a fresh headcount in the country. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif endorsed the sixth census plan after wading through two summaries one by the Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Division and the other by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). In the end, the prime minister, according to an official at the PM secretariat, "approved the Inter-Provincial Coordination Division's summary for a census in the country." Another summary by the ECP on the same subject was clubbed with the IPC's version, the official said. Between 1951 and 1981, four national population counts were conducted in the country at fairly regular intervals. The 1971 census was delayed by a year on account of the war and subsequent loss of East Pakistan. The next population count came nine years later in 1981. But the fifth census was conducted after a staggering gap of 17 years. The exercise – considered crucial for the judicious distribution of resources, representation in parliament, tax collection and electoral processes, among other civic issues – was held in 1998 during Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) government.

According to the constitution, it is obligatory to conduct a census every four years, so that the general elections – to be held every five years – can be held with more accurate population statistics, the ECP Public Relations Director Altaf Ahmad told BBC Urdu. In its summary to the PM, the ECP had stated that population census is essential for carrying out the delimitation of constituencies for the national and the provincial assemblies before the next general elections, which is the responsibility of the Election Commission under Article 222(b) of the Constitution and Section(3) of the Delimitation of Constituencies Act, 1974. The poll body had clarified that the request is for the next general elections and had nothing to do with the local government elections around the corner. The population has increased, according to reports, at a rate of 2.3% annually but the country is oblivious to the exact number of its citizens. This was why former chief election commissioner Justice (ret'd) Fakharuddin G Ebrahim had called for a fresh census in the beginning of this year for the accurate delimitation of constituencies before the May general elections. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement, too, opposed delimitation in Karachi without conducting a census first. As authorities missed the deadline, Yasmeen Rehman, a former member of the National Assembly from the PPP, moved a bill to make it binding for the government to hold population censuses in Pakistan every 10 years. The bill was passed unanimously in January this year by the outgoing assembly.

**The Express Tribune - December 15, 2013**

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### **Government Unveils Policy Framework to Regulate NGOs Activities**

The government has unveiled the new policy framework to regulate the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan, wherein organizations would sign agreement with government, besides maintaining full disclosure of their activities, their respective areas of work, source of their funding and use of funds. The Economic Affairs Division (EAD) has issued the notification of new policy for regulation of organizations receiving foreign contribution, as decided by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on November 21. Earlier, in the absence of a policy framework, Economic Affairs Division was restrained to sign

new memoranda of understanding (MoU) with international NGOs, particularly those with ongoing operations and their MoU was about to expire. To regulate the mushroom growth of NGOs, the ECC had approved a policy to review regulatory framework for NGOs working in Pakistan for facilitation of the humanitarian and development work. Massive inflows of foreign aid to NGOs had been witnessed during the last many years, which mostly remained unaccounted for and out of government ambit. The new policy would regulate the foreign as well national organizations, which are receiving or intending to receive foreign contributions, until the coming into force of appropriate legislation. Any organization registered outside or within Pakistan and desirous of utilizing foreign economic assistance would need prior registration with the government. The foreign economic assistance included moneys, services, and goods, which emanate from outside Pakistan.

According to the new policy, the application for registration would be accompanied by such documentary information as may be specified by the government and would be shared with and vetted by the ministry of interior, the provincial governments and or local government and other relevant stakeholders. The applications shall be processed expeditiously and in any case within four months of receipt. The new policy stated that organization would sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government containing the information specified by the government including amongst other things, the work and the geographical area in which it is proposed to be carried out. The government would maintain a register for such organizations. According to the policy, the duration of the MoU would be up to five years from the date of signature as decided between the government and the organization. The organization could apply for renewal of registration four months prior to the expiry of the registration and this application would be similarly vetted by the parties mentioned above. The new policy stated that the government would terminate and cancel the registration of organization if it violates any provision of MoU subject to the organization being provided an opportunity being heard. The organization could apply for review of the decision within 60 days in case of rejection of the application for registration. Such application would be considered by a review committee headed by the Secretary Economic Affairs Division and comprising senior level of representatives of interior ministry, foreign affairs ministry and other concerned ministries. The review committee would submit its recommendations to the government after giving the organization an opportunity of being heard. The decision arrived at after review would be final. The same process would be applied in case of rejection of an application of renewal or in case of termination of the MoU/cancellation of registration.

According to the new policy, the organization would declare to the government all foreign contributions along with the terms and conditions of these contributors, as well as details of all bank accounts maintained by it. Similarly, the organization would maintain accounts under internationally recognized accounting standards, get these accounts audited on an annual basis by a registered chartered accountant firm and would provide to the government, a copy of the audited annual statements along with a certificate from the auditors to the effect that the foreign contributions have been utilized for the objectives of the organization as specified in the MoU. The policy stated, "The organization will provide to the government and the concerned provincial government/local government on an annual basis a report regarding its activities with reference to the MoU, and the foreign contributions. The planning and development departments of the provincial government may review the activities of the organization in the context of their development framework and priorities and may convey recommendations to the government from time to time."

According to the draft of the policy, the organization would be bound to provide any information that the government may require from time to time. The government may verify any information provided by the organization. Similarly, if the government is of the opinion that

it is in the public interest (such as situation of disasters and emergencies), it may, subject to such conditions that it may specify, exempt an organization or class of organizations from all or any of the provisions of this policy for a period not exceeding six months.

**The Nation - December 05, 2013**

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### **NGOs Say Government Trying To Muffle Civil Society Voices**

The non-government organizations (NGOs) have expressed apprehensions about the recently enforced policy for regulating the organizations receiving foreign funding saying it is an attempt to muffle the civil society voices and chain their initiatives to end the socio-economic miseries. Voicing reaction to the recent move by the Pakistan Muslim League-led government, the civil society networks such as Insani Huqooq Itthehad (IHI), EVAWG Alliance and Child Rights Movement and other human rights activists said the civil society have been taken aback at the notification of the policy. The organizations reiterated that they stand for transparency and accountability in society yet trampling civil society in the garb of transparency is unjustified. Making their point, the civil society organizations said that all NGOs have been registered by various regulatory bodies and are already being regulated through existing laws. "The notification has been issued unilaterally in haste, without any meaningful consultation and inputs from the representatives of leading civil society organizations (CSOs). The policy will eventually shrink the space for pro-democracy institutions in Pakistan.

Additionally, it is tantamount to the dictatorial intent and is a sheer violation of norms of democratic culture," said a CSO activist while talking to 'The News', requesting for anonymity. Other representatives of the CSOs said that the new bureaucratic and discriminatory restrictions are violations of fundamental citizens' rights concerning with the freedom of association. These restrictions can be easily used against civil society organizations, which are working for protection and promotion of human rights in the country. As a consequence, the fundamental right to the freedom of expression will be adversely affected. It is suspected that the new policy vests sweeping and discriminatory powers into the hands of inefficient bureaucracy is likely to promote corruption and manipulation in the usage of foreign aid. They said the civil society is dedicated and believes in transparency and accountability of NGOs work. For this purpose, there are already elaborate and stringent legal, financial and administrative mechanisms in place. Rather than improving its own monitoring capacity, the government has decided to impose blanket control along with highly centralized regulatory mechanism. In fact, such blanket and centralized control itself is against the larger principle of transparency and democratic accountability.

The civil society members lamented that the proselytizers of extremism enjoy unchecked freedom in the country and the civil society is being asphyxiated through unfair means. The organizations members demanded that the policy should be scrapped forthwith and civil society should be engaged to explore the need and possibility of strengthening the existing laws, regulatory and monitoring framework. It may be mentioned here that the Economic Coordination Committee of the cabinet on November 21 had approved the policy saying that will ensure transparent utilization of funds and streamline activities of the NGOs. Under the policy, the NGOs shall maintain local accounts for the execution of activities and for opening and operating foreign currency accounts, they shall seek permission of the State Bank; the government will grant work permit to expatriate employees and they will be allowed to open and maintain offices with prior approval; the NGOs will be allowed to raise funds locally after getting prior approval from the government; the NGOs will be required to provide complete information about activities; the organizations will employ foreign nationals against not more

than 10 per cent of the total staff positions; the NGOs shall offer accounts for annual audit; they would also provide on yearly basis to the government independent or third party evaluation of its work; the government will cancel registration of an NGO in case its activities were considered detrimental to national interest, sovereignty and integrity of Pakistan or dubious in nature, or in violation of cultural and religious sentiments of people, or for providing false information or no reasonable activity in a year. However, the NGO will be given an opportunity of being heard before the cancellation of its registration.

The News – December 20, 2013

### **District Governments Need Capacity Building to Handle Future Tasks**

The decision to provide 30 per cent funds of the provincial Annual Development Programme to the future district governments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a welcoming one, but not without risks, according to officials. Development planners and economists told that government had taken one big leap forward towards decentralization by increasing district governments' development funds. However, the government has not done proper homework because district setups, according to officials, lack capacity to plan billions of rupees' development projects. "We are going to have a chaotic situation in most of the districts as their administrations do not have sufficient, qualified, trained, and efficient planning staff to dispense the responsibility being assigned to them," said an official development planner. The decision has left many with an important question: the district-based entities that have never been able to collectively spend Rs1.7 billion development funds in a year how would they be able to spend 20 times more money in a given year without having the human resources and technical expertise required to fulfill the job?

Provincial Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Inayatullah Khan, when contacted, sounded comfortable with the district governments' ability to handle the task. "All the execution agencies, working on ground at present, would be at their disposal so there would not be any problem," he said. However, the district governments' development expenditure data for the past several years does not support the minister's optimism. The collective district development budget of 25 district governments would come to over Rs20 billion per annum from the next financial year. The amount, according to officials, is way beyond their capacity to spend in a single year if one goes by their record. Since the introduction of devolution of power plan in 2001, district governments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have collectively been provided around Rs1.7 billion annually to conceive, plan, and execute development plans on need basis.

However, according to sources, they have never been able to spend even that money in any one year. In many instances, district governments and their subordinate local body institutions were never able to prepare their respective annual development plans in time. Some say that things went bad in the absence of elected local body institutions. Others think that districts need expert planners in the planning and development department as well as the district-based line departments. After the introduction of the 2001 devolution plan, said an official, the newly created posts of district planning officers were filled with officers transferred from Peshawar. "A majority of them was not ready to work in districts, particularly in remote areas like Tank, Malakand, Chitral and Lakki Marwat, etc," said an official. "Decentralization is a syndrome that does not work unless implemented in essence," said an official planner.

He added that without delegating financial autonomy and authority to the district governments to spend their development funds without involvement of other elements, like members of the provincial assembly, the new devolution plan would be as crippled as the 2001 local government system was. The MPAs' involvement, according to him, in district development

projects would remain in the presence of district development advisory committees (DDAC). With MPAs as their members, DDACs provide policy guidance for the development planning in districts, according to an official. "Without eliminating DDACs, independence of future district governments will not be possible particularly in the districts where the district nazim and MPAs happen to be political opponents," said an official.

Dawn - December 06, 2013

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### **Turf War: Opposition Joins Hands to Keep Ruling Party Out**

It remains to be seen whether opposition parties will be able to keep the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) from regaining the ground they lost in Rawalpindi in the upcoming local government elections. The January 30 polls are expected as they claim to do. In many constituencies neck and neck competition is expected. Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) district president and member provincial assembly (MPA) from Rawalpindi Arif Abbasi told The Express Tribune that the PTI has decided to make seat adjustments with all the opposition parties to ensure PML-N's defeat. "We have almost finalized seat adjustments with other parties. All opposition parties including Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), Awami Muslim League (AML) and Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) are united against the ruling party." In the general elections, PTI won one national (NA-56) and three provincial assembly seats from Rawalpindi. According to a survey conducted by The Express Tribune in the district, major opposition parties are cozying up to each other in a bid to give tough time to the PML-N. Negotiations among the major political players are underway to field unanimous candidates, with the PTI and JI - coalition partners in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa - leading the talks.

The PTI and Sheikh Rashid Ahmed-led AML were never as aligned on the issue of selection of the candidates as they are now. Political pundits believe the opposition alliance could give a tough time to the PML-N in at least 55 union councils (UCs) of Rawalpindi Municipal Corporation. However, in the rest of the 100-plus UCs across the district, the PML-N will hold sway. When contacted, PPP city president Amir Fida Paracha said that in some UCs, the party's local leaders have made seat adjustments with PTI and JI on their own. He, however, said that the local chapter is waiting for a green signal from the central secretariat regarding party policy in local government elections.

Meanwhile, Local Government Director Allah Ditta Najmi told that the government has completed delimitation for the Rawalpindi Metropolitan Corporation, district council and municipal committees for upcoming elections. He said that under the new local government law, urban areas would come under the administrative control of the metropolitan corporation, whereas rural areas would come under the administrative control of district councils. Najmi said the mayor and deputy mayor would head the metropolitan corporation, while chairmen and vice-chairmen would head municipal committees and district councils. Six tehsils - Taxila, Murree, Gujar Khan, Kotli Sattian, Kallar Syedan and Kahuta - will have municipal committees. Candidates of various political parties have started canvassing to gain maximum possible support for themselves. Banners and posters have emerged on various roads and streets, but full-fledged campaigning has yet to start.

The Express Tribune - December 12, 2013

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## Government 'Apologizes' Over Nisar Remarks on PTI

Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid said that the use of word tamasha in the National Assembly by Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan was just a political statement, and offered an apology on behalf of his cabinet colleague. "He did not refer to a person; rather he referred to a demand (of getting votes verified)," he said. "Pakistan has not been able to adopt the system to verify thumb impressions... Those who want to get the votes verified, let me inform them that there is no system to verify thumb impressions. Imran Khan must have cast his vote, let me let him that he too would not be able to find his own vote." The information minister said that it was a fair and free election as compared to the past. "What service are you doing to Pakistan, parliament or democracy by making a fuss over it?" However, in the same breath, the information minister said that if they (members of the National Assembly) were hurt because of that statement, "I apologies to them". When asked if Chaudhry Nisar should offer the apology himself, Rashid said that the interior minister represented the PML-N, and so did he, therefore he was apologizing on behalf of the interior minister.

The opposition Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continued boycotting the proceedings of the Lower House of parliament. Although Nisar and the opposition parties stuck to their respective positions, a ray of hope emerged when Deputy Speaker Murtaza Javed Abbasi told the House that a committee has been formed to calm down the opposition. The opposition had announced boycott of the proceedings on the use of word tamasha by the interior minister over the issue of thumb impressions' verification, a demand mainly by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Immediately after the question hour protesting members of the opposition entered from one gallery and went straight for the exit just to remind the government about their protest. Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party chief Mahmood Khan Ackakzai asked the treasury to bring back the opposition side because it is the norm around the world to get the opposition back whenever it goes for a boycott. Upon his the deputy speaker said that a committee has been tasked to bring the opposition back in the House. "We will not attend the session until interior minister withdraws his remarks," PTI's Shah Mehmood Qureshi said while addressing the media at Parliament house. Qureshi also expressed concern over what he said was interior minister's decision to withdraw security of PTI chief Imran Khan. "Imran Khan has serious threats from Taliban due to his stance on polio campaign, and withdrawal of his security is a serious cause of concern," he added.

Earlier, while responding to the apology sought by Bangladesh over the resolution against execution of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh leader Abdul Qader Molla, Sardar Awais Ahmed Leghari said, "This House should reject that demand." Referring to the protests in Bangladesh against Pakistan, he said that Pakistan is a democratic country and this House has the right to sensitize Bangladesh on this issue. Speaking on a point of order Achakzai said the opposition was the integral part of the House and proceedings of the House were not possible without it. Deputy Speaker Murtaza Javed Abbasi said he has already constituted a committee to bring back PPP and PTI. Meanwhile, State Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Shaikh Aftab Ahmed said he has already contacted the leader of the opposition Khurshid Shah and Shah Mehmood Qureshi asking them to attend the meeting of Business Advisory Committee of the House. Shah conveyed his inability to attend the meeting; however, he agreed to attend the meeting.

Daily Times - December 20, 2013

## Amended LG Ordinances Passed Amid Opposition Walkout

After a noisy protest and a walkout of all opposition parties from the house, the ruling Pakistan Peoples' Party passed into law two ordinances pertaining to amendments to the Sindh Local Government Act, 2013 in the Sindh Assembly. Following their walkout, the opposition held a rare parallel session at the entrance of the assembly building, where they presented and passed a resolution against the amendments to the LG law. The Sindh Assembly session was requisitioned by three opposition parties - the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the PML-Functional - against the promulgation of the Sindh Local Government (third amendment) Ordinance. The fourth opposition party in the house, the Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf, did not sign the requisition. As soon as the question-hour was over, PML-N lawmaker Irfanullah Marwat stood and sought permission of the chair to move a motion to table a joint resolution of the opposition about the Sindh Local Government (third amendment) Ordinance.

However, Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani asked the opposition lawmaker to let the business on the agenda be completed before taking up the resolution. He gave the floor to MPA Nand Kumar of the PML-F to read out his privilege motion. This move by the chair was resisted by opposition members who all stood up and insisted that Mr. Marwat be allowed to table his resolution. The opposition reminded the chair of their previous experience when the requisitioned session was prorogued soon after the agenda was completed. They continued to insist that they be allowed to read out their resolution. Seeing the mood of the opposition, Mr. Kumar also announced that he would withdraw his motion for some other time. However, the speaker was adamant on completing the business and asked the parliamentary affairs minister, Dr Sikandar Mandhro, to take the business forward.

As the next item on the agenda was the adjournment motion of PTI lawmaker Khurram Sher Zaman, Dr Mandhro announced that the governor had given assent to five bills about revival and amendment in the Lyari, Gorakh Hills, Malir, Hyderabad and Sehwan development authorities. As the next item on the agenda was laying of the Sindh Local Government (second and third amendments) Ordinances, the opposition members started shouting slogans saying that the black law was not acceptable. The house witnessed pandemonium when the opposition lawmakers converged in front of the rostrum of the speaker and chanted slogans against the PPP government. The PPP legislators, except a few, did not react to the opposition's protest. After a noisy protest for about 15 minutes, the joint opposition staged a walkout.

In the absence of any opposition member, the speaker asked the parliamentary affairs minister to take up the legislation business. Dr Mandhro laid the two ordinances by tabling the bill no 27 and 28 of 2013 one by one pertaining to the amendments in the Sindh Local Government Act, 2013. The minister said that the opposition was protesting over a bill which was tabled for the betterment of the people. There was nothing new in the LG Act passed by the house except that the amendments were made on the directives of the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Supreme Court so that the local government polls could be held in a fair, free and transparent manner, he added. Before the chair gave the floor to the minister of parliamentary affairs to read out the bill clause by clause, Senior Minister Nisar Ahmad Khuhro stood up and said that the opposition had still time to record their objections and suggest amendments to the bill.

The speaker said that they had the opportunity to speak and present their point of view but they did not avail it. Dr Mandhro started reading out the clauses of the bill and after a third reading both the bills were passed into law. After legislation business, Speaker Durrani, before reading out his order to prorogue the session at 5.35pm, allowed provincial minister Rubina Qaimkhani to read out her resolution declaring ever Dec 27 a public holiday in memory of former Prime

Minister Benazir Bhutto. Through another resolution, which was moved by Dr Sikander Ali Shoro, tributes were paid to great saints Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai and Shah Inayat Shaheed.

### **Opposition Holds Parallel Session**

As the ruling party was busy in legislation in the house, the joint opposition parties staged a protest sit-in at the entrance of the assembly building and vowed to continue their protest against the Sindh government for not allowing them a level playing field. After staging the walkout from the house, the opposition parties held a parallel session and elected MQM's Aamir Moeen Pirzada as speaker. The proceedings of the so-called session included speeches from leader of the Opposition Syed Faisal Sabzwari, Irfanullah Marwat of PML-N, Imtiaz Shaikh of PML-F and Samar Ali Khan of the PTI. The opposition also adopted a resolution which reads: "The Ordinance of second and third amendments in the Sindh Local Government Act 2013, issued on 25th November and on 13th December, 2013, respectively are unconstitutional, illegal and anti-democratic, hence is being disapproved by this house". The opposition termed the amendments to the LG law undemocratic. They said that by imposing the condition of forming a panel to contest the local government elections, the government was depriving common citizens from their constitutional right to contest the polls. The delimitations of constituencies was carried out only to benefit the ruling party's candidates, they added.

**Dawn – December 21, 2013**

### **Government Throws Full Weight Behind Mily**

As calls for stopping targeted operation in North Waziristan to avert civilian deaths grew stronger, the government has come forward to defend the security forces' right to pound hideouts of the militants who recently launched deadly attacks on the soldiers. The attacks on the security forces will not be tolerated at any cost and the government will not show leniency towards terrorists, Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif told. Thousands of people are fleeing to safer places from Mir Ali subdivision of restive North Waziristan Agency (NWA). The military raids were launched a day after a suicide attack on a military checkpoint in Khajori area of Mir Ali Subdivision killed at least five soldiers and wounded 34 others. Ansarul Mujahideen, a little-known militant group linked to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), had claimed responsibility for the suicide attack. The retaliation of security forces against foreign terrorists was a legitimate response to attacks on army convoys in Waziristan, where scores of army jawans embraced martyrdom, Asif said. "We will not surrender our right of self defense against attack on our security forces," he held. The minister said the security forces were offering sacrifices to save the lives of Pakistanis and it was their right to retaliate for their defense. He said the latest operation had been launched after an attack on the security forces in Miranshah, the main town of North Waziristan Agency (NWA). He warned foreign militants not to cross limits otherwise the government would take strict action against them.

Local sources said security forces imposed curfew in Musaki, Eppi and Haider Khail villages and used gunship helicopters and artillery shells against the alleged militants. Fearing escalation in the fighting, which had claimed 40 lives, a large number of people fled these three areas and migrated to safer places of Bannu and Miranshah. Clashes between security forces and militants have been rocking North Waziristan Agency since suicide bombing on Khajori checkpoint. Militants again attacked security forces the same day as they returned after rescuing soldiers wounded in the bombing, prompting the military to respond with mortars, artillery and helicopter gunships in a search operation to catch the insurgents. The security forces said they retaliated and killed 33 suspected persons after unidentified people opened fire on troops in

Mir Ali Bazaar amid curfew in the area. Four more bodies were recovered from the debris of two hotels that came under heavy fire after fleeing militants used them to take refuge. Exchange of fire was also took place at Amin checking point in Miranshah, the main town but with no loss of life. The number and identity of those killed could not be verified independently because of the ongoing search operation and curfew. The area is also off-limits to foreign journalists and aid groups.

The military says all of those killed in the operation were Taliban militants, but locals said many of those who died in the hotels were drivers forced to stay there by a curfew imposed. But local people alleged that mostly civilians were targeted in the military crackdown. They said people had left all of their belongings behind. However, curfew was relaxed for two hours from 11am to 1pm. Nazir Khan Wazir, the Member of Parliament for the area, said most of those killed and wounded were not militants. "Most of those killed and wounded were innocent civilians. People are facing a terrible time. They are trapped in their houses," Wazir told AFP. "Dozens of houses have been damaged by shelling. Residents are also facing food shortages." Wazir appealed to the government to stop the bombardment to allow locals to bury their dead and take the wounded to hospital. A senior security official said the search operation was still going on in Mir Ali and surrounding areas. Maulvi Gul Abbas, an Islamic cleric in Mirali told AFP that residents were not able to sleep for the whole night because of the continuous firing. "Dozens of houses have been damaged. All those killed inside the houses were local residents," Abbas said.

**Dawn - December 21, 2013**

## National Assembly & Senate

### Mustafa Kamal Resigns From Senate

Former Karachi mayor and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) SeNATOR Syed Mustafa Kamal has tendered his resignation to chairman Senate. Source said Kamal had been inactive in the party for the last four months. He left the country and stayed away from the party affairs. He was also not in contact with the party officials. Sources said after growing difference with the MQM leadership on various issues, Kamal tendered his resignation as SeNATOR. He faxed his resignation directly to the chairman Senate. Earlier, Kamal was reported out of the country for the treatment of his wife and spending time with his in-laws in Dar-e-Salaam, Tanzania. Mustafa Kamal who started his political carrier in MQM as a worker and also served as a telephone operator at MQM headquarters nine-zero. He remained IT Minister in Sindh government from 2003 to 2005. Kamal became a prominent figure by the virtue of his tremendous performance during his tenure as Karachi Mayor from 2005 to 2010. MQM Deputy Convener Engineer Nasir Jamal said reports regarding resignation of SeNATOR Mustafa Kamal were baseless and rumors. He said Kamal would continue to represent MQM in the Senate.

Senate Secretariat has confirmed that Mustafa Kamal has tendered his resignation from the seat over personal issues. Former mayor Syed Mustafa Kamal and former Deputy Convener of the Co-ordination Committee of the MQM Anis Qaimkhani had developed serious differences with the party and fled Karachi. Mustafa Kamal was in tears after being humiliated by the party leader as well as by the workers and had been living in Dubai and America – refusing requests to return to Karachi. Sources earlier revealed that Kamal was working for Malik Riaz in Dubai but that was only a cover and the actual story was something else. Reportedly, Babar Ghauri had denied in Washington that Kamal had differences with the party. He said when Kamal refused to return to Karachi over the direction of the party leader Altaf Hussain, he was asked to tender his resignation from the Senate seat. Kamal was in London in June this year to attend party meetings but left Pakistan soon after going back to Karachi and has rarely been seen in public. It

has been learnt that the MQM approached Kamal with an offer to return to Pakistan to be part of the local bodies' election campaign but the former Karachi mayor was defiant to such an extent that he was no more answering telephone calls or replying emails of his party and friends. Kamal had not answered any calls or emails for over two months. During military operation against the MQM, Anis Qaimkhani suffered torture and went to jail but refused to compromise, unlike many leaders who cut deals with the army against their own comrades. Those who know Qaimkhani within the party are aware that he has worked round the clock at the Nine Zero almost all his life.

**The Nation - December 01, 2013**

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### **NA Resounds with Calls for Check on Inflation**

The session of National Assembly, which continued its debate on the rising inflation, broke down at its fag end due to a lack of quorum. Although the Lower House of parliament discussed different issues, but the lack of members from the treasury side, particularly ministers, prompted PPP's Ayaz Soomro to point out the lack of quorum. This led towards the adjournment of the session. Earlier, the opposition side continued its onslaught against the government over rising inflation, and asked it to take immediate measures to check the increase in the prices of various commodities. The debate on inflation is underway in the House on a motion moved by Minister for Science and Technology Zahid Hamid. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's stalwart Makhdoom Javed Hashmi noted that people would lose their faith in democracy if politicians did not come up to their expectations. "The system will not change through long speeches, and practical steps are needed to resolve matters concerning the masses," he said and announced that the PTI would stage a sit-in on December 22 in Lahore against the price hike.

Meanwhile, Dr Arif Alvi of the PTI said the government should announce a package to give relief to the poverty-stricken people. He said price hike is affecting the lives of common people and the government needs to take emergency measures to bring down the prices of daily-use items. He asked the government to bring the elite and affluent class into the tax net to narrow down the difference between the rich and the poor. Ayaz Soomro remarked that there should be no difference between Lahore and Larkana in distribution of resources in the country. "Practical steps should be taken to control price hike in the country," he urged. He further said that there was need of a viable economic programme for the country and appealed the government to revive magistrate system in the country to control price hike. Taking part in the debate, Sajid Ahmed of the MQM said that the government should properly work on tax recovery. "Inflation should be controlled in the country, as around 50 percent of people live under poverty line and are suffering many difficulties." PML-N's Daniyal Aziz called for tightening the monetary policy to address the issue. Earlier, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq directed the ministries to ensure answers to the questions of the legislators. Minister of State for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali told the House that the government has geared up to recover outstanding electricity dues from the provincial departments. He said that directives have been issued to the provincial departments to pay the electricity bills or their connections will be disconnected. He said the Karachi Electric Supply Company (KESC) owes one hundred billion rupees, while fifty billion rupees are outstanding against the Sindh government. The minister said that an agreement to provide 660MW electricity to KESC is illegal and the court will be approached to review this accord.

**Daily Times - December 12, 2013**

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## Senators Walk Out Against Privatization

Opposition senators in the Upper House of Parliament observed walk out on two counts against privatization process and “insulting” behavior of State Minister for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali who claimed that the people of Balochistan “steal power”. During question hour, PPP Senator Rozi Khan Kakar told the House that the state minister for water and power has presented a wrong statement of ending load shedding across the country. Responding to him, Abid Sher Ali said the people of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh could not pay their electricity bill and that is why load shedding was ongoing there. All opposition senators strongly reacted to the statement and staged a token walk out against the “irresponsible” behavior of the minister. However, Abid Sher Ali claimed that he was talking on the basis of facts and figures. Senate Deputy Chairman Sabir Baloch told the minister that “you are a responsible person and you should not term all people of these provinces power thieves”. The second walk out by opposition senators was staged against the privatization process in the country.

PPP leader Raza Rabbani said the government is facilitating “crony capitalism” and selling all state enterprises to “near and dear ones” for “nominal” amount. The “whitening of black money” is underway which is tantamount to promoting corrupt people, the minister said. “Through privatization, the government again wants to create 22 powerful families in the country and it will mortgage the whole economy.” He added the government is planning to hand over Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM), OGDCL, PIA and other institutions to industrialists, and vowed that opposition would strongly resist this move. Senator Humayun Mandokhel, on a point of order, informed the House that a group of people from Zhob, Balochistan, had come to Islamabad on foot with a demand to provide gas and power facility to their area. They have established a protest camp in Islamabad and threatened to go on hunger strike until their demands are met, the senator said. He demanded that the government give assurance to the protesters that their demands would be met.

Balochistan Senator Abdur Rauf said provision of gas and power is the basic right of every citizen. He said gas from Balochistan was being distributed in far flung areas of Punjab, and regretted that it was not provided to local people. MQM Senator Tahir Hussain Mashhadi demanded that “injustices with Balochistan” should be stopped immediately and both gas and power should be provided to the province. Federal Minister for Petroleum Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, speaking on a debate on price hike, said it was regretful that “today those people are talking about corruption who looted the country during the last five years of their tenure”. “Those who are sitting in government for the last 20 years have also started criticising the government. The PML-N government has cleared the previous regime’s Rs. 500 billion circular debt.” He also regretted that the PPP government did nothing for increasing gas production in the country. He told the House that the PPP had “privatized PSM for just Rs 1.5 billion”. He also claimed that “whitening black money” was the PPP’s scheme and “we are going to implement it”. “However, our policy is based on increasing investment in the country. The entire world is going towards free market economy and same is the case of Pakistan.”

Daily Times - December 12, 2013

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## Senate Session: Almost 41% of Agenda Items Remained Unaddressed

The 99<sup>th</sup> session of Senate could not address almost 41% of agenda items on the Order of the Day. The session was marked by the passage of a private member’s bill and adoption of four resolutions amid low attendance of senators. This was revealed by a report prepared by Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), based on direct observation released. The House left 41% (21 out of 51) agenda items on the Orders of the Day, unaddressed. Nearly 60% (16 of 27 items)

of the private member's agenda on the Orders of the Day was not taken up as it was set ambitiously. Two resolutions, a motion under rule 218 and a question of privilege appeared as supplementary agenda, stated the report. The Senate remained in session from December 2 till 20, consuming 33 hours and 47 minutes. On average, each sitting spanned two hours and 36 minutes, observing a 40 minutes delay. The House took four breaks taking up 6% (115 minutes) of the proceedings, the report said. Major legislations included passage of the Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2013 that was introduced during the session's first sitting. In addition, three anti-terrorism ordinances: The Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013 (Ordinance No.VII); the Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013 (Ordinance No.VIII) and the Protection of Pakistan Ordinance, 2013, were presented before the House. The standing committees on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan; Climate Change, Defence and Defence Production; Cabinet Secretariat; Rules of Procedure and Privileges; and Capital Administration and Development laid their reports before the House.

### **Two Resolutions**

Additionally, Senate tabled two resolutions; the first recommending the government to publish names of the judges of superior judiciary holding dual nationality and the second calling upon the government to construct new water reservoirs in order to meet the water shortage in the country. According to the report, the House debated five adjournment motions under Rule 218 regarding procedure laid down for appointment of superior court judges, steps required to be taken by the government to address the growing water scarcity in the country, the recent price-hike specially the prices of petroleum products, gas and electricity and essential items, and the government's foreign policy on various subjects. During the eleventh sitting, the finance minister briefed the House for 22 minutes on the government's policy statement on the loans taken from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

### **Attendance**

The parliamentary leaders of ANP and MQM were more regular as each attended 12 sittings, followed by BNPA and JUI-F parliamentary heads (four sittings each). The PML-N parliamentary leader attended three. Chairman of Senate Nayyar Hussain presided over 58% (19 hours and 33 minutes) of the session while the remaining time was chaired by the deputy chairman. The Leader of the House attended 12 sittings for 30 hours while the Leader of the Opposition attended 10 sittings for 22 hours and 16 minutes. Ministerial absence was observed in the Question Hour. Only 80 of 235 starred questions (requiring oral replies) appearing on the agenda were taken up and responded to by the relevant ministry. Additionally, legislators asked 275 supplementary questions.

### **House Work**

The House took up three calling attention notices on the delimitation of constituencies for the upcoming local government elections, the government proposal of closing down 450 small railway stations and auction of railway land and the alleged involvement of Islamabad Police personnel in criminal activities. A total of 85 points of order were raised which consumed 13% of the session time. Three privilege motions, tabled separately by two ANP and one PPPP lawmakers, were referred to the concerned committees. The House witnessed six token walkouts by the opposition consuming 27 minutes of the session time. The protests were regarding unsatisfactory answers provided by ministers during the Question Hour, discriminatory coverage of members' speeches on state owned television channel, PTV, the

privatization of Pakistan Steel Mills, delay in the calling of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting, and provision of natural gas to Zhob, Balochistan.

**The Express Tribune - December 23, 2013**

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## Provincial Assemblies

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### **Innovative Plans: K-P to Be the First to Have Human Rights Directorate**

After a much-hailed Right to Information law, the provincial government aims to establish a human rights directorate, the first of its kind in the country, to help address citizens' complaints. A high-ranking government official said the premise behind setting up the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Human Rights Directorate is to help people get their complaints redressed in time. He added that the directorate will be set up through a governor's ordinance called the K-P Human Rights Directorate Act and that it was a unique step which has not been taken by any other province yet. "Anyone's complaint against any individual, institution or official will be addressed through the directorate," he said. "When a citizen lodges a complaint regarding any issue they confront, the head of the directorate would act as a complainant and process the case accordingly," he said, adding that the law will only cover K-P. An official familiar with the matter said the K-P Human Rights Directorate will function as part of the provincial law department. Explaining the broad contours of the law, he said "The director will look into the nature of the complaint and decide as to which competent court or legal forum would hear the case," he said. "The law, besides envisaging the protection of rights of citizens, will help towards tightening the noose around government officials to be mindful of citizens' rights to immediate redressing of their problems."

Furthermore, an official at the Governor's House confirmed that the ordinance had been signed by the K-P governor and would be presented for approval in the provincial assembly during its next session. By law, the ordinance should be approved by the house within 90 days or it will expire, he added. Chief minister's spokesperson Shiraz Paracha said the setting up of the human rights directorate should be viewed as part of a series of laws passed by the K-P government to establish a checks and balances system. He added that similar steps taken by the government include the Right to Information law, Ehtisab (accountability) Commission and the formulation of conflict of interest laws in the province. "All these laws and the human rights directorate are part of a larger scheme with the sole aim of empowering citizens," claimed Paracha. The spokesperson further said the idea of developing a law which would set up a human rights directorate in K-P was initially conceived by late law minister Israrullah Gandapur who was killed in a suicide attack in October this year. "It was later formulated by the provincial law secretary through the directives of the chief minister," he shared.

**The Express Tribune - December 14, 2013**

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### **Right to Information Bill Tabled in PA**

The Punjab government tabled and started debate on the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Bill 2013 in the provincial assembly to make compulsory for government departments to provide the demanded information within the next 14 working days to the citizens. Under the proposed laws, a special commission would be formed by the name of the Punjab Information Commission (PIC) that would consist of three information commissioners' equivalent to the public officer of grade 21. The commission will be responsible for providing information to citizens directly when they submit any request in this regard. One of the

members of the commission will be equivalent to the judge of the high court and the second equivalent to grade 21 officers, while the third one will belong to the civil society, having more than 15 years of experience in his field with skills in mass communication. The complainants could submit a request of information about any government department to the commission directly through its online service or a written application, and the commission will provide such information within 14 working days to the applicant. The commission will gather the demanded information from the relevant department and the authorities of that department will be bound to provide accurate information regarding the request to the commission.

However, information related to national defense and security, public order and international relations of Pakistan will not be provided to the citizens. After the bill was tabled, the opposition benches made hue and cry and strongly opposed it, and also pointed out the quorum three times. By the reason of lack of quorum, the chair pended debate on the bill. There are high chances that the bill will be passed today despite reservations of the opposition. Deputy speaker Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani chaired the session that started one hour and 43 minutes late. During the question hour, Minister for Forests, Fisheries and Wildlife Malik M Asif was given a warning by the chair after he gave unsatisfactory and contradictory answers to a question several times. The speaker directed him to probe the issue and inform the House about the real situation after collecting the required information.

However, while answering to a question regarding permission to foreigners for hunting in Punjab, the minister said that foreigners were being allowed by the Foreign Office for their "hunting adventures" in Pakistan. He said the office used to issue special permission to them, whereas the local people were not allowed to take part in such activities. The minister said that such special permissions were issued to figures of brother Islamic countries alone. "They were being issued visas for specific days and to hunt a hundred birds only," he mentioned. Meanwhile, treasury and opposition members disregarded his statement and said that foreigners used to stay for more than 20 days and they hunted countless birds. Asif also informed the House that the proportion of forests' land in the province did not meet international standards, as the area should at least have a forest cover of five per cent of its total geographical area. Out of the total 50.956 million acre land, the province had forest on only 1.62 million acres (3.1 per cent). He mentioned that in order to meet the international standards of having forests on at least five per cent of the land, the province would need a hefty amount of Rs 1 billion along with 600 cusecs of water, which according to him was an impossible task under the prevailing circumstances.

Pertaining to a question about transfer of 55 acres in Lodhran to a politician, the minister stated that the land was not delivered to a person but an organization in 1981. The minister also pledged that after enacting the Forest Act, 2010, the activities of the timber mafia had been reduced by 42 per cent though he admitted that the illegal activity of timber theft was taking place with the connivance of some officials of the department. He also informed the House that the government had banned felling of trees in Murree. Law Minister Rana Sanaullah, in his speech, claimed that the government was complying with the Supreme Court's observations. He appreciated that PML-N's defense minister presented himself before the apex court when summoned. Sanaullah termed Imran Khan as an unintelligent person for staging a sit-in protest in order to stop NATO supplies. "By doing this, the PTI cannot stop drone strikes," he underscored. PTI member Sadiq Khan walked out of the House after not being allowed to speak on a point of order. He tried several times to speak on a point of order but the speaker did not allow him.

**Daily Times - December 11, 2013**

## PA Adopts Right to Information Bill

The provincial assembly passed “Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Bill,” along with four other bills, rejecting almost all changes suggested by the opposition. The Right to Information bill carried two amendments that differentiate it from the original act. Clause Five of the bill maintained: “Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, any information mentioned in subsection (1) may be disclosed by the Public information officer if the information is 50 years old but commission, in an appropriate case, extend this time period of 50 years to a further 20 years.” (2), “where a public information officer or any other person has, without any reasonable cause, refused to receive an application, has not furnished information within time limits, or denied the request with mala fide or knowingly gave incorrect, incomplete or misleading information, the commission may, after providing sufficient opportunity of defense to the public information officer, direct the public information officer to pay fine not exceeding two days salary for each day of delay or to pay fine which may extend to fifty thousands (50,000) rupees.”

The assembly also passed Lahore Development Authority (amendment) Bill 2013, aimed at establishing a comprehensive system of metropolitan planning and development in order to improve the quality of life in the area of Lahore division and establish an integrated metropolitan and regional development authority. The bill would also help evolve policies and plans relating to improving housing, industrial development, traffic, transportation, education, health, water supply, sewerage, drainage, solid waste disposal and other allied matters.

The Punjab Commission on Status of Women Bill 2013 was also on the agenda, which as per the bill, was aimed at empowering women, expansion of opportunities for their socio-economic growth and elimination of all forms of discrimination against them. Other bills that were passed included the Punjab Weight and Measure (international system) Enforcement (amendment) Bill, the Punjab Workmen’s Compensation (amendment) Bill and the Employees’ Cost of Living (Relief) (amendment) Bill. The four bills that were deferred till next sitting, which was called at 9am, included The Punjab Commission on Status of Women Bill, the Punjab Shops and Establishments (amendment) Bill, the Punjab Minimum Wages for Unskilled Workers (amendment) Bill and the Punjab Payment of Wages (amendment) Bill. Earlier, the Opposition tried to force the House to take motion pertaining to stoppage of gas to the industry and the CNG sector out of turn, but in vain. Some speakers from the opposition, including Mian Mahmoodur Rasheed, pleaded the chair to suspend the routine business and discuss the impact of the stoppage, which according to them runs into billions of rupees and will result in unemployment of hundreds of thousands of people. However, the speaker, citing rules of business, asked the Opposition to go to the Business Advisory Committee of the House to get the motion included in the discussion.

Dawn - December 13, 2013

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## Punjab Launches Land Record Computerization

People would now be getting property deeds and other documents relating to their land holdings and plots in only 30 minutes as the Punjab chief minister inaugurated land record computerization centre in Lahore Cantonment. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, CM Shahbaz Sharif termed it a historic project and said that it would be completed by June 2014 in 140 tehsils. He said when this modern system becomes fully functional in all districts of the province, the culture of corruption, bribery and forgery in the matters relating to land would be eliminated and the people would get rid of the obsolete and exploitative system of Patwaris and Tehsildars. “Nothing is impossible if one is determined enough. There is a need for self-

reformation to turn failures into successes and become an invincible nation through hard work, honesty and continuous struggle,” he observed.

Federal Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique, members of national and provincial assemblies, intellectuals, columnists, TV anchorpersons, analysts as well as Senior Member Board of Revenue and other senior officials were present on the occasion. Planning & Development Chairman Irfan Elahi threw light on Punjab land record management and information system. Giving a briefing on the project, he said this was an important step towards change in style of governance. He said huge amount of public money was wasted on this project due to negligence and undue delay in the tenures of previous rulers. Elahi said that present government implemented this project expeditiously and saved more than Rs2.8 billion. He said with the completion of this project, proprietary deeds will be available in 30 minutes while the process of mutation will be completed in only 45 minutes. He said that computerization of land record has also eliminated the threat of theft and loss of documents in fire or flood. The chairman said that World Bank has expressed satisfaction over the pace of the project and provided additional grant of \$50 million for this purpose. He said that third-party monitoring has been conducted to ensure transparency of the project. He said that in 98 tehsils of the province service centers were already functioning and work in the remaining tehsils will be completed by next year.

Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif said the project will enable the citizens to obtain proprietary deed of their land as well as facilitate them in the matters regarding transfer of land which will be a big change. He said that former rulers did not pay due attention to this important project due to which a large sum of public money and time of the nation was wasted. However, he said, Pakistan Muslim League-N government furthered the project of land record computerization expeditiously and this project will be facilitating the people of the province from June 2014. The CM said that the government is not against Patwaris and Tehsildars but there was a need to change their mentality which had been a source of problems for the people for centuries. He said that despite summaries of government officers he has not recruited even a single Patwari during last six years and has instead appointed honest, hardworking and talented persons through Punjab Public Service Commission at the service centers, besides adopting an effective check and balance system for this purpose.

Shahbaz said that those criticizing the welfare projects of Punjab government were least concerned about the betterment and uplift of the masses. He said that some elements criticized metro bus project and termed it 'Jangla Bus' and they had been saying that Rs70 billion were 'wasted' on this project but today 150,000 people were benefiting from this mass transit system. The chief minister said due to corruption and greed of former rulers, an additional sum of Rs30 billion from the public money is being spent on Nandipur power project. He said that work is being carried out expeditiously on this project and its one turbine will start operating from May 2014. Addressing intellectuals, journalists and columnists who were present at the function, the chief minister said that government and media go hand in hand and the government takes guidance from analysis and comments of the journalists. He said that journalist community will have to play key role in steering the nation out of despondency. He said that politicians, generals, judges, journalists and all segments of the society will have to make collective effort to take the country out of problems. He further said that the analysis of writers, intellectuals and journalists provide him guidance. He said the journalist community raised its voice against price-hike due to which an effective system was evolved by the government for the provision of essential items to the people at the fixed rates and such measures were taken as resulted in considerable decrease in the prices of essential commodities while the system of supply and demand was also improved.

Similarly, he said, a massive outbreak of dengue was faced in 2011 and journalist community provided guidance in this regard. He said that vigorous efforts were made to counter this challenge and dengue was defeated and it was due to this reason that dengue situation remained under control next year and no death occurred. The CM said that access to information is of vital importance for elimination of corruption. He said that it is the responsibility of journalist community to promote awareness among the people about the modern system of land record not only in the country but also among overseas Pakistanis. He said that journalists should come forward and play their due role in this regard.

**The Nation – December 09, 2013**

### **Three Provincial Assembly Committees Elect Chairmen**

Members of three standing committees of the provincial Assembly elected their chairmen. Leader of Opposition Mian Mehmoodur Rashid was elected unopposed to head the Public Accounts Committee One. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) member Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath was elected unopposed as chairman of Public Accounts Committee Two. Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal was elected unopposed as chairman of the Privileges Committee. Abdul Qahar, spokesman for the provincial assembly speaker, said the house would elect chairmen of three standing committees for government departments. Bharath said his committee would issue directions to all administrative departments to fix their shortcomings. He said he would point out the shortcomings during course of his committee's work. Chaudhary Iqbal told The Express Tribune said that the Privileges Committee bridged the gap between bureaucrats and politicians. He said his committee had to protect the privileges of the members and address the complaints against bureaucrats and government departments. He said the committee would ensure the dignity and respect of both lawmakers and civil servants. He thanked Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif for trusting him with the job. There are 38 standing committees in the Punjab Assembly for government departments and eight special committees.

1. Public Account Committee No 1
  - a. Qazi Adnan Fareed
  - b. Saira Iftikhar
  - c. Malik Muhammad Waris Kallu
  - d. Syed Waseem Akhtar
  - e. Nadia Aziz
  - f. Mian Munazir Hussain Ranjha
  - g. Malik Muhammad Javed Iqbal Awan
  - h. Shamona Badshah Qaisrani
  - i. Muhammad Saqib Khurshid
  - j. Mian Muhammad Rafique
  - k. Mian Mehmood-ur-Rasheed, chairman
  - l. Waheed Asghar Dogar
  - m. Muhammad Sibtain Khan
2. Public Account Committee No 2

- a. Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, chairman
- b. Tahia Noon
- c. Mian Muhammad Azam
- d. Mian Tariq Mehmood
- e. Malik Muhammad Ali Khokhar
- f. Mian Irfan Daultana
- g. Jamil Hassan Khan
- h. Ch Raza Nasrullah Ghumman
- i. Ch Shamshad Ahmad Khan
- j. Rana Babar Hussain
- k. Raja Rashid Hafeez
- l. Mian Muhammad Aslam Iqbal
- m. Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mehmood

3. Privileges Committee

- a. Chaudhary Muhammad Iqbal, chairman
- b. Sardar Muhammad Jamal Khan Laghari,
- c. Mehdi Abbas Khan, (PP-205)
- d. Haji Ehsan-ud-Din Qureshi
- e. Rais Muhammad Mehboob Ahmed
- f. Rana Abdul Sattar Khan
- g. Ch Arshad Javaid Warraich
- h. Syed Hussain Jahania Gardezi
- i. Muhammad Arshad Khan Lodhi
- j. Sameena Noor
- k. Ahmed Khan Bhacher
- l. Ejaz Hussain Bukhari
- m. Ahmad Shah Khagga

The Express Tribune - December 27, 2013

## Judiciary

### Chief Justice Chaudhry to Pass Seat to Gentle Successor

Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry is due to retire on December 12 and government officials are counting the days until he hands over the Supreme Court to his successor. The outgoing chief justice has made the court the country's third power centre, alongside the army and fledgling civilian government. But he has made many enemies along the way. Chaudhry and

his judges have frequently and successfully challenged the government. He has even taken on the military, an unprecedented challenge to the most formidable institution. Supporters say Chaudhry has cracked down on corruption and fought for human rights in the country. But critics accuse him of overstepping his authority, paralyzing government and undermining democracy. Chaudhry's successor Tassaduq Hussain Jilani – nicknamed “the gentleman judge” for his mild manner – is expected to maintain the court's focus on rights but steer clear of intervening in government policy. “He is the opposite of the current chief justice,” said retired Supreme Court judge Nasir Aslam Zahid. “He's very mild, he hears all sides, he does not lose his temper.” The judicial handover will be the last in a year of orderly transitions for coup-prone Pakistan. A May general election marked the first time one democratic government handed power to another.

The army chief steps down this month. Celebrated lawyer and rights activist Asma Jahangir said the new chief justice would preserve improvements that Chaudhry had introduced but the top court would be less combative. “The judiciary will stay independent but there won't be such undermining of other institutions as there is now,” she said. A dapper lover of poetry, antiques and films, Jilani is related to the new ambassador to the United States Jalil Abbas Jilani and a former prime minister who Chaudhry forced to step down last year. He has largely avoided the high-profile political cases that Chaudhry has revealed in and he has called for judicial vigilance to be tempered with restraint. “If the courts fail to maintain this delicate balance, none else but people's confidence in the judiciary would be the worst victim,” Jilani wrote in a recent ruling. Confidants say Jilani often refers to a warning from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that constant judicial intervention had weighed on an already stagnating economy. When staff of a privatized bank challenged redundancies, Jilani ruled it was “for the bank management to decide about the usefulness of the employees” – an unusual ruling in a court known for its populist judgments.

### **Chaudhry's Tenure**

Under Chaudhry, judges often took notice of executive issues including everything from traffic regulations to civil service appointments. Foreign investment dwindled as deals got tied up in court. To the delight of many citizens struggling with rising prices, Chaudhry recently froze increases in taxes and electricity tariffs that the cash-strapped government needed to plug a gaping budget hole and qualify for an IMF loan. The government, fed up with seeing decisions overturned, has put off filling 70 posts, including law minister and the heads of state energy companies, until Chaudhry retires. Chaudhry has challenged such appointments before. He has made record use of laws that allow top judges to open a case without a complainant. Each day, he scrutinizes press clippings for possible cases and reactions to rulings. The media-shy Chaudhry does not give interviews but he said in a recent speech that he considered the Supreme Court to be the protector of the common man. His critics are cautious. Journalists, lawyers, and politicians have all been charged with contempt of court. Even Chaudhry's fellow judges are reluctant to disagree. Chaudhry's bench has issued unanimous rulings since 2009, highly unusual for top judges, said lawyer Fawad Chaudhry, who is not related to the chief justice.

Chief Justice Chaudhry burst into prominence in 2007 when he resisted then military ruler General Pervez Musharraf's bid to cling to power. It was unprecedented defiance of the military by a judge who until then seemed an unlikely rebel. Musharraf sacked him, triggering street protests by black-coated lawyers. Their anger galvanized opposition to Musharraf, who stepped down as president just over a year later after his allies were trounced in an election. Chaudhry was later restored to the Supreme Court in triumph. Since then, he has taken on all comers. One of his most celebrated fights has been with the military security services, demanding they reveal

the fate of thousands of missing people. Generals have appeared in court, along with a handful of tortured prisoners, though no one in the security services has resigned or even been charged over the disappearances. "The courts listened to us compassionately and did what they could but many times their orders are not obeyed," said Amina Janjua, who represents families of the missing. She hopes that the new chief justice might have more success in challenging the military. But, she said, even the courts know their limits.

**The Express Tribune - December 11, 2013**

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### **Man, Who Redefined Judiciary, Exits**

Pakistan's longest serving Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry will retire, and ending an era marked by aggressive judicial activism that even snared a serving prime minister. Chaudhry, credited with making the judiciary a strong pillar, is a man feared by the political class and the bureaucracy. He built a reputation for himself through direct confrontation with the civilian government and the powerful military to an extent.

Chaudhry, 64, himself believes that his legacy will continue even after he departs from the Supreme Court. "When such judges are still in the apex court, no one can derail the system from the path of rule of law. I lived my life, I fought my wars but not against the poor and weak but against power, cruelty and injustice," he said recently. He said historians will judge how the Supreme Court worked under him. "You can see not just one but 20,000 cases which we resolved." Born in Quetta on December 12, 1948, Chaudhry is the longest serving Chief Justice in Pakistan's history. He was appointed the top judge on June 30, 2005 but remained dysfunctional from November 3, 2007 to March 16, 2009 after he was deposed by former military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf. He became a symbol of the lawyers' movement against Musharraf and their protests eventually played a crucial role in the fall of his dictatorial regime. After his reinstatement in 2009, Chaudhry took up scores of suo motu cases against corruption and rights violations and issued strong judgments.

Though seen with suspicious eyes by the political class and the bureaucracy, Chaudhry is a darling of the masses. Chaudhry forced former premier Yousaf Raza Gilani to step down in 2012 after he refused to implement the Supreme Court's orders to revive graft cases in Switzerland against then President Asif Ali Zardari. Many critics had then described Gilani's ouster as a "judicial coup". Though most of the senior lawyers turned against the chief justice after his restoration, his real strength lay in young lawyers who still see Justice Chaudhry as a role model for freedom loving members of the legal fraternity. However, his critics accuse him of taking oath under Provisional Constitution Order (PCO) from the same military autocrat and then justifying military intervention and even giving the dictator a blanket authority to amend the constitution according to his whims.

**Pakistan Today - December 11, 2013**

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### **Government to Press Five Charges against Musharraf**

In the 'high treason' case against former president retired Gen Pervez Musharraf, the government plans to charge him with abrogating, subverting, suspending, holding in abeyance and attempting to conspire against the 1973 Constitution by declaring emergency and overthrowing superior judiciary in November 2007. In a formal complaint to be filed in a three-judge special court set up to try the former military ruler under Article-6 (1) of the Constitution, the government has not nominated any co-accused in the case. This is despite the fact that

clause 2 of Article 6 also holds “any person aiding or abetting or collaborating the acts mentioned in clause (1) shall likewise be guilty of high treason”. The complaint does not blame Gen Musharraf for the 1999 military coup. Informed sources said the complaint No 01/2013 would be submitted to special court’s registrar Abdul Ghani Soomro, Sessions Judge of Sindh Judicial Service, through the FIA director general and the interior secretary. It will be filed under Article 6 of the 1973 Constitution, read with Section 5 of the Criminal Law Amendment (Special Court) Act 1976, read with Section 3 of the High Treason (Punishment) Act, 1973. The interior secretary will act as the complainant and authorize the FIA DG to file the complaint.

The special court headed by Justice Faisal Arab of the Sindh High Court and comprising Justice Tahira Safdar of the Balochistan High Court and Justice Yawar Ali of Lahore High Court has been constituted by Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry at the request of the government under the Criminal Law Amendment (Special Court) Act 1976. The complaint says that under Section 3(1), read with serial number 14 of the Schedule of the FIA Act 1974 (Act VIII of 1975), the FIA is designated/authorized to prosecute the offences punishable under the high treason act. It pleads that the accused be tried on five heads of charges as mentioned in Article 6 and, if found guilty of any or all the charges, be awarded punishment as mentioned in Section 2(b) of the High Treason (punishment) Act 1973 (Act LXVIII of 1973). Under Section 2(b) of the High Treason Act 1973, a person found guilty of high treason “shall be punishable with death or imprisonment for life”, the complaint reads. Mr. Musharraf who ruled the country for 10 years has been accused of committing all the five acts of high treason - he abrogated, subverted, suspended and held the constitution in abeyance or attempted or conspired to do so.

The complaint says Mr. Musharraf issued a proclamation of emergency order on Nov 3, 2007, in his capacity as chief of the army staff and in his own name to hold the constitution in abeyance. “The accused in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army by adopting unconstitutional means abrogated/subverted /suspended/held in abeyance the constitution by the said proclamation and hence committed the offence of high treason as defined in Article 6 of the constitution. A copy of the said proclamation signed by the former military chief in his name is part of the complaint.” The complaint says that on the same day (Nov 3, 2007) the accused vide notification 2-9/2007-Min-1(A) also issued the Provisional Constitution Order 1 of 2007 which in express letter and spirit abrogated, subverted and suspended Parts II, III, IV, VII, XI and XII of the Constitution. This is the second act of high treason. The same day the accused, as self-styled president of Pakistan, issued “Oath of Office (Judges) Order, 2007” to declare that a person who immediately before the issuance of the said order held office as a judge of the Supreme Court, Federal Shariat Court or a high court shall cease to hold office with immediate effect. “This order grossly abrogated and subverted the letter and spirit of Parts I and VIII of the Constitution, and hence the third act of high treason.”

The accused who had ‘occupied’ the high office of president in June 2001 had on Nov 14, 2007, issued the “Provisional Constitution (Amendment) Order 2007” to further amend the PCO-1 and hence also abrogated, subverted and suspended the letter and spirit of various provisions of the Constitution, including Parts I and XI, and hence committed the fourth act of high treason. A month later, on Dec 14, 2007, the accused issued “Constitution (Second Amendment) Order 2007 (President Order No 6 of 2007) to further amend Articles 41, 44, 193, 194, 208 and 270-C of the Constitution. The amendment “revealed the real intention and motive for abrogating, subverting and suspending the Parts III, VII, XI and XII of the Constitution to remove the constitutional bars in Articles 44 and 63 against his inadmissible third term in uniform during pendency of his case in the Supreme Court”. This is the fifth act of high treason. The complaint says that all the five counts of offences were intentionally committed by the accused with the sole objective of “perpetuating his illegal occupation of the highest office, warding off any possible adverse verdict which could disrupt his continuous usurpation of power and thwarting

the sub-judice case as already conclusively determined and held by the apex court in its judgment PLD 2009 SC 879 in the Sindh High Court Bar versus the federation of Pakistan". In view of the above grounds, "the complainant seeks trial, conviction and punishment of accused Pervez Musharraf for all five separate offences of high treason" as envisaged in Article 6 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, read with Section 2 of the High Treason (Punishment) Act (Act LXVIII of 1973).

Dawn - December 08, 2013

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### **Special Court Summons Musharraf on December 24**

The special court has summoned former President Pervez Musharraf on December 24 in a high treason case under article 6 of the constitution initiated against him on the request of federal government. The trial against Musharraf will be held in the Supreme Court's national library. The special court has also issued summons for advocate Akram Sheikh after admitting complaints filed by the federation. A session of the three-member special court including Justice Faisal Arab of the Sindh High Court, Justice Tahira Safdar of the Balochistan High Court and Justice Yawar Ali of Lahore High Court, constituted by Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry at the request of the government under the Criminal Law Amendment (Special Court) Act 1976 was held in Islamabad. The complaint of interior ministry was reviewed in the meeting, said Registrar special court. The complaint holds the former army chief solely responsible for his decision to impose emergency and abrogate constitution in 2007.

According to reports, the three-member judge bench of the special court, headed by Justice Faisal Arab reviewed the charge sheet filed by the federation against Musharraf. Earlier, the federal government submitted a petition in the special court to initiate hearing of high treason against former dictator Pervez Musharraf. An eight-page plea was filed in the office of special court's registrar. The government requested that a case should be initiated against the former dictator under Article-6 of the Constitution for abrogating the constitution of the country by imposing emergency on 3rd November 2007. The interior ministry had also setup two teams to try former President Pervez Musharraf under Article 6 of the constitution. The two teams, constitution and prosecution, will be headed by Dr Tariq Hassan and Nasiruddin Khan respectively. Both of the teams will be working under the supervision of advocate Akram Sheikh. The constitution team comprises 10 lawyers while the prosecution has 11 team members. A notification in this regard has also been issued by the interior ministry. Meanwhile the charge sheet pressed five charges including November 3 emergency, detention of superior judges and implementation of PCO against Musharraf. The federation will show the details of his orders as proof in the court. The interior secretary will act as the complainant and authorize the FIA DG to file the complaint.

Pakistan Observer - December 14, 2013

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### **Musharraf Wants Military Court to Hold His Trial for High Treason**

Challenging the Special Court's proceedings for the offence of high treason under Article 6 of the constitution, former president Gen (r) Pervez Musharraf has requested the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to direct the federal government to initiate his trial in military court, saying that he remained the subject of the Army Act 1952 even after his retirement. Musharraf, through his counsel Dr Khalid Ranjha, filed a petition in the IHC under Article 199 of the constitution, making the Special Court and secretaries of interior and defense respondents in the case. The petitioner argued that the alleged acts were committed by him when he was holding the office

in Pakistan Army and “by virtue of Section 92 of the Pakistan Army Act, 1952 he remains the subject of the Army Act even after the retirement”.

Musharraf also contended that it would not be out of place to mention that the imposition of emergency was not the decision in isolation by him. He said in the petition that the November 3, 2007 emergency was “outcome of the discussions and decisions taken during the petitioner’s meetings with the then prime minister, governors of all four provinces, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, chiefs of the armed forces (naval and air), vice chief of army staff and corps commanders of the Pakistan Army. Hence arraigning of the petitioner alone is unjustifiable and reflects malafide and malicious intent of the prime minister”. The former army chief requested the high court that the proceedings launched by the Special Court for his trial should be declared “illegal and unconstitutional” because they lack jurisdiction to conduct his trial. “If the trial is allowed to be proceeded as it is with the respondent No 1 (Special Court), it would cause gross prejudice to the petitioner and would be violative of the petitioner’s mandatory constitutional right as enshrined under Article 10-A of the constitution of Pakistan 1973,” he said. The former army chief also said that it was essentially a matter falling within the jurisdiction of military court and the enabling laws stipulated in the Pakistan Army Act, 1952.

Daily Times – December 21, 2013

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### General in the Dock: Musharraf in the Line of Fire

Nestled between the Prime Minister House and PM secretariat, the tranquil National Library – usually frequented by bookish CSS students – will witness history. Not many would have thought former president General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf would find himself marching into the dock for a treason trial before a special court constituted on the library premises. After being granted bail in the Benazir Bhutto and Bugti murder cases as well as the Lal Masjid hearing, the former military leader is the subject of national attention as he becomes the first ex-army chief to stand trial for treason in a special court. “The element of surprise is our most powerful weapon,” Ahmed Raza Kasuri of Musharraf’s legal team told The Express Tribune, when asked to comment on the former ruler’s possible appearance at the opening of the treason trial against him.

Having just returned from the farmhouse that served as Musharraf’s sub-jail, Kasuri says the man of the moment is not under pressure. “He is hale and hearty. Very confident and cheerful,” he said. Kasuri said that the venue of the treason hearing was changed from the Federal Shariat Court to the expansive National Library as the former is not spacious enough to hold the press pouring in from all over the world. “Entry will be strictly monitored. Journalists must take passes from the registrar of the special court and will not be allowed without them.” Justice Faisal Arab, Justice Tahira Safdar and Justice Yawar Ali are on the three-member bench of the special court.

In a petition submitted by his counsel Advocate Ibrahim Satti, Musharraf approached the apex court seeking a stay order on the trial. It maintained that in the past, five “deviations” (coups) were validated by the courts and parliament and November 3, 2007 deviation was a similar state necessity for the good of the people. It also said that the prime minister and top military generals were consulted before the emergency was imposed, and further challenged the July 31, 2009 judgment of the apex court. “The petitioner, Musharraf, in the capacity of chief of army staff was compelled to issue promulgation of emergency on November 3, 2007 after reviewing the situation in meetings with prime minister, governors of all four provinces and with chairman joint chief of staff committee, vice chief of army staff and corps commanders of

Pakistan army,” the petition stated. “Everyone had accepted emergency rule and the National Assembly also adopted a resolution in favor of emergency,” Musharraf held in his petition.

Musharraf requested that the apex court accept his review petition as was done in Nawaz Sharif’s case. He also conceded in the petition that without imposing emergency there was no other way to remove former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry as it was not possible under Article 209 of the constitution. The July 31, 2009 judgment is the main evidence against Musharraf for his act to abrogate the constitution, the petition stated, appealing for review of this judgment. With a reference to some incidents of the past, the petition stated that due to differences between Justice (retired) Chaudhry and Musharraf, the judgment was rendered against the emergency. The review petition also held that Musharraf filed a reference against Justice Chaudhry and later declared emergency on November 3 on the advice of then Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. The letter of Shaukat Aziz has also been attached with the petition. The petition stated that no person has been tried under Article 6 of the constitution in the past for holding the constitution in abeyance, and even the apex court’s judgment has not asked for a trial against Musharraf. It maintained that the SC is silent on the issue because holding the constitution in abeyance is not tantamount to high treason before the 18th constitutional amendment.

**The Express Tribune - December 24, 2013**

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**BALUCHISTAN WATCH**

**Governance Watch**

**Balochistan Situation: Opposition to Devolution Putting Federation in Peril**

Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) SeNATOor Raza Rabbani has linked restoration of peace in Balochistan with the resolution of the issue of missing persons. "Retaining peace and carrying out development in Balochistan is impossible unless the government addresses the issue of missing persons," he said. Rabbani was addressing a seminar organized by the United Nations Development Programme and Inter Provincial Coordination Ministry to discuss the outcome of the 18th Amendment. SeNATOor Rabbani said Balochistan had been deprived for the last 65 years. However, he claimed that the PPP government had made attempts like the 18th Amendment and Aghaz-e-Huqooq Balochistan package to mitigate the sense of deprivation. "PPP had ended the impression that people are traitors or patriots in Balochistan. Those nationalists who had been labeled as traitors had supported the 18th Amendment and it was unanimously adopted in the National Assembly," he said. "No one is a traitor but certain circumstances forced people to take extreme steps," he added. He said those who were creating obstacles in devolution of powers to provinces were actually endangering the federation. "In Islamabad some people do not want powers to be transferred to the provinces and want to get back health, education and social welfare sectors." "Civil and military bureaucracies have been of the view that political forces that are empowering the provinces are actually weakening the federation, but we have observed that without provincial autonomy, Pakistan will become a weaker federation," he said.

**The Express Tribune - December 18, 2013**

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**POLITICAL & ELECTION WATCH****Political Stakeholders & Elections****IHC Bars NADRA from Buying 20 Million Chips**

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) barred NADRA from buying 20 million chips being used in the preparation of new identity cards. The case was heard by a bench headed by Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui. The lawyer of the applicant argued before the court that NADRA had awarded the bid to a blue-eyed company by disqualifying other applicant companies. The applicant urged the court to cancel the bid as it was partial, unfair and incomplete. The court adjourned the hearing until third week of June and summoned the secretary interior, chairman NADRA, companies in auction of the bid and other stakeholders to appear on the next hearing.

Pakistan Today - December 04, 2013

**ECP to Get NADRA's Control for Three Months**

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said that the administrative control of NADRA has been given to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for three months to ascertain the truth regarding the verification of thumb impressions and other controversies that had arisen after the termination of the NADRA chairman. Addressing a press conference here at the Punjab House, the minister said a 'political juggler' was running NADRA, and he was removed in broad daylight, not in the darkness of night. He said the secretary Interior Ministry will meet the secretary ECP to finalize the matter of handing over administrative control of NADRA to the electoral body. Chaudhry Nisar said a group of politicians and a section of media have created ambiguities regarding the election process, and they were hurling blame at the PML-N government. He said the resolution of such issues falls in the jurisdiction of the ECP and election tribunals. The minister said that the ECP and election tribunals should play their role to clear controversies. He said the FIA will also be put under the disposal of the ECP. He said investigations regarding rigging on some Karachi seats should also be conducted. "I will register an FIR against the ECP staff and other people if rigging was proved," the minister said. He said all controversies were raised after the termination of the NADRA chairman. He said the act of the government was legal and according to the law.

"It is the prerogative of every government to change or terminate any officer," he said, adding that a political party, which appointed the NADRA chairman on political grounds, is now agitating against the government's decision to give it a political color. He said another party, which believes in justice, is also backing the NADRA chairman for some obvious reasons. "We have lots of documentary evidence about misconduct, misappropriation and abuse of office which are enough to terminate him," the minister said, adding that the media should investigate the educational qualifications of the NADRA chairman, who claims that he has graduated from Harvard, Stanford and Michigan but it was stunning to know that he hadn't graduated from those universities but had attended two to three-day courses or seminars. Chaudhry Nisar said the NADRA chairman visited different countries of the world after getting permission from the prime minister. "The thumb impression controversy is not such an issue but there are many other motives behind the matter," the minister said, adding that the PTI could ascertain the fact by conducting a judicial inquiry by any judge they like to reveal the reality. To a question, Chaudhry Nisar said he firmly believed that the US drone attack was not accidental but it was

pre-planned to sabotage peace talks. The minister said keeping in view the security situation, the entry of foreigners has been banned in the Ministry of Interior. He said Black-water officials would be hanged publicly if found active in any part of the country.

Chaudhry Nisar said a draft of the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) has been completed and would be announced after the approval of the cabinet. He said the NISP has been divided into three parts - general, strategic and operational. "Some parts of the policy containing the strategy to counter terrorism will not be made public and will be kept secret in which decision of conducting army operations or joint operations of the military and civil forces will be made," Chaudhry Nisar maintained. He said the government would prefer peace without using force. He said in case of failure of talks with the extremists, the government will have to use other options to protect the cities and towns of the country. He said in case of an operation against the miscreants, a specific time period would be given to maintain peace. "We will try to complete any kind of operation within one year's time," the minister said. He said it is obvious that some opponents would give a political twist to the peace policy of the government but the government has an objective to protect every city and town of the country and to provide a peaceful atmosphere to the people of Pakistan.

About the execution of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Molla by the Bangladesh government, he said, "We should do more than what we have done as a reaction against his execution. I was shocked as a Pakistani on the episode." Chaudhry Nisar said he has put a ban on the official visits of officers of the Ministry of Interior including himself for six months. "I have declined official visits to the US, UK, France and other countries on their governments' invitation and decided not to visit any country for six months," the minister said. Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar revealed that the NADRA chairman was drawing Rs. 2,100,000 as a monthly salary which was contrary to the NADRA Ordinance. He said a NADRA chief could draw only around Rs300,000 salary as per the Ordinance. The minister, without mentioning any name, repeatedly said that he doesn't want to influence the case pending against the 'chairman'. He said the government had also offered the PTI to set up a committee under Justice (ret'd) Wajihuddin Ahmed to probe allegations of election rigging. However, he said, no response had been received from the PTI. He said the PML-N had always honored the courts' decisions and the NADRA chief was allowed to continue his duty after the court's stay order. He said that in the past, top slots were given to corrupt people.

Chaudhry Nisar said around 2,000 official passports, which were issued illegally in the past, had been cancelled. "These passports were being misused and some people were even involved in human trafficking," he added. He said in the past security officials were deputed to escort and give protection to influential people. He said the Rangers officials were also used to grab private lands. The minister said the government withdrew security of all VIPs and influential people. The minister said he himself withdrew 21 Rangers officials deputed for his security. He said the government's lawyer argued before the court that Tariq Malik's appointment as NADRA chief was against rules and regulations. "If he was appointed under the NADRA Ordinance then why did he sign another contract," the minister questioned. The minister said that NADRA, the ECP and the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) had signed an agreement under which the latter was bound to supply magnetic ink. "Now it will be investigated whether the ink was supplied to the ECP during the elections," he said. Chaudhry Nisar said he would also ask the minister for science and technology to place the PCSIR under administrative control of the ECP for three months to probe the supply of magnetic ink.

**The News - December 16, 2013**

### **ECP to Start Training Returning Officers**

In order to hold local government election process within the scheduled time, the Election Commission of Pakistan has finalized the programme to train its returning officers and other staffers from December 21. The ECP has already announced the local government elections on January 30, 2014 in Punjab on the directions of the Supreme Court and also issued the schedule for the election process for candidates on Dec 9, 2013. Local government elections would be held in Punjab on party-basis and the candidates for all 13 seats at union council level including chairman, vice chairman, six general seats, two women seats, one labor or farmer seat, one youth seat and one minority seat would be elected through direct elections in their respective constituency. In this connection, the Punjab Government has already passed the local government act including some amendments despite serious reservations raised by the opposition parties in last session of the provincial assembly. For conducting the local government elections 2014 in a free, fair and transparent manner, the training of the district returning officers and returning officers is going to be held from December 21 to December 29. According to the Punjab Election Commission of Pakistan, the training programme of DROs and the ROs would be held in all nine Divisions of Punjab, catering 36 districts. In these programmes, 36 DROs and 691 ROs would participate and as many as 21 training sessions would be conducted.

Daily Times – December 20, 2013

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### **ECP Excuses Itself from Thumbprint Verification**

The government was left scrambling for other alternatives after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) formally declined the interior ministry's request to play a role in the verification of voters' thumb impressions. A senior ECP official told that the decision was taken at a meeting of the commission headed by the acting chief election commissioner, Justice Nasirul Mulk. "Members of the commission were unanimous about the decision," the source said. The letter sent by the ECP to the interior ministry clearly pointed out that the constitution did not have any provision that empowered the poll body to take part in such an exercise. "The commission after an in-depth consideration has observed that the powers and functions of the commission envisaged by the constitution and the law do not seem to provide for exercising the powers or issuing any directions regarding the verification of thumb impressions," stated the letter that the ECP Secretary Ishtiaq Ahmed Khan sent to the interior ministry. The letter also stated, "Any other action being undertaken by any executive authority of the federation or of a province, especially when such an exercise or action is being carried out or done as a result of an electoral activity conducted by the commission itself. In such a case only a neutral arbiter such as a court of law or a judicial tribunal can take cognizance of any dispute arising out of an electoral activity." It also pointed out that the exercise of verifying thumb impressions by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), and the compilation of a report was forensic analysis in nature and that the ECP was not supposed to become party to it. Earlier, the interior ministry had sent a letter to the ECP regarding the issue that had been highlighted by the opposition, particularly after the government's removal of NADRA chairman Tariq Malik. Although the government has clarified on several counts that it has nothing to do with the arrangements for holding general elections, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan on December 15 came up with the idea of handing over the supervision of the process of verification of thumb impressions to the ECP.

The Express Tribune – December 20, 2013

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### **ECP's Assets List Reveals 'Billionaire Club'**

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued details of the assets and liabilities of members of parliament, revealing the 'billionaire club', which included Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Apart from the premier, MNAs Khalil Zaman Orakzai (NA-16) and Dr Raja Ameer Zaman (NA-19) from Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), Sajid Hussain Turi (NA-37) and Bismallah Khan (NA-43) from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata), and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Shahid Khaqan Abbasi (NA-50) were also among the billionaires. PM Nawaz, as per the declarations, owns agriculture land worth Rs1.43 billion, has made investments of over Rs13 million – he has shares in six different mills – and has Rs126 million in seven bank accounts. He also owns a Toyota Land Cruiser 2010 as well as the 1973 and 1991 models of Mercedes Benz. The premier also owns a 1991 model tractor. Meanwhile, PTI's Ameer Zaman disclosed that he owns property worth over Rs2 billion and that the value of one of his houses in Sector F-7 is Rs1 billion. But Ijazul Haq, the son of former military dictator General Ziaul Haq, pointed out a discrepancy as he claimed that he, too, owns a house in the same locality, which costs only Rs1.64 million.

According to last year's asset declarations, Sajid Hussain Turi owned as many as 1,000 shops in Turi Market, Parachinar, Kurrum Agency, but he had said that the value of his property remained "unknown". However, this time around, he declared his wealth to be in the billions. Chaudhry Parvez Elahi of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) declared that he owns non-agriculture property of Rs8.5 million with – surprisingly – no mention of agriculture land. Elahi, in his last year's declarations, had said he owned 60 acres of agriculture land worth Rs366,667, which meant that the price of one acre was just Rs6,111. Separately, Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Khurshid Shah of the PPP declared that he owned property worth Rs20 million and his major source of income was a cotton factory worth Rs5 million. PPP leader Makhdoom Amin Fahim owned property worth only Rs32 million, having some 184 acres of land. But he did not mention the price of this inherited land. Former Speaker Dr Fehmida Mirza claimed that she was the owner of property worth Rs40 million while her husband, Dr Zulfikar Mirza, shockingly owned property of only Rs18 million. Dr Fehmida also owns an apartment at Global Lake View, Dubai, which is priced astonishingly low at Rs1.6 million.

### **The Poorest Of Them All**

Independent MNA Jamshed Dasti was declared the poorest MNA last year, declaring nothing save his MNA salary. This year, Dasti 'owned nothing'. He did not fill his asset-declaration form and only informed the ECP of an account in Allied Bank Limited, Parliament House. He did not even show any cash in the account. Meanwhile, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazalur Rehman declared he owns two houses worth a mere Rs4 million, has Rs1.6 million deposited in the bank and gold worth Rs0.95 million. But he failed to declare possession or ownership of any vehicle – despite being seen in SUVs many times. PTI chairman Imran Khan was relatively poorer this year as his net assets slightly decreased by Rs0.5 million as compared to the previous fiscal year. His net assets amounted to only Rs29.6 million this year. Out of the 14 different properties he owned in Pakistan, he inherited eight while two were gifted, according to the declaration. PTI Chairman also owned a Toyota Prado whose estimated value is Rs5 million. He also has cash of Rs13.6 million in Bank Alfalah Islamabad.

### **The Chief Ministers**

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Parvez Khattak has declared to own real estate priced at Rs221 million and a Toyota Corolla worth Rs1.3 million. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Shahbaz

Sharif's assets valued at Rs142.2 million and his wives attained more wealth than him, according to the declarations. However, Shahbaz - unlike his elder brother, PM Nawaz - disclosed that he has property worth Rs138 million in London. Balochistan Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik has declared agriculture land worth over Rs280 million but said that he does not own any vehicle. Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah valued his moveable and immoveable property at an implausible Rs16.2 million. He also claimed that he does not own a car and uses his daughter's Honda City.

The Express Tribune - December 26, 2013

## Political Parties

### Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML - N)

#### Nisar Wants Poll Rigging Issue Resolved

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan invited parliamentary leaders of all political parties in the National Assembly to a meeting for resolving the controversy over alleged rigging in the May 11 elections. In a letter sent to leaders of parliamentary parties, the interior minister also sought to clarify the government's position on the sacking of NADRA chairman Tariq Malik, claiming that this had nothing to do with the issue of alleged poll rigging or verification of thumb impression of voters. "I am taking this opportunity to ask you to give your considered opinion for the future course in this regard in a manner which is not prejudicial to the sanctity of the entire electoral process or the democratic institutions which appears to be the sole purpose behind this entire debate," he said. "I am more than willing to organize a meeting of all the parliamentary leaders of political parties represented in the National Assembly, for reaching a consensus in this behalf." The government suffered humiliation last week when the Islamabad High Court suspended its abrupt sacking of the National Database and Registration Authority chairman.

All opposition parties condemned the government's action and alleged that the sacking was linked to verification of voters' thumb impression, especially in Punjab, the PML-N's stronghold. The government, through a notification, had removed the NADRA chairman without citing any reason and appointed a senior official of the authority, retired Brig Zahid Hussain, as acting chairman. In his letter, the minister informed leaders of political parties that "due to the reported non-use of magnetic ink on the ballot papers, digital verification and validation may not be possible and a large majority in each constituency will fail the verification process". He regretted that "in the recent days and months the issue of verification of thumb impression on ballot papers has resonated in media, public debates, judicial hearings and even the parliament". The entire debate, Chaudhry Nisar said, had initially revolved around the possibility of verification of ballots through a digital process applied by NADRA. "However, it had been contended that the same may not be possible because the magnetic ink for thumb impression was not used in the general elections."

Terming the removal of the NADRA chairman "a routine administration change", he said that "an impression has consciously been created as if the change is linked to the issue of verification of ballots which is erroneous, mala fide and patently misleading". "In case the relevant authorities failed to procure the magnetic ink in time what action was initiated by the previous government or the Election Commission which was overseeing the entire process?" he asked in the letter. "Who was responsible for start of this public debate on the issue and what was the motive behind this act?" Chaudhry Nisar informed the parliamentary leaders that it was

originally contended that NADRA required a few billion rupees to procure the equipment for verification process, but “subsequently verification process was started without procurement of the said equipment”. The minister said: “I would like to reiterate that NADRA is not a one-man organization. It comprises men and women of high calibre and honesty whose hard work and commitment have made NADRA the organization it is today. Somebody’s inclination or love for an individual should not be allowed to cloud this reality through a media trial and turn this very important issue into a political circus.” Despite all this, he said, his government had no objection to the verification process under the supervision of any institution or authority, not only in four or 40 constituencies but in every single constituency. “We are also prepared to hand over the supervision of this entire exercise to retired Justice Wajihuddin Ahmed of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf for absolute transparency”.

**Dawn - December 08, 2013**

### **Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP)**

#### **PPP to Sweep LG Polls, Says Khurshid**

Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly, Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah, has said the PPP candidates will sweep upcoming local bodies’ elections throughout Sindh because people are satisfied with the party’s performance over the years. Addressing a public meeting, Mr. Shah said that no party could compete with PPP in the province. He said that he had written a letter to the prime minister requesting him to either rehabilitate the crumbling and old structure of Sukkur barrage or replace it with a new one because the colonial-era edifice had outlived its life. He warned that if any harm came to the barrage, it would wreck havoc on 15 million acres of agricultural land and turn them into barren wasteland. Meanwhile, a PML-F leader Syed Gul Hassan Shah announced joining the PPP along with his friends on the occasion. Two more PML-F leaders joined the PPP when Mr Shah paid a visit to the residence of PML-F Sukkur president Syed Ajmal Shah Mousvi in Rohri where Mr Mousvi and general secretary of PML-F Sukkur Nadeem Qadir Bhutto joined the PPP along with associates.

**Dawn - December 02, 2013**

#### **PPP Gives PML-N Three More Months to Deliver**

Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Shah said that the Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP) is giving three months to the government to improve its performance otherwise opposition would chalk out a new strategy against it. Talking to reporters, he said the government has failed to reduce inflation and power load shedding in the county during its six-month tenure. Shah said that the government has also failed to uplift economy of the country. To a question, he said the issue of load shedding was older one and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif did nothing to resolve it in the past. The opposition leader said Imran Khan should contain price hike in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) first and then talk about Punjab. “We will have to abandon the path of clash and focus on sorting out problems and parliament is the potential platform for this purpose,” he added. He said the PPP had curtailed inflation during its tenure. He said that suspending or scrapping Pak-Iran gas pipeline project would be sheer injustice with people. He added that six months were given to the government to streamline the country’s affairs but its performance has not been good. “Therefore, we are giving three more months to the government and it should work for the betterment of people,” he added. He claimed that “more than half” of ministers did not come to the National Assembly.

Still, he added, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali talked about TA/DA of legislators. He should not claim TA/DA for attending National Assembly sessions, Shah added. The opposition leader also said that if the interior minister did not withdraw his remarks of “tamasha” he had used in a speech in the NA to describe a PTI campaign for thumb verification of voters, the opposition would devise a strategy to deal with the matter. Earlier on December 18, Nisar had used the word “tamasha” [drama] to describe a PTI campaign in and out of parliament for thumb verification of voters in four key National Assembly constituencies in Punjab, won by the PML-N in the May 11 general elections. The remark had drawn instant protests from opposition benches and a demand from Shah that the minister withdraw the word “tamasha”. Nisar had argued that ‘tamasha’ was no “unparliamentarily word”. Earlier in an interview with a private TV channel, Shah said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is holding key ministries himself and he has no time to come to the assembly. “The PML-N is pursuing dual policy on terrorism and no consultation has been made by the government with regard to National Security Policy.”

**Daily Times - December 26, 2013**

### **Pakistan Tehreek - e - Insaf (PTI)**

#### **Angry PTI, JI Workers Block Road to Protest Arrests**

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) workers blocked the Ring Road for all traffic as protest against police who they alleged had arrested six PTI activists for taking part in the sit-in against the NATO supplies. The workers blocked the road to protest the police action. They chanted slogans against police and threatened to continue the road blockade if the workers were not released. The arrested workers were later released. PTI workers stop trucks and check shipment documents to find NATO trucks. Some quarters said it was illegal and the PTI workers had no legal mandate to check trucks and stop their movement, and criticized police for not taking action. Police had lodged first information report against 40 PTI activists, according to PTI leaders, but none could be arrested. Some of the activists, including Younas Zaheer, who is in-charge of the sit-in on Ring Road, had got BBA to avoid arrest. The PTI and JI activists continued sit-ins for blockade of the NATO supplies for the seventh straight, with renewed resolve to carry on the protest against the drone strikes. Workers looked for NATO trucks on the Ring Road with usual checking of shipment documents. Two more trucks were forced to return for allegedly taking food supplies to NATO troops in Afghanistan. Women joined the protest camp to express solidarity with the protesters.

**The News - December 01, 2013**

### **Other Political Parties**

#### **JUI-F Bags Highest Number of Seats; PKMAP, NP Big Winners**

Balochistan’s election commissioner announced that the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl clinched 964 seats, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party 765, National Party 562 and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz 472 seats in the elections for local bodies held last week. “We have received results from all districts and according to final and official results, the JUI-F won 964 seats, PkMAP 765, NP 562 and PML-N 472 seats,” Syed Sultan Bayazeed said, adding that all results were compiled in a transparent manner. He said local bodies elections could not be held in three districts - Harnai, Turbat and Awaran – because of law and order situation as well as some other reasons. The provincial election commissioner said that local government elections were held

for 4,036 seats on Dec 7, including 472 seats of district councils, 772 of metropolitan, municipal corporations and municipal committees and 2,842 seats of union councils. Giving details of results of local bodies' elections in the provincial capital Quetta, he said that 21 seats out of 58 of the Metropolitan Quetta were won by independent candidates while PkMAP bagged 18 seats, PML-N 5 seats, Hazara Democratic Party 3 seats, BNP-M 3 seats, Tehreek-i-Insaf 3 seats, National Party 2 seats, Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen 1 seat, JUI-F 1 seat and JUI-N 1 seat. "Two-hundred-eighty-four candidates were elected unopposed on seats of municipal corporations and municipal committees while 2,120 candidates were elected unopposed on union councils' seats in different districts," he said. He said that local bodies' elections were yet to be held on 34 vacant seats of municipal corporations and municipal committees and 511 seats of union councils. He said that election for mayor, deputy mayor, chairman and vice chairman would be held after elections were held for seats reserved for minorities, women, labors and peasants. "Thirty-three per cent seats of the total seats in all local bodies' institutions have been reserved for women and five per cent each for farmers, laborers and minorities, respectively," Mr. Bayazeed said, adding that councilors to be elected on reserved seats would be eligible to vote for mayor, deputy mayor, chairman and vice chairman. He said 2,330 seats were reserved for women and 744 each for farmers, laborers and minorities.

Dawn - December 15, 2013

### By-Elections & Local Government Elections 2013

#### LB Polls Ordinance for Islamabad May Come Anytime

A law providing for the first-ever local elections in the federal capital is ready to be promulgated anytime through a presidential ordinance. The federal government has sent the draft law to the presidency for issuance of an ordinance. The law will apply to the urban areas of Islamabad. Local elections are already held in its rural areas under the 1979 ordinance. A stark dichotomy is being dispensed with. People of Islamabad will get representation in running the affairs of the federal capital for the first time. Successive governments have effectively dismissed calls for local polls in Islamabad for their flawed reasons while there have been consistent demands from the general public. It is yet not clear when local elections will be held in the Islamabad city after the promulgation of the relevant law, when both the provincial governments are reluctant to organize such polls on the new dates despite their repeated solemn commitments to the Supreme Court to go for the exercise without further delay. Since the elections elsewhere are being further deferred for an indefinite period, the polls in Islamabad are likely to be held along with others whenever they will be organized. The interior ministry has approved the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Local Government Act 2013 for enactment.

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan says the government is committed to holding local elections in the ICT and the rural-urban divide will end in this area in these polls. He saw a metropolitan cooperation for Islamabad as a viable option. The scope of the ICT Local Government Ordinance 1979, which is currently applicable in Islamabad, is limited only to its rural areas. While hearing a case on July 17 this year, the apex court asked the ICT administration to ensure that local elections are held in both urban and rural areas. It was later told that an amendment was required to arrange polls in urban Islamabad. In October 2012, the Islamabad High Court ordered the government to hold local elections within six months. The deadline passed in April, but polls were not organized. The court noted that local governments allow people at grassroots level to resolve their own problems. The interior minister has directed the ICT administration and Capital Development Authority (CDA) to initiate necessary paperwork and formulate proposals for local elections in the federal capital.

The functions currently being performed by the CDA directorates of municipal administration, sanitation, water supply, parks and health services would fall under the purview of the proposed local government. Similarly, the federal directorate of education, ICT's local government department and premier medical facilities including Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences and Federal Government Services Hospital will be given to representatives of the local government. Like the provinces, the local elections in the federal capital will also be held on party-basis. Of the two National Assembly seats from Islamabad, one each was won by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in May parliamentary polls. If they continue to enjoy this popularity, the main contest in the local polls will also be between the two.

**The News - December 01, 2013**

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### **Sindh Finally Gives Way To Jan 18 LG Polls**

After much dilly dallying, the Sindh government has finally, albeit unwillingly, bowed to the election commission's demand to stage local government (LG) polls on January 18. The Sindh cabinet members on December 9 had unanimously decided in a meeting to hold local bodies' elections in the province in March instead of January, claiming "reasonable" time was needed to make necessary arrangements for the process. A day later, the Sindh chief minister, in a meeting with the UK high commissioner, claimed the main reason the provincial authorities were asking for more time because it didn't want to disturb the ongoing targeted operations against criminals in Karachi. The crackdowns would be affected as the law enforcers would be assigned on security duties for polling, Qaim Ali Shah had reasoned. But after much bickering, the Sindh government conceded to the demands of the election authorities instead of further dragging on its proposal to stage the polls in March next year. Sharjeel Memon, the Sindh information and LG minister, said the government was ready to hold the upcoming local bodies' polls in the province on the given date, as the provincial administration did not want to get involved in another controversy with the state institutions.

Talking to the media at the Chief Minister House after a meeting of the ministerial committee which was formed to chalk out the election schedule, Memon said it was the first time that the LG elections were being staged on the basis of political parties and the provincial government was doing its best to hold the polls successfully. The Sindh government wanted to organize the elections in March to give the prospective candidates ample time to prepare for the polling process. But the election commission was not willing to extend the date any further beyond January. The government did not want to get into a controversy on the issue with any of the state institutions and would do its best to make all the necessary arrangements in the limited time. The minister said the provincial government would use all its authority to ensure that the upcoming polls were conducted in a transparent manner. "We would utilize all resources at our disposal to establish credibility and fairness of the local governments." To a question, he replied the election commission was responsible for correctly mention the names of the prospective voters in the electoral rolls in accordance with their respective residences. The commission is also responsible for providing magnetic inkpads to the election staff to ensure credibility and transparency in the voting process. The election commission would now issue the schedule for holding the local bodies' polls in the province on December 18. The schedule had been delayed repeatedly due to the incomplete arrangements by the Sindh government.

**The News - December 14, 2013**

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## Balochistan LG Polls: Independent Candidates Establish Clear Lead

Balochistan took the pole position in holding local government (LG) elections. Defying all threats and fears, people turned out in large numbers to exercise their right to vote in 3,500 of the total 4,168 constituencies. And according to unofficial results, independent candidates won the largest number of seats followed by component parties in the ruling coalition in the province. By and large, the electoral process was peaceful and the turnout was over 40%. The participation of people in Quetta and northern districts of the province, where ethnic Pashtuns are in majority, was unprecedented. Conversely, the turnout in the Baloch-dominated areas, including Khuzdar, Kalat, Gwadar, Kech, Panjgur, Washuk, Chagai, Naushki, Dera Bugti and Kohlu was low. The low turnout was partly attributed to a shutter-down and wheel-jam strike called by Baloch separatist groups. The provincial election commissioner, Sultan Bayazeed, claimed the election was 99% successful. Barring some complaints, the elections were held in a free, fair and transparent manner, he added. Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch claimed some of the credit for holding LG polls in a peaceful manner, while acknowledging the role of the security agencies and the voters at large.

Of the total 1,680 seats of Metropolitan Corporation, municipal corporations, municipal committees and district councils, unofficial results of nearly 1,000 constituencies were announced at the end of the polling. The unofficial results showed that the biggest share of the pie went to independent candidates who clinched nearly 500 seats. The National Party (NP), to which Chief Minister Dr Malik belongs, won 130 seats, followed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) with 102, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) 72 and Pashtunkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), 69 seats. Around 113 seats went to other political parties, including Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M), Balochistan National Party-Awami (BNP-A), Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), JUI-Ideology, Hazara Democratic Party (HDP) and Awami National Party (ANP). Officially, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will notify the winners on December 10 while re-election will take place within 30 days in over 600 constituencies where elections were not held.

In the provincial capital, the PkMAP took the lead by bagging 19 out of the total 57 seats of the Metropolitan Corporation Quetta followed by the PML-N with 13 seats. Similarly, independent candidates' clinched 14 seats followed by the HDP and NP with four each, BNP-M with three, and JUI-F and JUI-I two each. "The Quetta mayor is likely to be elected from the PkMAP," the party's spokesperson, Usman Kakar said. Most of the ruling NP candidates were elected in rural Balochistan, including Kech, Mastung, Kalat, Awaran and Khuzdar districts. The 10-party electoral alliance comprising BNP-M, JUI-F, ANP, JUI-I, HDP and Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) could not secure enough seats in the south and southwest of the province. Overall, the NP won 49 seats in municipal corporations, followed by the JUI-F with 12 seats, BNP-M, 11, PkMAP eight and independents six. In municipal committees, 301 independent candidates were unofficially declared winner, followed by the PML-N with 52 seats, NP, 51, JUI-F, 52, and PkMAP with 50 seats, while 54 constituencies were claimed by the 10-party alliance. In district councils, independent candidates won 151 seats, followed by PML-N with 52 seats, NP 48, JUI-F 35, PkMAP 30, BNP-M 10 and 45 seats went to local parties.

Provincial Election Commissioner Sultan Bayazeed admitted that he did receive some complaints about missing symbols and flaws in the electoral lists. Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch said his government and its coalition partners deserved the credit for holding 'timely' LG elections in a transparent and peaceful environment. The Chief Minister's Secretariat said that by conducting the polls, government had proved that it was committed to transferring power to the grass roots. Dr Malik admitted, however, that the security situation in his home district of Kech was still alarming. "The government is still facing serious problems in Kech, Awaran and

Tump due to the worsening law and order,” he said. Eleven councilors belonging to his party have been kidnapped in Kech district. Dr Malik stressed that strengthening democracy was the best way to restoring peace in Balochistan, and the LG elections would help restore normalcy in the volatile province.

**The Express Tribune - December 08, 2013**

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### **A Longer Wait: LG Polls May Face Further Delay as ANP Goes to Court**

Local government (LG) polls in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) were expected to be held in March. They may face further delay as the Awami National Party (ANP) looks to challenge some clauses of the LG act in court. Opposition parties had opposed two clauses in the K-P Local Government Act 2013. One was the abolishment of union councils and creation of village and neighborhood councils instead, while the other clause referred to non-party based elections. The LG elections that were promised to be held in the first three months of the new government could now be postponed even further than March. ANP parliamentary leader, Sardar Hussain Babak told The Express Tribune that his party had prepared a writ petition to challenge the LG act in Peshawar High Court (PHC). “It is a matter of days before we go to court against some of the LG act’s clauses. He said they wanted the decision of replacing union councils and holding non-party based elections to be reverted. Babak claimed that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP), Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) also had their reservations about the law, which the government had tried to brush under the carpet.

When asked whether legal wrangling may further delay the elections, Babak shifted the blame on to the K-P government, saying they had ignored the opposition’s view on the matter. He claimed non-party based elections were aimed at weakening political forces at the grassroots level. K-P Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Inayatullah Khan told that LG polls were likely to be held in March-April. He said the dates were still tentative because PTI has to further discuss the LG draft with its coalition partners. To a question about legal wrangling over some clauses of the law, Inayat said if that happens, ANP would be responsible for the delay in polls. “125 out of the 127 clauses were passed unanimously, while the two contentious clauses were put to a voice vote before being passed,” Inayat added. The minister has previously justified the government’s stance by saying they want to devolve power to the grass roots for the welfare and development of K-P.

**The Express Tribune - December 12, 2013**

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### **Sindh Government Not Willing to Budge on Demand for Polls in March**

The current impasse over the date of the local government elections are nowhere near over as the Sindh government has decided to use “legal and constitutional means” to postpone the elections till March. This course of action was revealed in reaction to the Election Commission of Pakistan’s likely rejection of the provincial government’s proposal to change the date of the elections from January 18, 2014. “We will proceed according to the options available to us under the law and Constitution and hopefully, we’ll be successful,” Sindh minister for information and local government, Sharjeel Memon. Another Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP) leader, Sharmila Farooqi, said that the only option left was to approach the court. “The election commission is supposed to settle the date through consultations with the provinces.” Farooqi said that they don’t want elections taking place in haste and want them to be free and fair. “Complaints are being received about the [local government] elections in Balochistan. We don’t want the same scenario.” The Awami National Party (ANP) sided with PPP on the issue, saying that the party

does not want the elections to be held in haste. "We have no issues if the polls are held in March. The process of delimitation and finalizing voter lists has yet to be completed," said ANP's Bashir Jan. "The boundaries of constituencies have not been decided and candidates have yet to be announced. How can the elections be held in January?"

### **Not In Haste, Not Too Late**

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) was, however, in favor of holding the elections as soon as possible. "The local bodies system is the foundation of a democratic government and we demand the polls are held at the earliest," said Rabita Committee member Aminul Haque. According to Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Ameer, Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, the provincial government did not seem interested in devolution of powers. "The PPP appears very interested in sharing powers with the MQM through a deal," he said, adding that the JI has a major mandate in the city, as people have elected their leadership to run the city district government three times in the past. "If the PPP continues to create impediments, the JI will approach the courts to develop a process that ensures transparent mechanism for the polls." Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's MPA Khurram Sher Zaman said that they were prepared for the elections even if held in January. He, however, shared concerns over whether the government was prepared. "We don't want the government to use the early date as an excuse for holding haphazard elections. We want them to be prepared so that issues of rigging and voter verification do not arise."

**The Express Tribune - December 12, 2013**

### **Re-Polling In 22 Constituencies of PK-81 Ordered**

Election Tribunal (ET) Peshawar, while suspending the victory of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate Azizullah Giran in the constituency of PK-81, has announced to re-conduct the polls in 22 polling stations. Suspended MPA Azizullah Giran has announced to challenge the decision in the Supreme Court (SC), while workers of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and Awami National Party (ANP) have expressed joy over the decision. Azizullah Giran of PTI was declared winner with 13,045 votes from PK-81 (Swat) in general elections of May 2013. In the said constituency Habib Ali Shah of JUI-F stood second with 11,635 votes, while Sher Shah Khan of ANP secured third position. JUI-F's nominated candidate Habib Ali Shah alleged that rigging has been done in some polling stations and challenged the victory of PTI's candidate in ET Peshawar. While deciding the petition of JUI-F's candidate, the tribunal announced to re-conduct the polls on 22 polling stations of the constituency. JUI-F and ANP workers have said that PTI has failed in fulfilling its promises and people are reminding the previous era due to bad performance of government.

**Daily Times - December 21, 2013**

### **Dual Nationals Barred From Contesting LB Polls**

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued the code of conduct for the local bodies' elections in the Punjab and according to it, dual nationality holders will not be able to contest the polls, the expenditure limit was fixed at Rs. 200,000 and there would be a complete ban on public meetings and rallies. The ECP established 143 appellate authorities in the province for timely disposal of appeals regarding acceptance and rejection of nomination papers for the LB polls to be held on January 30, 2014. This information was shared by provincial Election Commissioner (PEC), Punjab, Mehboob Anwar, during a press briefing held here at the ECP's

provincial office. The PEC further said that the province had one metropolitan corporation, 11 municipal corporations, 35 district councils, 172 municipal committees and 4,028 union councils for local government elections 2013-14. The PEC said that for each constituency, exclusive ballot papers would be printed with names and symbols of the candidates on them. It was also revealed that the printing of ballot papers would commence after the issuance of final list of "contesting candidates" by the returning officers. He said there were 36 district returning officers, 691 returning officers, 707 assistant returning officers for the conduct of the LB polls in Punjab. "There are 143 appellate authorities established in the province for timely disposal of appeals regarding acceptance and rejection of nomination papers," he added. He said that a candidate who had submitted the candidature fee during the election schedule issued earlier was not required to submit the fee again. Moreover, he said, the ECP had fixed the security fees from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 20,000 for candidates while the total budget for campaigning would not exceed Rs. 200,000. Talking about the ECP's code of conduct for the LB polls, the PEC said that display of arms and gunshots would not be allowed during the campaigning process. The PEC said the advertisement banner would be of 3x9 ft size while the hoarding would be of 3x5 ft that candidates could utilize during their election campaign. He said the code of conduct would be implemented in letter and spirit and any candidate violating the same could face disqualification.

The News - December 21, 2013

### **ECP Issues Code of Conduct for Local Government Polls**

In what came as a surprise for many, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has excluded the president from the list of public office-holders barred from directly or indirectly running the election campaign of any candidate for the local government polls. During the recent general elections all public office-holders, including the president, were barred from taking part in the campaign of any candidate. Under the code of conduct for the coming LG polls, the prime minister, chairman and deputy chairman of the Senate, speakers, deputy speakers and members of national and provincial assemblies, federal ministers, ministers of state, provincial governors, chief ministers and ministers and advisers to the PM have been told not to take part in campaigning. Under Section 31 of the code, public meetings and processions will not be permissible and the candidates will only be allowed to hold corner meetings after providing prior information to the local administration so that they could make security arrangements.

Section 26 places a bar on display and carrying of weapons in public gatherings, meetings and rallies and on the polling day. "This ban will continue for 24 hours after compilation of final results by returning officers." The code also prohibits aerial firing, fireworks and use of any explosive material at or around public gatherings and polling stations. Wall-chalking in all forms will be banned during the election campaign. Use of loudspeaker will be allowed for election rallies. It asks political parties, candidates and supporters not to oppose participation of anybody in the polls on the basis of gender, race, religion or caste. The candidates and their supporters will also have to avoid speeches which provoke regional or sectarian sentiments or have the potential to give birth to conflicts among genders, sects, linguistic groups and different segments of society. The code seeks to limit criticism against political parties and opponent candidates to their policies, programmes and past record and their work, and avoiding criticism of leaders of other political parties and workers with respect to their personal life, which has nothing to do with their public activities. It also restrains criticism based on unverified allegations and distortion of facts.

Dawn - December 24, 2013

## JI, PTI to Contest LG Polls under One Banner

Given the sway a party could have at national scene and abroad by dominating Karachi's local government, various groups and political parties are in talks to form alliances just before nomination papers are issued for the LG elections in the province scheduled for next month. While there are several other parties believed to be preparing for electoral deals, the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf, which rule the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province as coalition partners, have 'in principle' decided to contest polls under one banner.

"Our party and PTI have almost sorted out all issues and decided to contest the coming LG election in Karachi under one banner," said Dr Mairajul Huda Siddiqui, JI Sindh chief. He said the alliance could get bigger if more parties or groups, which 'believe in the construction of Karachi', came forth and joined them. "We'll welcome other parties and groups as well to join our alliance provided they believe in making Karachi a peaceful and progressive city," he said citing the possibility of more right-wing parties joining the loop, which might include the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. Both the JI and the PTI are harsh critics of the city's dominant party - the Muttahida Qaumi Movement - and the Pakistan Peoples' Party, which rules Sindh but is hardly a distant second force in the provincial capital. Interestingly, the PTI stayed away from joining the MQM, PML-F and PML-N lately in requisitioning the Sindh Assembly's session, which lasted for a day but plenty of hullabaloo by opposition failed to stop the PPP from getting passed the two recent amendments to the controversial LG act. JI has no representation in the provincial legislature. Yet, it has experience of ruling the city twice in 1980s and once during 2001-5, a skill matched only by the MQM. When Dr Siddiqui said most of the issues had been sorted out, a PTI leader said the most critical issue, which was yet to be resolved was to decide the joint symbol of the alliance. "There are certain issues to be sorted out as yet," said Syed Hafeezuddin, a provincial legislator and PTI Sindh's secretary general.

"The most critical of all is to decide what symbol the two parties will use to contest election under one banner," he added. Mr. Hafeezuddin was confident that the alliance was on the cards anyway, but his party had contacts with other parties as well. "We have coalition with the JI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but the issues of Karachi are altogether different. We are going to have a different ballgame here and what we can't sacrifice is our election symbol - the cricket bat." He said since the JI had a history of contesting polls on different election symbols by joining alliances from time to time, it might not be a difficult experience for its voters to vote for a PTI symbol.

"The difficulty for us is that our voters want to cast their votes for the cricket bat, which is crucial. We believe to repeat even better performance than we did in the May general elections," he said. He, however, agreed with the JI's stance that they wanted to get all the 'positive forces' under one umbrella. Asked whether the PPP and the MQM qualified among those forces, his prompt response was a harsher 'no' specifically for the MQM.

Dawn - December 23, 2013

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## 3,500 Get Nomination Forms on First Day

Though it was the first day of issuance of nomination papers for the upcoming local government elections and a holiday-like day because of Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain yet thousands of candidates belonging to different political parties and independent panels congregated at the offices of the deputy commissioners of the city's six districts to get hold of candidature forms. At the outset, the day gave an aura of nonchalant approach from political parties and groups, which are otherwise anxious to dominate the commercial hub of the country, with fewer individuals

and groups showed up, however, as the day passed by their numbers snowballed. Karachi Commissioner Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui said the issuance of nomination forms had kick-started the election process, which would be continuing irrespective of weekly holidays, etc. District administrations confirmed of issuing more than 3,500 forms to the individuals belonging to various political parties including the city's dominant force - the Muttahida Qaumi Movement.

Other influential parties included the Pakistan Peoples' Party, which rules the province, Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf, Jamaat-i-Islami and Nawaz, Functional and Quaid-i-Azam factions of the Pakistan Muslim League, etc. Given the number of seats for the taking, the issuance of nomination papers on the first day was taken as not an impressive showing; however, the parties' leaderships said the coming days would show greater passion and eventfulness as Chehlum processions, blockade of cell phone networks and high security alert allowed little scope to political activism gathering pace. The deputy commissioners - who are also the district returning officers (DROs) - will start receiving nomination papers from candidates and the process would continue till late night like clockwork. All major parties are finding engaged in a huge exercise. They have stretched their tentacles to the limit for multitasking; such as finalizing candidates, covering candidates and formation of panels for each UC, and mulling over the deals with each other to derive most from the city's goldmine.

Since dominating Karachi enables a party to muster influence at the national level and abroad, the political parties have decided to field their best in the upcoming polls. The MQM had fielded many of its frontline leaders and parliamentarians to contest LG elections last month before the election schedule was cancelled and the date for polling changed to Jan 18 from earlier Nov 27. Sources said the MQM, PPP and JI would stick to the policy to pit their top men and women in the elections. The JI and the PTI which performed reasonably well in the May general elections have decided to contest the elections under one banner. "It is going to be a very interesting contest in Karachi and it also proves that how important and influential has become to be a member of a local council," said a senior official having close liaison with the people at the helm.

Meanwhile, Local Government Director, Karachi Rubina Asif asked all the DROs to ensure that all polling stations were duly inspected to check availability of facilities like drinking water and proper working washrooms. Besides, she asked for proper orientation of the returning officers and assistant returning officers, transportation plan, facilitation of people during nomination filing process, strict observance of date and time conveyed by the election commission for election process and sharing of the polling plan with the police and paramilitary Rangers for effective security measures. The DROs have been asked to make polling material available at polling stations and its proper distribution well before time, issue 'strict' instructions to polling staff for impartiality and form committees for monitoring of the entire process. The city offers a huge contest on its 268 union committees (UCs) - each UC comprising nine seats with six on general councilors and one each reserved for women, peasant/worker and religious minorities. Thus, out of 2,412 seats, 1,608 are there for general members and 804 for women, workers and religious minorities.

Dawn - December 25, 2013

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### **Ceiling for Candidates' Poll Expenses Fixed in Sindh**

The ceiling for election expenses of candidates for union councils, union committees, town committees and municipal committees in the coming local government elections in Sindh has been fixed at Rs. 50,000. The limit will be Rs. 100,000 in case of candidates for district councils and district municipal corporations. Under the updated local government rules provided by the Sindh government to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), it has been made mandatory

for candidates to confirm, through a bill stating the particulars and a receipt, any payment made in respect of election expenses except where the amount is less than Rs. 200. Every candidate will be required to submit to the returning officer details of election expenses within 30 days after notification of the returned candidate, along with an affidavit. The nomination papers will not be accepted unless a non-refundable candidature fee in cash or a bank draft in favor of the ECP is paid by or on behalf of the candidate. The candidature fee will be Rs. 2,000 for union councils, union committees and town committees, Rs. 3,000 for municipal committees and Rs. 5,000 for district councils and corporations.

Elections to the reserved seats for women, peasants, laborers and non-Muslims members in a council other than union councils or committees will be elected through proportional representation system of political parties by providing lists of candidates to the district returning officer on the basis of total number of general seats won by each political party in a council. The total number of seats will include independent returned candidates who join a political party within three days of publication of the returned candidates in the official gazette. Under the rules, an election petition can be filed within 60 days of the publication in official gazette, the names of the returned candidate, with a receipt showing deposit of Rs. 2,000 in a scheduled bank in favor of the ECP. Each election tribunal to be appointed by the ECP will consist of a person who is or has been a district and session's judge and additional district and session's judge. The tribunal after disposing of an election petition will retain record for a period of five years from the date of its receipt and will destroy it after that subject to the directions of the ECP. The vacant seat of mayor, deputy mayor, chairman or vice chairman as the case may be, will be filled by holding election within three months from the date of vacancy.

**Dawn - December 25, 2013**

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### **The Devil Is In the Detail: Minister Spells Out Rules For Impending LG Polls**

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) local government (LG) department has spelt out rules for the upcoming LG elections; rules aimed at holding the polls in a "free and fair environment". Minister for Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Inayatullah Khan told that delimitation in the province is expected to be completed by January 15, 2014. The district government completed delimitation of Peshawar's union and village councils earlier in December.

Recommendations have been made to relevant departments and their officials to cooperate with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), shared the minister. Inayatullah explained the K-P government has proposed rules and regulations for candidates contesting polls. "Candidates for village and neighborhood council can spend up to Rs. 50,000 while district and town candidates can spend Rs. 200,000," he said while referring to the bar on spending for election campaigns. According to the K-P government's LG regulations, "it's necessary that candidates contesting on the union council level have not defaulted more than Rs. 2,000 in utility dues, including WAPDA and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited, at the time of submitting their nomination papers." The proposed rules further reveal that government machinery and political parties will not be allowed to influence the election staff. "The ECP will have the power to dismiss those government employees, including officials of law enforcement agencies, who are found harassing or blackmailing ECP staff," the minister added. He said the ECP will appoint district returning officers (DROs), and returning officers (ROs) for town, neighborhood and village councils. Appointment of staff for the polling stations will be conducted by ROs, and the list of details will be later sent by them to DROs for approval. Responding to a query, the minister said elections will be held simultaneously across the province. However, if there are some unexpected reasons for not organizing elections in some parts of the province – those will

be held later. Interestingly, if a contest between two candidates is drawn, the RO will decide the contest on a coin toss.

“For reserved seats, political parties will give names for various seats at the initial stage,” Inayatullah added. The proposer and seconder of a candidate can only be from his or her constituency. The proposer and seconder will need to submit an affidavit proving his/her families have not defaulted Rs50,000 or more in any financial transaction with banks. Their families should not have been bankrupt in the previous 12 months. Similarly, district and town candidates will pay a fee of Rs. 3,000 with their nomination papers. Village and neighborhood council candidates will pay Rs. 1,000. According to Inayatullah, white ballot papers will be specified for general seats at the village and neighborhood council levels, pink for seats contested by women, light green for laborers, brown for non-Muslims, and yellow for seats contested by the youth. Similarly, light grey ballot papers will be used for general seats at the tehsil and town levels, orange for general seats at the district level. Symbols will be allotted to candidates for district and town polls when they prove their political affiliation during submission of their nomination papers. The ECP has allotted 56 more election symbols apart from 149 already given, including bananas, crocodile, duck, a purse, toothbrush, melon, and a turtle.

**The Express Tribune - December 25, 2013**

### **Tri-Party: 3 Opposition Parties Join Hands for Electoral Cooperation**

Three opposition parties in the K-P Assembly have formed an alliance for the upcoming local government (LG) elections in the province. A tri-party meeting of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), Awami National Party (ANP) and Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP) was held. Party leaders agreed on an alliance for LG polls expected to be held in March or April. The meeting also formed a 15-member committee; five members each from the three parties will form the committee to finalize matters related to the ‘coalition’. JUI-F district president Ameer Qari Rafiq Shah, secretary information Abdul Jalil Jan, Senator Ghulam Ali; PPP’s Sayed Zahir Ali Shah, Zulfqar Afghani; and ANP’s Ghulam Mustafa were in attendance. Jan will act as the committee’s communication secretary. The leaders have decided to field joint candidates for LG elections for village, neighborhood, town and tehsil councils. The committee is scheduled to meet on January 2.

**The Express Tribune - December 25, 2013**

### **LB Polls: Civil Society Asks ECP to Issue Gender Disaggregated Data**

To add to the hype surrounding local bodies (LB) elections, non-government organization and human rights groups have urged the election commission to prepare and release gender disaggregated data. Addressed to the Prime Minister, Senate chairman and chief ministers, the letter demands categorized data to strengthen democratic culture. Spearheaded and endorsed by over a dozen organizations, including the Women Parliamentary Caucus, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Aurat Foundation and Democracy Reporting Institute, the appeal calls for classification of voter turnout on gender basis in much the same vein as the Senate Special Committee on Election issues in 2012. “Gender disaggregated data on voter turnout increases transparency of the electoral process and enhances trust in election results,” it states, adding that availability of data is helpful in determining whether women were able to fully exercise their right to franchise. It can also be crucial in assessing barriers to the effective political participation of women. This requirement is in line with international treaty commitments, as

detailed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), of which Pakistan is also a signatory. Unfortunately, provincial laws and election rules do not comply with the standard set by ECP, lamented the letter; besides, there is no data on gender disaggregation of voter turnout during the upcoming local government elections. The letter urges the government to ratify this issue with a simple amendment to local government laws, or even the local government (conduct of election) rules, which determine the polling forms. It has been suggested that the forms could easily provide polling officials a slot to record the number of women who vote at each polling station, similar to the one used in general elections. The letter also urges the federal and provincial governments that law and regulations should be introduced which necessitate the availability of data immediately after elections.

**The Express Tribune - December 25, 2013**

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## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

### Human Rights Related Issues

#### Ulema of Different Sects Devise Code for Harmony

Ulema of different schools of thought have unanimously agreed on a nine-point code of conduct (COC) to maintain sectarian harmony. They signed the code after a detailed deliberation at a meeting presided over by Punjab Auqaf and Religious Affairs Minister Atta Maneka. The meeting lasted about five hours. "The three sects - Barelvi, Ahl-i-Hadith and Ahl-i-Tasheeh - were represented by Mufti Intikhab Noori, Dr Abdul Ghafoor Rashid and Haidar Ali Mirza, respectively. Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Asharfi said he had presented a 15-point code in the Islamic Ideology Council some time ago and placed the same in the meeting arranged by the Auqaf department. The participants accepted nine of the 15 points. The main points are:

1. The clerics, scholars and Zakirs would refrain from saying anything derogatory about Khulfa-i-Rashideen (Caliphs). The clerics/scholars from any sect will neither declare anyone Kafir nor term anyone liable to be killed.
2. There will be a complete ban on use of loudspeakers, except for Azaan and religious sermons in Arabic language. None of the sects shall make hate speeches or remarks, raise slogans or publish hate material in the form of handbills, books, pamphlets, etc, or press releases. They will also desist from wall-chalking directly or indirectly against each other.
3. All sects will hold joint public gatherings to promote inter-sect harmony, cooperation, unity and love. The clerics/scholars of all sects will give due respect to each other and present their problems at an appropriate forum, instead of reacting emotionally, directly or indirectly. Display of arms will not be allowed.
4. All sects will be duty bound to protect the rights of non-Muslim minorities and safeguard their places of worship. They will follow and implement the COC in its letter and spirit.
5. Allama Asharfi said the meeting had agreed to devise a monitoring mechanism to fully enforce the COC. The forum will take action against violation of the code.

He said the participants had also agreed to convert the COC into a proper legislation after involving all stakeholders in the process. A bill in this regard will be tabled in parliament. All sects would be legally bound to follow it. In reply to a question about taking all religious parties into confidence on the COC, he said the country's seasoned clerics had already signed a similar code a few years ago and the Pakistan Ulema Council, in collaboration with the Auqaf department, finalized arrangements to hold a national conference of clerics of all sects and leaders of religious parties.

**Dawn – December 03, 2013**

#### Religious Leaders for Implementation of Code of Conduct

A grand conference of 32 religious groups and political parties under the umbrella of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) demanded the government implement the recently prepared code of

conduct and make it a formal law to curb sectarian violence in the country. The 'Istehkam-e-Pakistan Conference' was attended by PUC Chairman Maulana Tahir Asharfi, Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General and Milli Yakjehti Council Secretary General Liaquat Baloch, Jamaatud Dawa leader Amir Hamza, Sunni Ittehad Council Chairman Syed Mahfooz Mashhadi, PPP's Naveed Chaudhry, Shia Ulema Council Vice President Hafiz Raza Naqvi, Mujeebur Rehman Inqlabi from Jamia Ashrafia and other scholars. Addressing the conference, Maulana Tahir Asharfi said that participants of the conference have announced their support for the prescribed code of conduct and pledged to abide by these regulations. He said they would also present a resolution for the arrest of killers of innocents and implementation of the code of conduct across the country. Presenting the joint statement, Ashrafi announced that they would organize conferences in all provinces of the country to establish peace and harmony in Pakistan.

The conference decided that Sunni Ittehad Council leader Mahfooz Mashhadi would help table the bill of code of conduct in the Punjab Assembly. Liaquat Baloch said that "today our mosques and imambargahs are target of sectarian violence and we must unmask the faces behind this evil design". He said the code of conduct could ensure religious peace in the country. He also demanded implementation of the capital punishment to make such criminals an example for terrorists. PPP's Naveed Chaudhry said it was right time to bring the resolution and PPP would completely support this step to ensure peace in the country. The speakers called for immediate arrest of those responsible for the Rawalpindi incident and murder of Maulana Deedar Hussain Jalbani, Maulana Shamsur Rehman and other scholars. They further demanded that the government take steps for the execution of the prescribed code of conduct. They pledged that they would hold meetings with all political, religious members along with members of parliament and launch a campaign across the country to execute the prescribed code of conduct. They also announced to pass resolutions against the Rawalpindi incident and killings in Karachi and for implementation of the prescribed code of conduct. The conference also decided to make a committee under the name of 'Tahafuz Namoos Sahaba wa Ahlebait Action Committee' to bring the prescribed code of conduct into action.

Daily Times - December 12, 2013

### **Pakistan Wins Prestigious International HR Award**

Aahung, a Karachi-based non-governmental organization, was recently awarded the Human Rights Tulip Award by the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs, Frans Timmermans, says a press release. The award was presented to Director Aahung Sheena Hadi by the minister in The Hague. Dutch embassies, national & international NGOs and public organizations nominated candidates for this award. Three finalists were chosen by the public through a vote and three finalists received a wild card from the Hague Institute for Internationalization of Law, the implementing organization. A jury consisting of academics, professionals and government officials evaluated the six finalists for the award. The Dutch minister of Foreign Affairs selected Aahung as the 6th official recipient of the annual award.

'Awarding the Human Rights Tulip is not only about looking back but also - mainly - about looking ahead to the future,' Timmermans says. "How can we support the winner in the good work she and her organization are doing? Aahung's positive agenda is precisely what can make the difference for more and more young people in Pakistan. We want to support their work," he added. The Human Rights Tulip Award is presented each year to a global human rights defender or organization for the promotion and protection of human rights through the use of innovation. The award allows individuals and organizations to win global recognition and support to further develop and scale up their innovation. Recipients of the award in the past have included

individuals who have worked on human rights issues related to violence against women in armed conflict zones in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, inhumane execution method in Iran, protection of the rights of relatives of individuals who have disappeared in Honduras, and legal rights in China.

Aahung was nominated for its role in advancing reproductive health and rights at a national level through the use of innovative strategies which have overcome barriers to promoting public awareness on critical topics of reproductive health such as gender equality, violence, maternal health, and infection prevention. Through its efforts, Aahung has significantly increased public access to quality information and services for reproductive health and rights by developing long-term, sustainable partnerships with organizations and institutions providing education and medical services. Aahung's programmes include educational interventions which work towards equipping young people with essential life skills to support their capacity to make healthy and informed decisions regarding their health. Recently, Aahung has initiated programmes with children as young as age 4 with an aim to promote body protection and prevent abuse. Along with training teachers to implement school-based programme, Aahung also focuses on strengthening the delivery of quality reproductive healthcare in Pakistan by improving the information and skills of medical professionals and ensuring that pre-service medical students are better prepared to manage the reproductive health needs of the local population. Aahung also continues to work on enhancing community outreach by working with the field staff of community based organizations (CBOs).

The News - December 12, 2013

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### **Use of Technology Urged To Increase Resilience of Disaster-Prone Communities**

Speakers at the launching of World Disasters Report 2013 highlighted the use of technology in increasing resilience of disaster-prone communities. The World Disasters Report was jointly launched by Pakistan Red Crescent Society and (PRCS) International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Addressing at the occasion, member of the PRCS managing body Mian Muhammad Javed, who was the chief guest, said the report has served to remind us of the vital role technology plays in so many aspects of humanitarian work.

PRCS supports the notion that the government and other humanitarian agencies must fully commit to and invest in developing the tools, policies and strategies to improve dialogue with disaster-affected communities; however, such humanitarian technology and use of information must remain ethical and focused on principles of humanity and humanitarian imperative. PRCS Secretary General Dr. Mahboob Sardar said the report examines the potential of technology to improve humanitarian operations and increase people's resilience to disasters. It also looks at the risks and unintended consequences of this influx of technology and provides recommendations on how to maximize opportunities while minimizing risks. PRCS, being the leading humanitarian organization of the country, has already equipped itself with Mobile SMS Service, Radio Wireless Communication System, Email Service, SAP system and a user-friendly website. Other projects in pipeline are Video Conferencing and Disaster Data Bank. Sardar said, PRCS welcomes any technological advancement in humanitarian service that can help mitigate the sufferings of the vulnerable and bring more transparency and accountability. "What matters is not technology, but how we use it," he added. The report also highlights the use of technologies such as mobile phones, social media, satellite imagery and web that are creating new ways for disaster-affected communities to organize, coordinate and respond to their own problems, and enabling people-centered humanitarian action.

IFRC Head of Pakistan Delegation Karen Bjornestad said, “The report tells us that technology is proving to be a tool of empowerment for such communities. In addition, it alerts us to the fact that the evolution of technology is faster than the humanitarian sector’s ability to deliver and we, as humanitarians, need to keep up. At the same time however, we are reminded to strike a balance between updating ourselves on technology just for the sake of doing so and applying it thoughtfully so that our ability as humanitarians to reach out to vulnerable communities is truly enhanced.” The report raises awareness of the importance of ethical application and use of technology in the humanitarian sector. Others who spoke on the occasion include Brigadier Kamran Zia, member operations, National Disaster Management Authority, and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Timo Pakkala.

**The News - December 12, 2013**

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**GENDER WATCH****Violence against Women****HEC Urged To Control Cybercrime against Women**

Speakers at a panel discussion urged the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to come up with a policy to control increasing trend of cybercrime against women in the higher education institutions suggesting to make cyber harassment a part of the Harassment Act. To highlight violence faced by women especially young girls due to negative use of social media, Gender Equity Program (GEP) of Aurat Foundation supported by USAID organized the discussion titled 'Social Media: New Dimension of Violence against Women'. The event was organized to commemorate 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. A large number of students from public and private universities participated in the discussion. The participants were of the opinion that increasing trend of cybercrime against women immeasurably hurt young girls who face subsequent loss of personal freedom, mobility, recreation and most importantly educational and employment opportunities. It was revealed that a large number of girls and women are victims of this kind of violence which includes harassment via email, cyber stalking, exploitation, tampering, cyber pornography, defamation, morphing, visual surveillance and tracking. Director Institute of Gender Studies, University of Sindh, Dr Misbah, urged HEC to issue directives to the university administrations for the control of rising trend of cybercrime against girls in educational institutions. In her talk about psycho-social impact of cybercrime against women, Mental Health Prof. Dr Khadija Tahir said that the internet is creating new ways and means for crimes to be committed against women and children. An audio of a heart-touching story by a university student was presented who had to leave her studies and suffered extreme physical and psychological violence because a fake statement from her that appeared on a confession page created by a university boy on the Facebook.

**The News - December 11, 2013**

**NCSW Emphasizes Better Environment for Working Women**

National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Chairwoman Khawar Mumtaz has said that lack of awareness about the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010 is the biggest hurdle in its effective implementation. Sharing her views on the eve of the National Working Women Day being observed, she eulogized the services of working women rendered for the country. The day, declared on December 22, 2010 to acknowledge the struggle of working women in securing a dignified and respectful working environment. It is also celebrated to acknowledge the economic contributions made by women to the country, as women are increasingly joining the ranks of doctors, engineers, lawyers, judges, journalists, armed personnel, scientists and business administrators. In a statement issued, Khawar said that the NCSW collaborated with the Pakistan government and civil society organizations to facilitate the women who had entered the mainstream society and were practically contributing to the national economy. She said that successive federal and provincial governments in Pakistan showed commitment to the cause of women and promulgation of the 'Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010' was a manifestation of the government's resolve to address the concerns and issues of working women. She said it was a landmark move to help Pakistani women work without fear of being harassed or discriminated against. The government has recently introduced an online facility for victims of harassment at workplace

through the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat (FOS) for their protection. Khawar said that most of the private and public sector organizations were not implementing the law in letter and spirit, like the mandatory requirement to display the copies of the code of conduct in English. “The organizations may be fined up to Rs, 100,000 if an employee lodges a complaint of harassment,” she added. Despite an improvement in the socio-economic status of women, a lot still needs to be done. She said that women’s participation in the formal workforce is still low, while 80 to 85 per cent of women worked in the informal sector as laborers and agriculture workers. The NCSW chief stressed the need for acknowledging the rights and contributions of home-based workers and introducing policies and laws for them. “The country now has a legal obligation to comply with international laws and is monitored by the International Labor Organization’s Committee on Application of Standards,” she said.

Daily Times - December 21, 2013

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## SECTARIAN CRISES & CONFLICT WATCH

### Conflict & Sectarian Crisis Incidents

#### Security Briefs for the Month of December

Date	Incidents	Killed	Injured
December 03, 2014	Four suspected cadres of TTP were killed and another was injured by unidentified assailants near Sarina Shopping Centre within the precincts of Shahrah-e-Noorjahan Police Station in North Nazimabad Town of Karachi in Sindh.	8	1
	Three members of the Tablighi Jama'at were shot dead and two others were injured in a targeted attack in North Nazimabad Town of Karachi.	6	2
December 04, 2014	At least five alleged Lyari gangsters, identified as Noor Mohammad Baloch, Khalid Baloch and Wajid Baloch, associated with Uzair Baloch group, and Saddam and Mushtaq Baloch, associated with Baba Ladla group, were killed during two encounters with law enforcers in Rangi Wara, Singu Lane and Ali Hotel areas of Lyari Town in Karachi, the provincial capital of Sindh.	10	0
December 05, 2014	At least five militants and a SF were killed in an armed clash during a search operation launched for the recovery of 13 kidnapped employees of Uch Power Plant in Pat Feeder area of Naseerabad District in Balochistan. One SF was injured in the clash.	12	0
December 06, 2014	At least three ASWJ cadres, identified as two brothers Talib Ahmed and Kashif Ahmed, and third identified as Shahid, were killed and one injured when unidentified armed assailants opened fire at an eatery near Maskan chowrangi in Gulshan-e-Iqbal area of Gulshan Town in Karachi.	6	1
December 09, 2014	Three persons, including a child, were killed and three others were injured in a firing incident at the Jahanabad area of Pak Colony in SITE Town of Karachi, the provincial capital of Sindh.	6	3
December 12, 2014	At least four soldiers were killed when a roadside bomb struck their vehicle in Spinwam village of North Waziristan Agency in FATA. Ansar-ul-Mujahideen, a little known militant group linked to the TTP claimed responsibility for the attack.	8	0
December 14, 2014	At least six suspected militants were killed in a drone strike in Mach Magai area of Khyber Agency in FATA.	12	0
December 17, 2014	Four persons, including a SI, were killed while 13 others were injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up in a sectarian attack outside an Imambargah in Gracy Line area near airport in Rawalpindi District of Punjab.	10	13
December 18, 2014	At least five soldiers were killed and 34 others, including 28 soldiers and six FC personnel, were wounded when a suicide	12	34

	bomber rammed his explosive-laden car into a military checkpoint in Mir Ali tehsil of Miranshah in North Waziristan Agency of FATA.		
December 19, 2014	Troops mounted helicopter and mortar attacks on militants in North Waziristan Agency of FATA, where officials said that at least 33 militants and three civilians have been killed.	72	0
December 20, 2014	Three passengers were killed after SFs opened fire on a vehicle during curfew hours near Khajori check post in North Waziristan Agency of FATA.	6	0
December 23, 2014	Police found three torture-marked bullet-riddled unidentified dead bodies from Super Highway within the precincts of Gadap City Police Station in Karachi.	6	0
December 24, 2014	Four IED blasts killed four people including two teenagers and injured 23 others on Chehlum and Orangi Town of Karachi.	8	23
	At least five militants and one FC personnel, identified as Sobedar Samar Gul, were killed in an exchange of fire in Buleda area of Turbat District in Balochistan.	12	0
December 26, 2014	A US drone fired two missiles at a compound near Qutab Khel in Miranshah town of North Waziristan Agency in FATA, killing at least four suspected militants.	8	0
December 27, 2014	Six Lyari gangsters, identified as Rizwan Baloch, Shahzad, Sajid alias Mithal, Amir Baloch, Gulzar and Dilawar Pathan, were shot dead and their bodies were discovered in Pak Colony area of Old Golimar near Rexer Bridge in SITE Town of Karachi.	12	0
December 29, 2014	Three MWM activists of Shia community, identified as Safdar Abbas and Abdul Aleem, and Syed Ali Shah, were shot dead, while a female companion, identified as Sakeena, sustained injuries when unidentified armed assailants opened fire targeting their cab while they were after filing their nomination papers at the Election Commission Office on Dalmia Road in Gulistan-e-Jauhar area of Gulshan Town in Karachi.	6	1
	Four unidentified dead bodies were found at a house in Musharraf Colony area of Mauripur in Kiamari Town of Karachi.	8	0
December 30, 2014	At least three people, including a woman and two children, were killed and two others were injured when a bomb planted outside a house exploded in Charsadda District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.	6	2
December 31, 2014	At least three people were killed and four others were injured in a bomb blast in Garhi Khan Sher area of Buddher in Peshawar.	6	0
Total Killed & Injured		240	80

*Compiled from different dialies*

## Analyses, Reports & News

### Militants to Be Paid In Same Coin

Issuing a warning to the militants fighting the security forces in the north-western tribal region, Chief of Army Staff Raheel Sharif reiterated to pay them in the same coin. "The terrorist attacks will not be tolerated and will be responded effectively," said Chief of Army General (COAS) General Raheel Sharif in an official statement following his visit to the X1 Corps and its division headquarters in Peshawar. Sharif also reiterated full support to the government-led ongoing peace process, the statement said. His views and visit came after a targeted military offensive Pakistan Army and its paramilitary wing, Frontier Corps (FC), launched in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) in response to a deadly attack on a military picket that left at least five soldiers dead. Since then, the violent skirmishes between the military and the militants have left dozens of miscreants dead and several injured.

According to an intelligence source, General Officer Commanding (GOC) 7 Infantry Division NWA Maj-Gen Ali Abbas Haider, Inspector General FC Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Maj-Gen Ghayur Mehmood and Corps Commander Peshawar Lt-Gen Khalid Rabbani briefed the army chief on progress regarding the ongoing crackdown in Mir Ali and parts of Miranshah. The military chief also reportedly visited 7 Infantry Division and the FC headquarters in Peshawar. Presently, he said, the targeted crackdown was restricted to Mir Ali and Miranshah towns where displacement of the civilian population is going on. "There is no military activity in Razmak. If required, the reinforcements would be dispatched there," the official said. He said a fierce gun battle between the security forces and militants took place when the military and political administration relaxed the curfew restrictions. This allowed the free movement of militants in the garb of the civilians who were moving to Bannu that turned the situation extremely deadly, he added. Following this situation, the insider said curfew was again imposed for three days whereas residents in a large number from Mir Ali and Miranshah towns of NWA have taken refuge in Bannu.

**The Nation - December 22, 2013**

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## ECONOMIC WATCH

### Facts & Figures

#### **Dollar Will Be Brought Back To 98 Rupees: Dar**

Federal Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar says the spiraling price of the dollar vis-a-vis the rupee will be reined in and brought back to 98 rupees to a dollar. He said the government was keeping a close vigil on the banks and may act against them. He said the government's package was final. The need of the hour is industrial expansion and investment. Gone are the days when the country could have been run on a mere one or two billion rupees. The income support levy has now become part of the budget. This is not a tax, and it will be spent on the poor. According to the Constitution, the provinces can levy agriculture tax. The finance minister was talking to Kamran Khan in his programme 'Aaj Kamran Khan Kay Sath'. He said after the implementation of the package, there will be a marked improvement in the economy. The Income Tax Ordinance 2001 empowers the government to give legal cover to its efforts for expanding the tax net. "If we have to take the country forward, then we need real growth. If we want to change the destiny of the nation, then we will have to motivate the people into contributing their share in development," he said. Responding to a question, he said the income support levy had become part of the finance bill. "We are not forcing anyone that we will not accept your return without the income support levy return." He said the government had no choice but to go for the IMF programme to pay debt installments. He said there will be an improvement in the foreign exchange reserves in the next three to four months.

The News - December 04, 2013

#### **Trade Deficit Narrows**

Pakistan's trade deficit narrowed down to \$7.743 billion in the first five months (July-Nov) of this fiscal year from \$8.195bn over the corresponding period of last year, reflecting a decline of 5.52 per cent. The decline is the outcome of a slight increase in export proceeds while imports witnessed a paltry growth of less than three per cent, suggested data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics issued. Last year, annual trade deficit was \$20.432bn as against \$21.288bn over the previous year, reflecting a decline of 4.02pc. Statistics show that exports rose to \$10.367bn in July-November 2013 from \$10.055bn in the corresponding period of the previous year, an increase of 3.10pc. On monthly basis, exports witnessed a decline of 4.85pc in November 2013 over the corresponding month of last year. The depreciation of rupee also facilitated export of goods from the country in November 2013. In terms of rupee, export proceeds witnessed a growth of 13.39pc in July-November 2013 over the corresponding months of last year. The import bill reached \$18.110 billion in July-November period of the current fiscal year from \$18.250 billion over the corresponding period of last year, reflecting a decline of 0.77 pc. On monthly basis, the import bill witnessed an increase of 1.22pc to \$3.651bn in November 2013 as against \$3.607bn over the corresponding month of last year. The central bank has already reported that the current account deficit in July-October 2013 reached \$1.366 billion as against the surplus of \$14 million in the corresponding period of last year. This deterioration in current deficit is despite growth in foreign remittances. Pakistan has also held out an assurance to the IMF to work on a new trade framework to do away with statutory regulatory orders and simplifying tariff rates. The framework is expected to be completed by end-June 2016, which

will further liberalize trade regime of the country. The new framework will be evolved and implemented in phases. The second focus of the framework is to liberalize trade regime with neighboring countries with special reference to India. These two areas are identified to improve the competitive environment in the country.

Dawn News - December 14, 2013

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### **Reforms on Track: IMF Clears Release of Second \$550m Tranche**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved the release of the second tranche of the \$6.7 billion loan package to Pakistan and said the country was broadly on track with reforms tied to the programme. The lender, however, cautioned that Islamabad would have to act quickly to rebuild the country's dwindling foreign exchange reserves. The IMF executive board, which met in Washington, showed leniency while approving the release of the \$550 million tranche. It waived a condition related to Pakistan's net international reserves – the country had been unable to meet the target agreed upon with the IMF for the first quarter of 2013-14. The release of the second tranche would never have been approved had the condition not been waived. Earlier, between October 28 and November 8, an IMF team visited Pakistan and held meetings with senior finance ministry and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) officials as part of the first review of the three-year Extended Fund Facility (EFF). Sources told that some board members were quite critical about reforms in taxation. They said some of the executive directors observed that Pakistan needed to take urgent measures to broaden the tax base, which remains narrow. They were apprehensive about the reversal of some policy actions, the sources added. The members of the board also observed that the central bank will have to take urgent measures to build its foreign currency reserves. They stressed the need to take necessary measures to control inflation.

The IMF approved the \$6.7 billion loan for Pakistan in September this year and released the first tranche of \$547 million around the same time. Future payments of the loan were made dependent on the completion of tough economic reforms and performance in this regard would be reviewed by the IMF staff every quarter. The second review of the IMF programme will take place in January and will pave the way for the release of third tranche of \$550 million in March. It is expected to be tougher than the first review meeting due to the objections raised by the board members. However, according to some analysts, Pakistan will not have any major problem until the fourth review. The progress from there onwards will depend upon some major policy actions, including the privatisation of state owned entities – mainly Pakistan International Airlines and Pakistan Steel Mills.

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said that the government did its best to implement the reforms agreed with the IMF. He said the second tranche was expected to be disbursed by the IMF on the next working day. In the wake of the latest disbursement, the country's reserves will cross the \$4 billion mark again. The reserves dropped below the \$2.9 billion level last month due to heavy repayments to the IMF. Till December 13, the official foreign currency reserves had increased to \$3.467 billion on the back of short-term loans from international lending agencies and the SBP's purchase of dollars from the open market. Meanwhile, Finance Secretary Dr Waqar Masood said the government was on course to put the country's economy back on track and would not stray from its path of reforms. The federal government claimed an early victory last week and said Pakistan's economy grew at a pace of 5% during the first quarter of the current financial year. The average growth rate in the last five years remained at 3%.

The Express Tribune – December 20, 2013

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**DEVELOPMENT WATCH****Health Projects****Health Reports/Controls****Pakistani Doctor Wins \$1m to Fight Child Deaths**

A Pakistani doctor won a \$1 million grant to fight early child mortality in a small fishing village in southern Pakistan in a contest financed by an American entrepreneur to find innovative ways to save lives, The Caplow Children's Prize said. A proposal by Anita Zaidi, who heads the pediatrics department at the Aga Khan University in the port city of Karachi, beat out more than 550 other applications from more than 70 countries. The prize was founded and funded by entrepreneur Ted Caplow to find impactful and cost-effective ways to save children's lives, according to a press release announcing the results. Zaidi said in a telephone interview that her project will focus on reducing child mortality rates in Rehri Goth, on the outskirts of Karachi. According to Zaidi, 106 out of 1,000 children born in the town die before the age of five. That is almost double the worldwide under-five child mortality rate of 51 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011, according to UNICEF. Few of the women in the area of roughly 40,000 people have access to medical care during pregnancy or money to pay for things like multivitamins, said Zaidi. There is no nearby hospital, and women usually give birth accompanied by a birthing attendant with little or no formal training.

When women do run into complications giving birth, the babies often die while the women seek medical care, the doctor said. The money will be used in Rehri Goth to eliminate malnutrition among expectant and new mothers and their babies, ensure that children have access to primary health care and immunizations and train a group of local women at Aga Khan University to become midwives. Women taking part in the program would get two medical checkups to monitor their pregnancy, multivitamins to promote a healthy fetus and food if they are malnourished, she said. Zaidi has been working in the area for the last ten years on various health-related research projects carried out by the university so she was familiar with its needs. "I know this community. I know what its problems are," Zaidi said. "It's a really good match between what the community needed and what this prize was offering." Caplow said Zaidi "really gave reassurance that she would be able to do exactly what she said she would do and it would have the impact that she said it would have." He added that he and his wife conceived of the prize after they gave birth to triplets who spent a month in an intensive care unit. The prize, which Caplow said would continue next year, was a way to address the disparities in medical technology available around the world.

**Pakistan Today - December 11, 2013**

## ENERGY CRISIS

### Government's Role in Oil and Gas & Energy Crisis

#### **Energy Solutions: Hydroelectric Power - The Way Forward**

It really would be a cliché to say that the country requires more electrical power. For a long time, authorities have complained of shortage - the issue dragging on such that we feel that nothing can be done about it. But there is a solution. To produce electricity, coal, wind, solar power can all be used. But given the magnitude of our requirements there is only one source - our hydroelectric potential of over 60,000 megawatts. Only by recognizing this and pursuing the project, can there be abundant and affordable electricity. As a member of the Planning Commission's Energy Working Group in 1990-1991, I identified 42 projects to produce over 40,000MW. I kept on striving for these hydroelectric projects at various seminars and conferences, and these were incorporated into a programme in the Water and Power Development Authority's (WAPDA) 'Vision 2025'. WAPDA was established for the integrated and multi-purpose development of the water-power resource. Under Ghulam Faruque, a small group of engineers formed the nucleus of the organization in 1958. It soon became Pakistan's largest development organization with world-class engineers. Projects were completed on time, within stipulated periods.

#### **Role of Hydroelectric Resources**

As early as 1975, it was realized that economic development needed to be accelerated with hydel development. In 1975, a national conference was organized in Lahore. This was chaired by the then Minister of Water and Power Yusuf Khattak with WAPDA and concerned federal secretaries along with 200 engineers taking part. In my keynote address, I emphasized on two issues. First, that since Tarbela was near completion, we should immediately undertake the process of constructing two major hydroelectric projects on the Indus and to take up the installed capacity to 12,000MW by 1982. Second was that the selection of these two projects should be undertaken through a ranking study by a reputable international consulting engineering organization. My paper was accepted as the conference recommendation and the ranking study was finally completed in 1984, by the reputable Montreal Engineering Company. They ranked nine projects on the Indus, prepared and completed a detailed feasibility study of the top-ranked Bhasha Dam and hydroelectric project in 1984.

Since they had not ranked Kalabagh, the Kalabagh lobby practically blacklisted them. However, a separate consulting engineering firm prepared and completed the feasibility study on Kalabagh, also in 1984. Since then, we could have built the three non-controversial mega projects, Bhasha, Dasu and Bunji to add 16,000MW power. But by stressing only on Kalabagh, not allowing construction of the other non-controversial mega projects, and impeding hydroelectric development, we have been faced with an inadequate power shortage, as well as over dependence on oil-powered and inefficient thermal power IPP's coupled with their unaffordable cost. After many years of delay, work started on filling the gaps in Bhasha's feasibility study. By 2005, the design and engineering documents were ready but to please the Kalabagh lobby, Bhasha was delayed. No further feasibility of the Bhasha is needed now and we must not fall into the trap of asking for more funds.

#### **The Way Forward**

The new government has announced that the Diamer-Bhasha Project has the highest priority. Efforts should be made to start the construction of Bhasha and almost simultaneously Dasu 4320MW. Bhasha would also increase the life of Tarbela by 30-40 years. We are not in a position to add 23,837MW by 2015 but hydropower can be our salvation in the power sector - the only indigenous and abundant resource that can make electricity affordable and cheap enough to cost around Rs. 2 per unit. Electricity from coal is Rs. 10, furnace oil over Rs. 16, gas over Rs. 4 and wind about Rs. 14 per 30,000MW in 10 years. It is imperative that we proceed and accelerate through hydel projects and this can be done if the government produces the will and commitment to pursue them. The writer is a former chairman of the Planning Commission Working Group on Hydropower and Alternate Energy.

**The Express Tribune - December 02, 2013**

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### **NEPRA Rejects Power Tariff Hike**

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) rejected an application seeking 45 paisa per unit increase in power tariff by distribution companies of WAPDA. It ordered recovery with interest of a surcharge paid to independent power producers (IPPs) and readjustment of the recovered amount into consumers' bills. It called for action against senior officials of the Central Power Purchase Agency (CPPA) responsible for paying Gas Infrastructure Development Cess to the IPPs despite its suspension ordered by the Supreme Court. The decisions were made at a public hearing held on the request of the CPP which sought to increase power tariff because of "higher cost of fuel" during November. NEPRA's acting chairman Khwaja Mohammad Naeem, who presided over the hearing, said the apex court had ordered suspension of payment of the GIDC to the IPPs about five months ago but the CPPA had continued paying it. It does not even bother to question bills submitted by the IPPs. "It has become a principle to recover mark-up from poor consumers," he deplored and said. "This is a criminal act and officials responsible for it should be held accountable." The NEPRA chief called upon the government to order an inquiry into the matter and fix responsibility for allowing GIDC payments to the IPPs in violation of the court order. The inquiry report should be provided to the authority in 15 days, he insisted. The regulator took exception to widespread power breakdowns in Punjab caused by heavy fog and sought an inquiry from the ministry of water and power. Mr. Naeem linked power breakdowns to criminal negligence of the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC). He said it was an incomprehensible argument of the NTDC that grid and transmission line tripping had been caused by fog and rain because the NTDC had been charging maintenance costs in electricity bills. In many countries transmission lines are much older than those in Pakistan but they do not face a similar problem. NEPRA decided to hold next hearing on tariff increase on Dec 24.

**Dawn - December 16, 2013**

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### **SC Rejects 9pc Additional Tax on Gas Prices**

The Supreme Court (SC) rejected the nine percent additional tax on gas prices and directed the government to return the additional money to consumers. The court order said: "As far as Subsection (8) of Section 3 of the Sales Tax Act, 1990, inserted by means of the Finance Act, 2013 is concerned, it is contrary to law and the Constitution... therefore, the levy of extra tax at the rate of 9 percent cannot be charged except the rate which has been fixed under section 3(1) of the Sales Tax Act, 1990... Moreover, the same directions and the ratio of the judgment of June 21, 2013 reported as Iqbal Zafar Jhagra v Federation of Pakistan (2013 SCMR 1337), wherein

Rule 7 of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act, 1931 was declared ultra vires, shall be applicable in this case.” It directed the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) to issue a revised notification to recover only 16 or 17 percent sales tax as early as possible but not beyond a period of seven days. A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry announced the judgment in the backdrop of unprecedented load shedding, an increase in the electricity prices and the grant of 450 and 200 licences to CNG stations during the tenure of former prime ministers Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf.

The judgment, authored by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, ruled that load shedding of electricity in the country is manageable subject to dedicated and committed efforts to ensure the maximum possible generation of electricity which is sufficient to cater to the requirements of all consumers. “The competent authority must concentrate its efforts to minimize the sufferings of the consumers by endeavoring to provide uninterrupted supply of electricity... if, however, load shedding is the only way out, it must be administered without having distinction between rural and urban areas as well as the domestic, commercial and industrial sectors. Moreover, a formula must be put in place to ensure the distribution of electricity on an equitable basis,” says the order. The court ruled that the competent authority shall take steps to control all kinds of losses by using modern devices like smart meters. It said electricity should be supplied only to the consumers, who are ready to make payment, if need be, in advance or without any default after submission of the bills.

“As far as all kinds of unauthorized consumers are concerned, efforts should be made to persuade them to make payments of the bills, failing which action as envisaged under the Electricity Act, 1910, the Electricity Rules, 1937 and NEPRA Act, 1997 as well as other enabling laws/rules, should be taken,” the judgment ruled. The court ruled that a policy has to be announced by the NTDC/Discos under which the supply of electricity to the consumers who believe in law and make the payment in time is encouraged and supply to unauthorized consumers is discouraged. “It is responsibility of the NEPRA and Pepco to reduce the prices while ensuring that electricity is generated through less-costing value of production from hydel power and as far as thermal power is concerned, preference must be given to generate electricity by using coal and gas, and unless there is no compulsion, the electricity should not be generated from RFO as it is casting higher prices, which ultimately has to be borne by the consumers,” the court ruled. The court observed that the renewable sources for generating electricity including wind and solar power must be utilized, adding that prices of petrol, diesel, petroleum products, etc are invariably being fixed by OGRA arbitrarily without taking into consideration the rate in the international market.

“Therefore, in future, the court ruled that all necessary steps shall be taken in this behalf to fix the prices strictly in accordance with the prevailing rates in the international market,” it said. Regarding supply of gas at subsidized rates to the fertilizers, the court ruled, “As far as supply of gas at subsidized rates to the fertilizer companies are concerned, it may continue but at the same time there must be a policy to ensure that fertilizers like urea etc is sold in the market to the farmers at a subsidized rate. However, as far as captive power plants are concerned, the policy must be revised and without any justification they cannot be allowed supply of gas to produce electricity because they supply electricity at much higher than the NEPRA rate instead of subsidized rate to NTDC.” The court observed that NEPRA has failed to perform its duties in accordance with the Regulation of Generation, Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power Act, 1997. It said without any unnecessary interference, NEPRA must watch interest of stakeholders/consumers while determining the tariff of the electricity and opportunity of hearing must be ensured to all concerned. It ruled, “The Federation of Pakistan under Article 38

of the Constitution as a policy is bound to secure the well-being of the people by raising their standard of living.”

The court ruled that the subsidy already being given to the consumers should not have been withdrawn, adding though the subsidy is not their right, the government being responsible for their welfare may consider in near future to increase the rate of subsidy by extending its benefits to the consumers. The court observed gas development charges (GDIC) falls within the definition of Section 2(46) of the Sales Tax Act, 1990 and no order is required to be passed in this behalf. The court while referring to issuance of licenses to CNG stations observed that an exercise has also been undertaken to inquire into the grant of licenses to the various CNG stations. “These were prima facie unauthorized issued from time to time and this aspect of the case is to be heard along with the case of implementation in the case of appointment of Tauqir Sadiq and the Court shall decide it on the basis of evidence recorded by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) independently,” says the verdict. The court ordered the FIA to hand over it to NAB where already proceedings against Tauqir Sadiq are pending.

**The News - December 11, 2013**

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### **Countrywide Load Shedding To Increase**

The government announced revival of electricity load shedding for ‘about two hours’ per day throughout the country because of an increased gap between power generation and demand arising out of annual canal closure and diversion of gas to textile industry. “The Indus River System Authority has reduced indents for annual canal closure due to which load shedding of about two hours will start,” a statement issued by the ministry of water and power said. “Inconvenience to be caused to the people due to load shedding is regretted,” it added. An official, however, told Dawn that load shedding could go up to four hours on an average, but it would be kept at two hours in big cities and maximum load shedding would be done in the rural sector and areas with lower recovery of bills. As a result, some consumers may complain of more than 10 hours of load shedding. He said the government was engaging with Irsa to persuade it to make higher water discharges from Tarbela dam to enable WAPDA reduce electricity supply gap. At the same time, consumers have been advised to adopt energy conservation measures to minimize electricity shortage.

But Irsa had not accepted the water and power ministry’s demand because of the absence of its chairman, an official said. He said Irsa had been asked to ensure at least 15,000 to 20,000 cusecs of water releases from Tarbela dam against usual discharges of about 8,000 cusecs for drinking purposes during annual canal closure. Discharges from Tarbela dam stood at 35,000 cusecs. The official said the Irsa chief would be back in town on Dec 26 and preside over a meeting to consider the government’s demand. He said the government had not asked for higher discharges from Mangla dam because Punjab had availed higher discharges from them and further depletion of storage could create operational difficulties. An Irsa official said members of the authority appeared to be inclined to accept the government demand for higher water releases for more power generation, but for genuinely different reasons. He said the industrial sector was mostly releasing its waste into the river system and causing higher contamination. “Even though the drinking water was properly treated before use, there should be higher flows in rivers to enable filtration and treatment.” A power ministry official said the electricity shortage had been caused not only because of canal closure but a sudden drop in temperatures beyond freezing point in many parts of the country. On top of that, the diversion of 100 million cubic feet of natural gas per day from the power sector to textile sector had generated an additional shortfall of about 450MW.

The official said Sindh would close down Kotri canal on Dec 26, followed by Sukkur on Jan 6 while canals in Punjab would remain closed for annual maintenance between Dec 25 and Jan 31. As a result, the hydropower generation would fall drastically to 1,000MW for about 35 days. Coupled with the canal closure, the production from WAPDA's thermal stations will remain static at 1,500-2,000MW because of the ongoing rehabilitation programme. Maximum reliance will, therefore, shift to IPPs. As a result, the cost of electricity will go up in view of more reliance on furnace oil and diesel for power generation.

Dawn - December 24, 2013

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### **Energy Trade: Pakistan Moves Closer To Electricity Import from India**

At a time when the international court has allowed India to divert water from the Neelum Jhelum River for the Kishanganga Dam in Indian-controlled Kashmir, Pakistan is set to sign an initial deal for import of electricity from Delhi to overcome a crippling power crisis. The Ministry of Water and Power had sent draft of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to the Law Division for vetting, before signing it to pave the way for electricity import. The previous government had taken an initiative to buy electricity from India to overcome the energy crisis in Pakistan. Former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani had given the go-ahead for electricity import. "The two sides are likely to ink an MoU for electricity trade," a source said, pointing out that this was going to happen despite the fact that Delhi had succeeded in getting a decision in its favor from the International Court of Arbitration. The court has permitted India to divert water to the Kishanganga Dam, which will hurt 900-megawatt Neelum Jhelum hydropower project being set up in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). India has offered to supply about 500MW of electricity in the beginning and this plan could be implemented within a year by laying a transmission line. A senior government official said Pakistan felt that it could import 2,000-2,500MW of power from India to tackle the acute shortage which had hit its economic growth bringing it down to 3% a year.

India has also expressed interest in exporting oil, but since Pakistani refineries produce low-quality oil whereas India produces oil of Euro 2, 3 and 4 standards, they cannot press ahead with the plan. "Now, the World Bank has come up with a proposal, saying it can provide technical assistance for conducting a feasibility study of the power import programme," an official said. Delhi had told Islamabad that it faced problems in interconnection of power, however, Pakistani officials insisted such issues would be resolved later and the two sides were now set to sign an MoU for electricity trade, he added. Sources said preliminary discussions with India were under way and tariff matters still needed to be finalized. "However, the MoU will be an initial commitment to India," the official said, adding the government of Pakistan was also working on other power import projects like Casa-1,000MW and electricity purchase from Iran. Pakistan is currently importing 35MW of electricity from Iran to meet requirements of Gwadar, while work on increasing it by 100MW is going on. The two sides signed an agreement on the project in 2007. Pakistan also has another project in the pipeline for import of 1,000MW of electricity from Tajikistan under Casa-1000 programme. Feasibility report of the project has been finalized and work is expected to be completed by 2016. The country's power production ranges between 10,000MW and 16,000MW against total installed capacity of 20,800MW. Globally, most countries generate 80% of their power requirements from their installed infrastructure, but Pakistan's generation capacity only meets 65% of the needs due to old plants, poor maintenance and high circular debt.

The Express Tribune - December 24, 2013

## **PESCO Transfer Plan Stokes Plea For More Concessions**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif approved a plan to hand over administrative control of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, prompting calls for provincial independence over electricity production and more federal concessions. Moments after news broke of the premier authorizing the Water and Power Ministry to write a letter to the K-P government regarding the administrative control of PESCO; Chief Minister Pervaiz Khattak issued a statement demanding more concessions. In a press statement issued, Khattak welcomed the federal government's move to hand over PESCO to the K-P government. But at the same time, the chief minister also called upon Islamabad to surrender the 'production rights of electricity' to the province. Gaining control of PESCO is an encouraging sign, Khattak said, but for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa it is important to be more independent in matters of electricity production. That is why, he said, the federal government should also hand over the management of the 4,200 megawatt hydroelectricity generated from the province. Khattak voiced hope that the prime minister would soon free up Rs100 billion that is "payable to the province" on account of hydroelectricity.

The Prime Minister House dismissed the PTI-led provincial government's reaction as premature. "The reaction of the K-P government should come once it has reviewed the detailed letter from the water and power ministry," an official from the PM House said. "Only then will its [PTI's] reaction be taken on logical grounds. So far, we have just forwarded the authorization of the PM to the water and power ministry on the demands of Imran Khan." In accordance with PTI chief Imran Khan's wishes, the said letter inviting the provincial government to take over the reins of the power distribution company will be written to Khattak in a few days. "On the request of the water and power ministry, the prime minister has authorized it principally to write a letter to the K-P government to formally take control of PESCO. The letter will be written in the next couple of days," the PM House statement read. PM Nawaz is acting in line with the 18th Amendment, which allows provincial bodies to oversee generation and distribution of electricity. Officials told The Express Tribune that Water and Power Minister Khawaja Asif issued a response to Imran Khan's demand, and also consulted with the premier regarding the matter. It was then decided that the ministry would send PM a formal request to give his consent for handing over the reins of PESCO to the provincial authorities. The request was received at the Prime Minister House and his consent was given soon after. The move comes days after Imran Khan said the K-P government would eliminate power theft and generate cheap electricity if PESCO was handed over to them.

**The Express Tribune - December 30, 2013**

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## REGIONAL WATCH

## Pakistan &amp; United States

**Strategic Dialogue with US to Resume in Feb: Aziz**

The strategic dialogue between Pakistan and the United States, suspended in 2010, will resume by February in the perspective of post-2014 situation in the region after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. This was stated by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz who was winding up a debate in the Senate on foreign policy with particular reference to the prime minister's visit to the US, drone attacks and repercussions of the expected reduction in the number of forces in Afghanistan next year. He said that four of the six working groups which were scheduled to meet before start of the strategic dialogue had already met. The talks were suspended after the Raymond Davis episode, attack on Salala military post and the US raid in Abbottabad. Mr. Aziz claimed that the government had for the first time taken a clear stance on the issue of drone attacks and conveyed to the US the concern of the Pakistani nation. He informed the house that the UN General Assembly was about to adopt a resolution regarding use of force during the war against terrorism that would strengthen Pakistan's position on the drone attacks. He said the first priority of foreign policy was to have a "peaceful neighborhood". He claimed that there had been considerable reduction in anti-Pakistan sentiments in Afghanistan after three meetings between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Hamid Karzai, and a new border management system was being prepared to check movement on the Pakistan-Afghan border. He said Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had agreed that elections in his country should not be contested on anti-Pakistan rhetoric. He expressed the hope that the peace process with India would resume soon after the elections. Mr Aziz assured the house that the new national security policy would be placed before parliament. He rejected a perception that five people, including Prime Minister Sharif, were running the foreign ministry and said he had all the powers of a federal minister.

About the US-Taliban talks in Doha, he said Pakistan had facilitated the process but, according to his information, the process had been disrupted and it would not go ahead. He did not say anything about the government's policy for talks with Taliban which, according to him, concerned the interior ministry. Earlier, giving a policy statement on the issue of circular debt and agreement with the International Monetary Fund, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar claimed that the government had saved 14 per cent interest amount being paid for delay in payment of Rs. 500 billion circular debts to independent power producers and others left by the previous government. He said 1,700 MW had been added to the national grid after the payment of circular debt. He criticized the opposition for its criticism of the government's economic policies and claimed that things had started improving. He said details about the agreement with the IMF and circular debt payment were being placed on the ministry's official website. Mr. Dar informed the house that the government had abolished the secret funds of 32 of the 34 departments. He said the PML-N government was clearing the mess left by the previous PPP government. Responding to Mr. Dar's remarks, Leader of Opposition in the Senate Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan said the finance minister had ignored the prevailing price hike in his speech and challenged him to make the budget of a common man with a monthly salary of Rs. 10,000. "How a person who cannot make the budget of a common man can make the budget for 180 million people," he said while rejecting Mr. Dar's claim about the poor performance of the PPP government. Speaking on a point of order, Tahir Mashhadi of the MQM drew the attention of the house to reports about two Chinese nuclear power plants being set up in Karachi. He said there

were reports that these nuclear plants called “ASP 1000” were “untested and untried”. He demanded that the plants be set up outside the city and far from population to avoid any mishap caused by radiation and contamination of water.

Dawn - December 19, 2013

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### **International Law Compliance: UN Adopts Resolution against Use of Drones**

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a unanimous resolution against the use of armed drones in foreign territories in what Pakistan claimed to be a ‘moral victory’ for the country. The 193-member body adopted a resolution urging the United States to comply with international laws for its use of unmanned aerial vehicles for taking out ‘high value targets’ in countries. This was the first time that the issue of drones was raised in a UN resolution. The reference to the controversial drone programme was contained in a 28-page UNGA resolution titled ‘Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism.’ The resolution urged member states to ensure that any measure taken or means employed to counter terrorism, including the use of drones, comply with their obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction and proportionality. It laid emphasis on the urgent and imperative need to seek agreement between states on the legal questions pertaining to the use of drones.

In its official reaction, Pakistan immediately took credit for the unanimous resolution against drone strikes. “Pakistan successfully coordinated with like-minded states to include references to the use of drones in the resolution,” said a statement issued by the foreign ministry. The statement reiterated Pakistan’s stance that drone strikes have “serious human rights and humanitarian implications”. The issue will also be taken up by the UN Human Rights Council in its March 2014 session, it added. Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said the present government had been raising the issue of drones’ at all relevant international forums, including the United Nations, to muster international public opinion against the use of drones. She also recalled that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in September, strongly raised the issue of drones.

Meanwhile, Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid termed the UN resolution a “marvelous achievement” that has been accomplished after a long drawn-out struggle. “The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government had set the issue of drones as a priority and there were clear directions for the envoys in Pakistan’s missions abroad and the permanent envoy in UN to raise the issue at every forum to safeguard Pakistan’s integrity and sovereignty,” he told. However, other political parties begged to differ. Leader of the Opposition Khursheed Shah said that PML-N should not claim sole credit as previous governments had also advocated Pakistan’s stance against US drone strikes. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf’s MNA Asad Umer said his was the only political party that rendered true and practical efforts to raise its voice against drone attacks in Pakistan’s tribal region. He added that recent announcement of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government – led by PTI – to block NATO supply lines in protest against the drone strikes built significant pressure on the US and the international community. “Imran Khan has been very vocal on the issue and bringing international focus on the issue of drones goes to PTI’s credit,” claimed another PTI member Naemul Haq.

The Express Tribune – December 20, 2013

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## No Reimbursements if US Supplies Disrupted

A proposed new law that has the White House's approval seeks to fiscally squeeze Pakistan if interruptions to the US/NATO ground supply route through Pakistan continue. In addition, the US National Defense Authorization Bill of 2014 seeks a certification from the US defense secretary that Pakistan is taking demonstrable actions against Al Qaeda and other militant groups active along the Pak-Afghan border. The development comes on the heels of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's recent visit to Pakistan during which he was reported to have warned of the mood in the US Congress souring on Pakistan.

The bill, already approved by the House of Representatives, includes a one-year extension for reimbursing Pakistan for supporting the US-led war against terrorists. In a statement issued, the White House noted that "the bill will support (US) capacity building efforts with foreign military forces, and support contingency or stability operations." The bill includes a section which extends funding Pakistan's counter-terrorism activities for one year with certain modifications. In a section titled "Limitation on amounts available", it reduces the amount available for reimbursing Pakistan from \$1.65 billion in 2013 to \$1.5bn in 2014.

It also says that no amounts authorized to be appropriated by this bill, and no amounts authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years before 2014 that remain available for obligation, may be used for reimbursing Pakistan, until the US secretary of defense certifies to the congressional defense committees each of the following:

- A. That Pakistan is maintaining security and is not through its actions or inactions at any level of government limiting or otherwise restricting the movement of US equipment and supplies along the Ground Lines of Communications (GLOCs) through Pakistan to Afghanistan so that such equipment and supplies can be trans-shipped and such equipment and supplies can be retrograded out of Afghanistan.
- B. That Pakistan is taking demonstrable steps to:
  1. Support counterterrorism operations against Al Qaeda, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and other militant extremists groups such as the Haqqani Network and the Quetta Shura Taliban located in Pakistan;
  2. ii) Disrupt the conduct of cross-border attacks against United States, coalition and Afghanistan security forces located in Afghanistan by such groups (including the Haqqani Network and the Quetta Shura Taliban) from bases in Pakistan;
  3. Counter the threat of IEDs, including efforts to attack IED networks, monitor known precursors used in IEDs, and systematically address the misuse of explosive materials (including calcium ammonium nitrate) and accessories and their supply to legitimate end-users in a manner that impedes the flow of IEDs and IED components into Afghanistan; and
  4. Conduct cross-border coordination and communication with Afghan security forces and US armed forces in Afghanistan.

The bill also requires the secretary to certify that Pakistan is not using its military or any funds or equipment provided by the US to persecute minority groups for their legitimate and non-violent political and religious beliefs, including the Baloch, Sindhi, and Hazara ethnic groups and minority religious groups, including Christian, Hindu and members of the Ahmadiya community. The bill, however, authorizes the US secretary of defense to waive the limitation if the secretary certifies to the congressional defense committees in writing that the waiver is in the national security interests of the United States and includes with such certification a justification for the

waiver. "Although the bill includes a number of provisions that restrict or limit the Defense Department's ability to align military capabilities and force structure with the president's strategy and implement certain efficiencies, overall the administration is pleased with the modifications and improvements contained in the bill," the White House said. The bill addresses "most of the administration's significant objections with earlier versions regarding these issues and the administration support passage of the legislation," it added.

Dawn News - December 20, 2013

## Pakistan & India

### Manufacturers' Concern at MFN Status to India

The Pakistan government move to grant Most Favored Nation (MFN) status to India in the wake of increasing trade imbalance between the two countries has raised serious concerns among the local manufacturers who believe it will force them to close down their businesses altogether. India granted MFN status to Pakistan in 1996 but trade balance remained heavily in favor of New Delhi. Since 2008, the deficit has almost increased by four times in favor of India, according to a leading industrialist who had been a former office-bearer of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Quoting State Bank's statistics, the industrialist said Pakistan faced a deficit of \$719.857 million in fiscal year 2008-09 with India, with imports payment of \$1.033 billion and export receipts of \$313.037 million. The deficit in the next fiscal 2009-10 surged up by 11 per cent, with \$1.061 billion imports payment and \$260 million export receipts. The balance further deteriorated during the last fiscal year as Pakistan faced a deficit of \$1.158 billion as compared to \$802 million in 2010, depicting an increase of 44 per cent in 2011. A former president of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI) said that Indians had almost unchecked access to Pakistani market. Due to having economies of scale, many Indian products are much cheaper than Pakistani goods which simply can't compete in terms of prices, though having better quality than Indian products," he said. "Pakistan has yet to grant MFN status to India but has been maintaining a 'positive list' of importable items from India. The number of items on the list has been continuously increasing. "The list started with seven items when the trade was resumed after nine years in 1974, it reached 800 items in 1996 when India granted MFN status to Pakistan. It rose to 1,945 items by the end of 2011 when the Pakistan government moved towards granting India the MFN status," said the RCCI member.

Dawn - December 02, 2013

### Experts Call for Ending Proxies in Afghanistan, Resumption of Pak-India Talks

Diplomats, retired generals and journalists at a two-day conference on regional and national security have examined the core questions surrounding the future of the region after withdraw of the coalition forces from Afghanistan next year. They suggested various strategies for reducing country's vulnerabilities in the rapidly changing regional and global environment, said a press release. The conference titled 'Matrix of Regional and National Security in South Asia and its post-2014 dynamics', being jointly hosted by Strategic Vision Institute (SVI) and Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) of Germany. Lt-Gen (retd) Muhammad Owais linked peace in the region to peace in Afghanistan. "To achieve this goal proxy wars in Afghanistan will have to be ended and some decision on US-Afghan Border Security Agreement will have to be reached", he suggested. Gen Owais also called for resumption of Pak-India Composite Dialogue for addressing the outstanding issues between the two countries. He said Pakistan would have to

de-Islamize the polity and contain groups like Lashkar-i-Taiba and Jamaat ud Dawah. He also urged India to end coercive diplomacy. Executive Director of the Islamabad-based think-tank Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) Imtiaz Gul said conflicting interests of regional and extra-regional powers, the failure of social programmes to change the tribal nature of Afghanistan and perceptions about US unilateralism were keeping the region unsettled. He feared that the region would remain volatile and mired in security crisis until and unless Pakistan and India disengaged from their proxies and synergized their strategies on Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Ambassador Arif Kamal said Tehran's nuclear deal with the West could provide a stepping stone for a broader deal between the two sides. He saw the timing of the deal as very critical and believed that it could provide relief to sanction-hit Iran, which in turn could adopt a more assertive posture in its regional dealings. Mr. Kamal said Iran's increased assertiveness could strain Islamabad-Tehran ties. But, he warned Islamabad against entering into a conflict with Iran. Former ambassador Khalid Khattak said convergences have increased between Pakistan and Russia but have failed to translate into tangible results because of "sluggish bureaucracies" in the two countries and mistrust. Mr. Khattak said Russia was interested in economic interventions in South Asia by promoting energy, trade and communication links. Johan Sorensen, Head of Political, Trade and Communication section at the Delegation of the European Union said the EU continues to be a major trade actor in South Asia, and fostering trade between the EU and the countries in the region as well as intra-regional trade and regional integration can play a major role in enhancing stability and security. President SVI Dr Zafar Iqbal Cheema in his comments on Pak-US ties it was in Islamabad's interest to remain engaged with Washington.

### **Uncertainty Looms Large Over Horizon**

Experts at a separate conference on the same theme agreed that though uncertainties loomed large over the horizon, it could be hoped that the Afghan government coming into power after the 2014 elections would be able to stand up to the insurgency. Things have changed in the war-torn country and it is not the Afghanistan of the 1990s. However, this optimism was based largely on the assumption that the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) would ultimately be signed between the US and the Afghan government. The conference addressed by political analyst Lt-Gen (ret) Talat Masood, journalist Rahimullah Yousufzai and educationist Prof Dr Naheed Zia Khan was organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) on the institute premises. All three experts agreed that the Taliban's return to power was difficult as the country had undergone qualitative social and political changes. The Afghans had become fed up with the Mujahedin when the Taliban emerged on the scene in the 1990s. "Had the Afghan Left regrouped at that time people would have welcomed them, too," Yousufzai said. They believed that there had been little progress in peace talks and it was not likely the Taliban would agree to power sharing or accept the elected government. Their dominant group insisted that power which was taken from them ought to be returned to them. With such a mindset it would not be easy to conduct any political settlement after US withdrawal.

Moreover, the Taliban had no political organization for the Afghan government or the US to engage with. Therefore, prospects of peace in the post-withdrawal scenario were indeed doubtful. Gen Masood warned Pakistan against supporting the Taliban or trying to divide them in the negotiations. "Pakistan has no option but to play a positive role in peace efforts and bringing stability to Afghanistan," he asserted. Yousufzai said Pashtun representation in the Afghan parliament was falling due to Taliban terror and this could go in favor of Dr Abdullah Abdullah who was a front runner for president in the coming elections. Dr Naheed Zia Khan dwelt on the economic prospects in the wake of the withdrawal which were not hopeful as there

was large scale capital flight under way due to uncertainty, and fear of business losses due to closure of contracts could squeeze an economy mostly dependent on foreign aid.

**The Express Tribune - December 19, 2013**

### **No Option but Talks with Pakistan**

Indian Minister for External Affairs Salman Khurshid has said that there is no alternative option except dialogue with Pakistan because both the countries cannot face the situation of war. In an interview, the Indian minister said, "Pakistan and India must choose the way of dialogue to resolve the issues because in both the situations of 'war' or 'peace' they will live as neighbors." He said relations between Pakistan and India should be made better for the assurance of 'peace situation' and dialogue should be continued on every level in this regard. Salman Khurshid said, "There are some 'powers' which do not want peace between India and Pakistan and if such powers succeed, both the countries will become toy in the hands of terrorists." He said India should talk with Pakistan in a decisive way whether it was ready to end the concerns of India on terrorism issue or not, however both the countries could not afford war. The Indian minister said, "We are clearly aware that active 'terrorism structure' exists in Pakistan, but democratic government focuses on the way of negotiations, while bilateral issues between Pakistan and India cannot be resolved overnight so we have to move forward in phases." Salman Khurshid also demanded that Pakistan should prevent the cross border activities for better relations and also move forward in the investigations of Mumbai attacks. Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Foreign Ministry in Beijing said China welcomed the efforts and progress made by Pakistan and India for ensuring ceasefire at the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. The spokesperson made the comments on a meeting held between Director Generals Military Operation (DGMOs) of Pakistan Army and Indian Army that reiterated resolve and commitment to continue efforts for ensuring ceasefire, peace and tranquility at the LoC. At the meeting between the DGMOs of Pakistan Army Maj Gen Aamir Riaz and his Indian counterpart Maj Gen Vinod Bhatia, both agreed to carry forward the positive spirit of DGMOs meeting.

**The News - December 26, 2013**

## **India's Elections**

### **Ruling Congress Wiped Out, BJP Gains Thumping Victory**

India's main Hindu nationalist party appeared to make strong electoral gains in four heartland states, sidelining the ruling Congress party in a race seen as a test before next year's general election, according to preliminary results. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has waged a fierce campaign fronted by its prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, who has charmed businesses but worried critics that his rise could worsen sectarian tensions between India's majority Hindus and its 138 million Muslims. Preliminary results released showed the BJP trouncing Congress in the Indian capital, northwest Rajasthan and landlocked Madhya Pradesh. The race for central Chhattisgarh was also in the favor of the BJP after a neck-and-neck contest. As the votes were being counted, dozens of BJP supporters held an impromptu street fest outside the party's Delhi headquarters, dancing to drum beats and setting off firecrackers, while the area outside Congress headquarters was deserted. Congress spokesman Randeep Singh Surjewala called the results disappointing but conceded "we have lost" in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Modi offered congratulations by Twitter to Madhya Pradesh's incumbent chief minister "for BJP's wonderful performance," and to the party in Rajasthan for

“the historic victory.” The elections were seen as an important gauge of voter sentiment in this secular democracy of 1.2 billion, where there are no reliable opinion countrywide polls and at least one-fifth of the 800 million-strong electorate will be youths casting their first general election votes next year.

TV news channels gave breathless coverage to vote count, offering a taste of the nationwide contest to come. Ballots from a fifth state that voted, Mizoram in the northeast, will be counted. Overall, Congress - led by a dynasty descended from India’s first prime minister that for decades has dominated national politics - was seen to lose ground due to sustained national focus on widespread and systematic graft, with several members from the party, as well as the BJP, embroiled in corruption scandals. Meanwhile, bribery has remained an everyday feature in routine tasks, from getting a marriage license to securing a child’s place in school. Congress has also taken a beating over stalled economic reforms and the soaring costs of living, exacerbated by the slowdown in economic growth from averages above 8 percent for five years up to 2011 to below 5 percent today. In the race for the 70-member Delhi Assembly, Congress’ Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit was denied a fourth consecutive term as Delhi’s top elected official. Dikshit, 76, has presided over the city as it burgeoned into a mega polis of nearly 17 million people; many of them impoverished migrants in search of jobs.

A new political party called Aam Aadmi Party - or Common Man’s Party - played spoiler in the race, campaigning in Delhi’s poorest neighborhoods’ and pushing Congress into third place. Preliminary results suggested the BJP won 31 seats and the debutant party 28, with Congress collecting only eight. Hundreds of AAP members danced wildly in the street outside the party’s Delhi office while holding up brooms - the new party’s symbol, alluding to its top platform promise to sweep corruption out of the ruling class. The party’s leader, former tax official Arvind Kejriwal, has said it hopes next to campaign nationally. “It is very much fabulous. For the first time we are contesting elections, seven months of hard work,” said party member Balaji, a 26-year-old software engineer from the southern tech city of Bangalore who goes by one name. “We can give this country, this state, a very good opposition.” It appeared to be a stunning fall for Congress, which took 43 seats in the last Delhi elections, and experts partly blamed anger over the deadly gang rape of a student on a Delhi bus last December and a corruption scandal involving the 2010 Commonwealth Games. “We accept our defeat and we will analyze what went wrong,” Dikshit told reporters after resigning as chief minister. “We respect what the people of Delhi have decided and thank them for supporting us for the last 15 years.”

Both the AAP and BJP capitalized on Congress’ battered reputation. For several years after Congress won the national government in 2004, technocrat Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was praised for leading India to breakneck growth and economic reforms that enticed foreign investment. But as the economy slowed and scandals surfaced, Congress found itself wrangling with regional coalition partners and unable to push through further reforms. In Rajasthan, for example, years of political infighting prevented a new law on free medicines and ambulance services from coming into force until this year - leaving little time to make an impact that could have helped Congress in the state’s vote. Congress lost control of Rajasthan to BJP, with preliminary results giving Congress only 21 seats to BJP’s 162. The preliminary results also suggested BJP easily retained Madhya Pradesh, with 165 seats to Congress’ 58. In Chhattisgarh, after a very close contest, the BJP eventually prevailed with 49 seats against Congress’ 39. Meanwhile, India’s benchmark Sensex rose by 1.4 percent in the two days after the recent elections as markets cheered early signs of a strong showing by BJP. The BJP’s Modi, a three-time leader in Gujarat, is credited with turning his western state into an industrial haven.

**The News - December 09, 2013**

## Pakistan & Bangladesh

### Anti-Pakistan Protests Continue In Bangladesh

Anti-Pakistan protests continued for the second consecutive day in Bangladesh, a private TV channel reported. According to the report, protesters outside the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka called for an end to diplomatic ties with Islamabad. Chanting slogans against Pakistan, the protesters called upon the Bangladeshi government to sever diplomatic ties within 20 hours. They also warned that if ties were not severed, the Pakistan High Commission would be stormed, the TV channel reported. During the protests, several people were injured during clashes with police. Protesters burnt the Pakistani flag, effigies of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and tried to enter the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka, it reported. Protests in Bangladesh started taking place after the National Assembly passed a resolution against the execution of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah. Reacting to the protests, PTI Chairman Imran Khan said the anger of the Bangladeshis' over the military operation was justified but the execution of Mollah was wrong.

Officials said the protesters were detained in joint operations by the police, the elite Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and paramilitary border guards amid a series of transport blockades called by opposition parties, which are boycotting the polls. The "joint forces" arrested 118 people, mostly activists from the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its key ally Jamaat-e-Islami, in five districts where police had earlier clashed with demonstrators. The BNP, Jamaat and their smaller allies have been staging protests since late October to try to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down so that a neutral caretaker government can oversee the election. She refuses to accept the arrangement, which was in place during previous national polls.

The BNP has refused to field candidates for the January election, saying the vote under Hasina will be rigged – an accusation the premier flatly rejects. Jamaat, the country's largest Islamist party which has been barred from contesting the polls, is also furious with the government after one of its leaders was executed last week for crimes during the 1971 war. Protests over the divisive polls and the war crime trials have left at least 264 people dead since January, making this year the bloodiest in Bangladesh's history. Of the 118, 37 protesters were arrested in Rajnagar village in the western district of Meherpur, local police Chief Nahidul Alam said. "Most of them are Jamaat activists," he said. "They are anarchists. They cut trees to put blockades on the roads, threw crude bombs and attacked Lorries. They're arrested in a joint operation by police, RAB and BGB (Border Guard Bangladesh)," Alam told.

Daily Times – December 20, 2013

### Bangladesh Announces Three-Day Protest Against Pakistan

Bangladesh's ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance has announced three days of protest rallies against a resolution of Pakistan's National Assembly which criticized Abdul Qader Molla's execution. The rallies will be held in the capital. The alliance leaders will visit the violence-prone districts soon, stated the alliance spokesperson Mohammad Nasim. Addressing a press conference in the AL president's Dhanmondi office in the capital, he said the decision came at an emergency meeting of the alliance, headed by AL President Sheikh Hasina. Regarding the resolution, the AL presidium member said "Pakistan showed it was neither repentant over the 1971 genocide nor had moved on from its policy against humanity". Mahbubey Alam, addressing a press briefing at his Supreme Court office, urged all to make statements over the

war crimes trials “only being correctly and sufficiently aware of the related laws, rules, constitutional provisions and the matter”. He said Pakistan had not changed the “aggressive attitude” it showed towards Bangladesh in 1971. One country’s parliament cannot talk about the judiciary of another independent country like Bangladesh; he said adding, “From their resolution, it was proved that Qader Molla was their collaborator.”

Daily Times - December 21, 2013

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### **Bangladesh to Deploy Military to Stem Poll Violence**

Bangladesh authorities said that thousands of troops will be deployed next week to contain violence ahead of controversial general elections slated for January 5. Heavily armed troops have already fanned out in major trouble spots across the country but “official deployment” will start December 26, the Election Commission said. “The army troops will be deployed between December 26 and January 9 across the country,” Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad told reporters. He did not say how many troops will be deployed but local media put the number at around 50,000. The move comes amid mounting tension in the country with the opposition and a key ruling party ally boycotting the parliamentary polls. The government insists the vote will go ahead as planned. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its allies have been staging protests since late October to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down so that a neutral caretaker government can oversee the election. Three rounds of United Nations-brokered last-minute talks between the government and opposition have failed to resolve the dispute, plunging the nation into its worst crisis in decades. Violence over the planned elections has left more than 100 people dead since November. A series of strikes and nationwide transport blockades have crippled the economy, affecting millions of poor farmers and the urban middle class. The Election Commission said the troops were being deployed in addition to security forces that include paramilitary border guards, who this week launched a crackdown on protesters after weeks of violence.

Daily Times - December 21, 2013

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## **Bangladesh Polls**

### **Bangladesh Opposition to Boycott Jan 5 Polls**

Bangladesh’s opposition alliance confirmed its boycott of a January general election, failing to register candidates before a deadline for nominations and plunging the country into renewed political uncertainty. The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) announced the decision amid growing street violence that has left 52 people dead since late October and a series of strikes and blockades that have paralyzed large parts of the country. Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, a BNP vice president, said that there is no question of BNP filing nominations for the Jan 5 election under the present circumstances. They are not going to take part in the Jan 5 elections. Nominations closed at 5pm on December 02, 2013 and officials said no BNP officials had filed their papers.

The announcement on Nov 25 of the election date further fuelled unrest, with 22 of the 52 deaths occurring since then. Two people died on December 02<sup>nd</sup> in western Bangladesh during clashes between hundreds of BNP supporters and ruling party activists, police said. Opposition activists have also tried to force a shutdown of public transport. Dozens of rail services have been suspended after the activists uprooted tracks, torched coaches and attacked trains with petrol bombs, officials said. Late on December 01<sup>st</sup> a train was derailed, with seven coaches

coming off the tracks, which blocked the line between Dhaka and the major cities of Chittagong and Sylhet, Bangladesh Railway traffic director Syed Zahur Hossain said. Police have cracked down on BNP leaders, prompting many of them to go into hiding. The BNP on December 02<sup>nd</sup> extended its 72-hour nationwide transport blockade until on December 05<sup>th</sup> afternoon to press its demands, party spokesman Salahuddin Ahmed said in a video statement from an undisclosed location. Chowdhury said the BNP and its 17 smaller allies including the country's largest Islamic party would only change their minds on the election boycott "if the polls are organized by a non-party, neutral government".

The BNP, led by two-times ex-premier Khaleda Zia, demands that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina quit and make way for a "non-party and impartial" chief executive to oversee the polls. It believes any polls held under Hasina will be rigged. Four free and fair polls have been held under caretaker governments in the past two decades, but Hasina scrapped the system in 2011 – arguing that it was unconstitutional and could pave the way for military coups. The prime minister has instead formed an interim multi-party cabinet which includes her allies. Her Awami League and its ally Jatiya Party, led by former dictator Hussain Muhammad Ershad, filed their nominations by the deadline, elections officials said. Bangladesh has witnessed at least 19 coups since August 1975 when Hasina's father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country's founding leader, was assassinated. Amid intensifying diplomatic efforts to calm the country's increasingly violent politics, the United Nations rights chief Navi Pillay warned at the weekend that Bangladesh was "dangerously close" to a major crisis.

**Dawn - December 02, 2013**

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### **Another Bangladesh Party Boycotts Polls As Death Toll Mounts**

Another major Bangladesh political party announced a boycott of the upcoming general election, declaring the country was on the "brink of disaster" as seven more people were killed in poll protests. Former dictator Hussain Muhammad Ershad said his Jatiya Party, the country's third largest and a key ally of the ruling Awami League, would not contest the January 5 elections, following in the footsteps of the opposition alliance. "Since all parties are not contesting, so the Jatiya Party will also not participate in the polls," Ershad told reporters, adding that a "proper environment" was absent for the elections. "I am not going to contest the election. The country is at the brink of disaster. We're heading towards uncertainty," Ershad added. The announcement came as fresh violence erupted across the country between police and bomb-throwing opposition supporters over the elections, leaving another seven people dead.

Police said they opened fire on opposition activists during fierce clashes in the southern district of Satkhira and the central district of Chandpur, after some of the protesters blocked a main road with logs in Satkhira. "They attacked officers with crude bombs and guns as we tried to clear the logs after midnight," said the district's police Chief Molla Jahangir Hossain. "We responded by firing rifles. Later we learnt that two protesters were killed," he said. In Chandpur police fired shotguns at about 300 opposition supporters, who attacked them with home-made bombs and rocks, local police chief Amir Jafar told AFP. "Two people including a protester were killed," he added. Another two people were killed during protests in the port city of Chittagong while a burns victim succumbed to his injuries in the capital. At least 59 people have now died in street violence since late October, when the opposition launched a series of protests, strikes and transport blockades. It is trying to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to quit making way for a neutral administration to oversee the polls, as happened in past elections.

The United States urged protesters to halt the “senseless violence” and called on rival political parties to hold talks to resolve the crisis and pave the way for “free and fair elections”. “The senseless violence of past days is especially reprehensible as it intentionally targeted innocent people with bombs and by burning them alive in vehicles,” the US embassy in Dhaka. ‘ ... we believe that it is now more urgent than ever for both major parties to empower trusted lieutenants to undertake constructive dialogue to find a way forward to hold free and fair elections that are credible in the eyes of the Bangladeshi people,” it added. The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its Islamist allies announced a boycott of the elections declaring that they would be rigged with Hasina still in charge. Hasina has refused to resign and has instead formed an interim multi-party cabinet which includes her allies.

**The Express Tribune - December 04, 2013**

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### **Jamaat Leader Hanged in Dhaka**

An opposition leader convicted of war crimes, hours after the Supreme Court rejected an appeal was executed in Bangladesh. The death threatened to spark new violence ahead of national elections next month. Sheikh Yousuf Harun, chief government administrator in Dhaka, said Abdul Quader Mollah was hanged at 10:01pm. Mr. Mollah’s party, the Jamaat-i-Islami, immediately called a nationwide general strike. The wife and children of Mr. Mollah met the opposition leader at a jail in Dhaka for one last time hours before the execution, and found him to be “calm”. “He has told us that he is proud to be a martyr for the cause of Islamic movement in the country,” Mr. Mollah’s son Hasan Jamil said after meeting his father. The 65-year-old leader was convicted of war crimes during the nation’s war of independence in 1971. He is the first person to be executed after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2010 began trying people suspected of crimes during the conflict. Most of the defendants are opposition members. Mr. Mollah’s execution had been placed on hold on night just before he originally was to have been put to death. The Supreme Court rejected his final appeal. Jamaat-i-Islami, an ally of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, had warned of “dire consequences” if he were executed. The two parties say the trials are an attempt to weaken the opposition and eliminate Islamic parties. Authorities have denied the allegations. Security was tight around the jail in Dhaka where he was hanged. Extra police were deployed along with paramilitary guards on the streets of the capital. Earlier, party activists clashed with police, torched or smashed vehicles and exploded homemade bombs in three other major cities like Chittagong, Sylhet and Rajshahi, TV stations reported. Scores of people were injured in the latest violence to hit the country, which has seen weeks of escalating tension as it struggles to overcome extreme poverty and rancorous politics.

**Dawn - December 13, 2013**

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### **Bangladesh Deploys Military in Election Countdown**

Bangladesh deployed tens of thousands of troops in a bid to contain deadly political violence ahead of elections next month which are being boycotted by the opposition. With Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina determined that the January 5 general election goes ahead despite claims that it will be a farce, troops are being sent to nearly every corner of the country at the end of its deadliest year for political violence since independence. The deployments are expected to further infuriate the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party which called for a mass march on the capital Dhaka beginning on December 29 in a bid to scupper the polls. Election Commission spokesman SM Asaduzzaman said that troops would be deployed in at

least 59 of the country's 64 districts. "They'll be used as a striking force if there is any violence and they will patrol important areas, streets and highways," he told AFP. While a small number of soldiers had begun taking up positions earlier this week, military spokesman Muhammad Reza-ul Karim said the mass deployment would begin and continue through until January 9.

"The troops have been deployed at the request of the Election Commission in an effort to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections," Karim said in a statement. The soldiers would initially be deployed to the main towns and cities in the districts before then moving into more rural areas. He did not say how many troops were being deployed but local media put the number at around 50,000. The BNP and its leader Khaleda Zia have condemned the military deployment, saying it would pit the armed forces against the people. The BNP is at the head of an 18-party opposition alliance which has refused to take part in the polls after Hasina blocked their demands to stand down and let a neutral caretaker government oversee the contest. Two other left-wing parties have also pulled out of the election as has a faction led by former dictator Hussain Muhammad Ershad, who had been an ally of Hasina's ruling Awami League. The boycotts have highlighted the growing political polarisation in the country of 153 million that won its independence from Pakistan in 1971. While Bangladesh has had a deeply troubled history since independence, with more than a dozen coups, this year has been the bloodiest since it broke free from its former rulers in Islamabad.

Protests over the polls and over the death sentences handed down to those convicted of war crime during the 1971 conflict have left at least 268 people dead since January. A constable was burned to death in a petrol bomb attack on a police vehicle while two more people succumbed to their burn injuries. Much of the violence has been blamed on supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami which has been barred from fielding candidates on January 5. Three rounds of UN-brokered last-minute talks between the government and opposition have failed to resolve the dispute between the Awami League and the BNP whose leaders despise each other. The United States, European Union and the Commonwealth countries have announced they will not send observers to the election, seriously denting its credibility. Strikes and blockades have crippled the economy, affecting millions of poor farmers and the urban middle class in what is the world's eighth most populous country and one of the poorest in Asia. The strikes have done further damage to an economy already reeling from the impact on the crucial garment sector from a factory collapse in April which sparked widespread industrial unrest.

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### **Bangladesh Opposition Calls Mass March To Derail Polls**

Bangladesh opposition leader Khaleda Zia called on citizens to stage a mass march to the capital Dhaka in an escalation of protests aimed at derailing controversial January elections. Zia's call stokes tensions in the impoverished country, with over 100 people already killed in clashes since late October when the opposition launched the protests to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign and make way for the polls to be held under a neutral caretaker government. "I urge all citizens to march to Dhaka on December 29. This march is to say 'no' to these farcical elections and to say 'yes' to democracy," Zia, a two-time former prime minister, said in a speech. "Wherever you are, carry a red and green national flag and march to Dhaka. We call this a march for democracy," she said in the capital. She asked the citizens to form "protest committees" in every village to foil the polls." The centre-left government insisted it would go ahead with the January 5 polls despite a boycott by opposition parties and major foreign nations announcing they won't send any election observers.

The United States joined the European Union and the Commonwealth countries in refusing to send observers to monitor polls, denting the credibility of the elections. Both the US and EU have raised questions about the polls as the winners of more than half of the seats in the 300-seat parliament have already been declared as they faced no opponents. It means technically that Hasina's Awami League government could form a government even before ballots are cast as the party and its allies have won 154 seats. Zia's main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its 17 allies including the country's largest Islamist outfit, Jamaat-e-Islami party, called the uncontested victories "the worst scandal in the country's election history". They said they are boycotting the polls because they fear the elections will be rigged by Hasina. The opposition wants Hasina to quit and make way for a neutral caretaker government to hold the polls in line with the four previous elections. Hasina has rejected the opposition demand, saying the caretaker government system is unconstitutional.

Last week, she ruled out changes to the election schedule, mocking Zia, her bitter rival for nearly three decades that she had missed the election train. Zia's call for a mass march comes as the country has been reeling from the deadliest political violence since its independence from Pakistan in 1971. At least 265 people have died since January in violence that has pitted opposition activists against police and ruling party supporters. At least 115 of them have been killed in the past two months when Zia stepped up her campaign to topple Hasina. Zia said she was still ready "to continue talks" with Hasina to resolve the crisis after three rounds of UN-brokered talks between the two major parties yielded no result. But Zia accused the government of not being sincere, charging that "it wants to cling to power at any cost".

**The Express Tribune - December 25, 2013**

## Pakistan & Afghanistan

### **Nascent Peace Process: Afghan Taliban Not Willing To Talk**

Despite Pakistan's efforts to facilitate talks between the Afghan High Peace Council and the Afghan Taliban, the group is unwilling to enter into negotiation, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz. "The Afghan Taliban has a principled stance that they do not recognize the government in Kabul and the constitution," Aziz told on the conclusion of the Pakistan-Afghanistan conference in the capital. "There is a need for increased informal contacts with them [Taliban] as most of their leaders are in Afghanistan and in Qatar, and the Afghan government can approach them," he added. "We do not have control over the Afghan Taliban. We have been urging them for a long time to talk to the High Peace Council but they do not accept our requests," Aziz said. Asked about the possible relocation of the Taliban office from Qatar, he said the venue was not important. He said the new office could come up in "Turkey or Saudi Arabia" but that the important facet was that they agree to talk. He confirmed that High Peace Council's members met former Taliban chief strategist Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in Pakistan last month. "They [Afghan council] met him but later said he [Baradar] was not feeling well so they were unable to hold detailed talks. I think Mullah Baradar had no permission from his leadership to talk," Aziz said. "Meetings with Mullah Baradar will be useful when the Taliban leadership allows and gives him authority to talk on their behalf," he added. Asked why Mullah Baradar has not yet been allowed to rejoin his family like the 50 other freed Taliban detainees in one year, he said President Hamid Karzai had insisted that Mullah Baradar could play a role in the reconciliation process when he is accessible. "If he [Mullah Baradar] is inaccessible, he will not be traced and that is why we have kept the situation as per the expectations of the Afghan government," Aziz said. He pointed out that the Afghan negotiators could have access to Mullah Baradar and insisted that he is allowed visits by family members. "But we provide him security

and cannot let him go,” he said. “Pakistan has also in principle agreed to allow Mullah Baradar to go abroad if Afghanistan agrees,” the adviser said.

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### **First Option, Dialogue: Top Security Forum Endorses Taliban Talks**

At the first-ever meeting of the recently reconstituted top security forum, the country’s top civilian and military leadership decided to pursue peace talks with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its affiliates, labeling it as the ‘first option.’ The Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS) made the decision at its maiden session chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In August, this year, the Defense Committee of the Cabinet morphed into the CCNS to deal with issues related to national security. A meeting focused on three key issues: formulation of a national security strategy to safeguard Pakistan’s national interests, devising a strategy on internal security, and relations with Afghanistan, according to the official handout issued by Prime Minister’s Office. The committee reaffirmed the government’s commitment to negotiations with the TTP and considered the use of other options only as a last resort. Sources said that Chief of the Army Staff General Raheel Sharif and other senior military officials briefed the committee on the country’s internal and external security situation.

Despite recent hiccups in efforts to bring the TTP to the negotiating table, Premier Nawaz said the government would give ‘peace a chance’ before going for any other option. Another major decision taken by the committee was to enhance security on the western border with Afghanistan. This decision was taken after US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, in his recent meetings with Pakistani officials, raised the issue of ‘terrorist hideouts’ on the Pakistani side of the border. According to officials, the Pentagon chief told Islamabad that it could significantly reduce drone attacks in the volatile tribal regions if a decisive action was taken against ‘terrorist hideouts’ there. The Afghan reconciliation process and Pakistan’s role in peace efforts also came under discussion. The official statement said the committee directed the ministries concerned to take measures to facilitate regional peace and stability. The prime minister also briefed the members of the committee on his last visit to Kabul. He said a number of steps were agreed upon for political security and economic and commercial cooperation with Afghanistan.

### **‘No More Talks’: TTP Rebuffs Dialogue ‘Option’**

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) immediately dismissed the idea of peace talks. “Like previous governments, this one is [also] a puppet of the United States. It’s powerless and dollar-hungry,” said TTP spokesman Shahidullah Shahid. He said the Taliban had information that plans were already under way for a military operation, saying the Taliban were ready for battle.

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