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FORUM

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**GOVERNANCE WATCH****Government Working****11-Point Agenda: 10 Parties Push For FATA Reforms**

Political Parties Joint Committee on Fata Reforms has announced an 11-point agenda for reforms in Fata and demanded that, like people of other areas of the country, the people of Fata be given legal, political, democratic and constitutional rights. The discussion was addressed by leaders of ten political parties including Arsalan Hoti of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Akhundzada Chattan of Pakistan Peoples' Party, Abdul Jalil Jan, Mufti Abdul Shakoor and Munir Orakzai of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), Suleman Afridi of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Hashim Babar and Anisa Zaib Tahir Kheli of Qaumi Watan Party, Nawabzada Mohsin Ali Khan of National Awami Party, Saeed Qadir of Muttahida Qaumi Movement, Sahibzada Haroonur Rashid, Zamoor Afridi and Abdul Rashid of Jamat-e-Islami and Ajmal Wazir of Muslim League-Q, Coordinator of Chief Minister Balochistan Jan Muhammad Buledi.

The committee demanded that peace should be maintained in Fata and basic human rights provided to all tribal citizens through an amendment to Article 247 of the Constitution; additionally, the committee asked that legislation rights be transferred from president to parliament, local body elections in Fata be held, a comprehensive development and economic package be announced, the people be entrusted with the right to decide the future of Fata, Fata be brought under the purview of Pemra and the media be given access to Fata, jirga system should be made more democratic and independent, Actions in Aid of Civil Power Regulation should be abolished, the powers of the administration and the judiciary should be separated, citizens should not be deprived of their properties, the law of inheritance be implemented and the Khasadar and Levies forces be made more professional.

Jamaat-e-Islami leader Sahibzada Haroon Rashid said that even though there are currently 12 members in the National Assembly and eight senators who belong to Fata, they do not have the right to introduce a bill or resolution regarding the region. He said that the right to make all the decisions in Fata lies with a Grade 19 officer who enjoys the authority to order imprisonment, exile, demolition of houses and even hanging a person and his decision cannot be challenged in any court of the country. Arsalan Hoti said that contrary to the past, the option of talks is being tried in this case and every possible effort will be made to avoid an armed operation. Zamoor Afridi said drone strikes in Fata should end and the Tehreek-e-Taliban should be brought on board for any talks in order to make peace possible in the region. Aneesa Zaid Tahir Kheli added that action against all the criminals should be taken, be they Pakistanis or foreigners.

**The Express Tribune - April 14, 2014**

**Renewed Commitment: Government, Army on Same Page**

Pakistan's political leadership and the army are on the same page when it comes to retaining peace, progress and bringing development in the country, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said during a visit to Gwadar port. He was welcomed here by Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif and Chief Minister Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch and briefed on the progress of development works in the area. "Chief Minister Balochistan is on my right side and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif to my left," the PM said as he met with the media during his visit. "The political and military leadership are on the same page for securing peace and bringing

prosperity in the country. We want to take the country out of the present difficult situation," he said. The PM said the government has a broad-based plan for the development of Gwadar under which a new security force would also be raised for the security and protection of foreign nationals, particularly Chinese citizens working on various projects in the area.

Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif will devise the plan and ensure the implementation of the security plan. Matters relating to the development of Balochistan, peace and security and Pak-China Economic Corridor were discussed at meeting. The ways and means to connect Kashgar (China) and Gwadar through road and rail links were deliberated in detail. The PM said the Director General FWO briefed the meeting about the pace of work on various road projects underway in the province. He expressed his government's resolve to lay a network of roads in Balochistan during the current tenure. The PM said, "It is regrettable that Gwadar had never been paid due attention despite being strategically important. Gwadar should have been a free port long ago." The premier announced the construction of a 300-bed hospital and state-of-the-art airport here, describing the plan to model Gwadar along the lines of 'free ports' such as Dubai, Singapore and Hong Kong ports.

The PM announced that the construction of a 19-kilometer highway to connect Gwadar with the coastal highway and express highway will soon begin. "The Planning Commission has been directed to expedite the construction of Gwadar port," he added. The Planning Commission has also been tasked with the exercise to hire international consultants for this purpose, he said. The PM said he would also convene a cabinet meeting in Balochistan. "The Balochistan CM is playing crucial role for good governance and maintaining law and order," the PM said. Earlier during the briefing, the PM was apprised that in the Pak-China Economic Corridor project, Rs162 billion have been allocated for Balochistan only. He was informed that the provision of clean drinking water, a technical training center and the expansion of the airport and port have also been planned for Gwadar. The PM appreciated the role of federal agencies, army, FC and police for improving the law and order situation in Balochistan. He directed the Finance Minister to release Rs1.6 billion for port dredging

The Express Tribune - April 25, 2014

## National Assembly & Senate

### NA Resolution Seeks Ban on 'Immoral' TV Programmes

The National Assembly passed a resolution to impose a ban on broadcast of "immoral programmes" on private and government-run TV channels. The Lower House of parliament put off lifting the ban on video-sharing website YouTube over treasury's opposition, which called for making necessary arrangements to block sacrilegious material on the website before lifting the ban. The House also adopted a resolution urging the government to take steps to improve and regulate education in seminaries after Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yusuf told the House that the government is consulting the Ittehad-e-Tanzeemat-e-Madaris to bring reforms in seminaries. On the private members' day, the speaker disposed off major items on the agenda and allowed lawmakers of Jamaat-e-Islami to introduce their resolution which called for an immediate ban on airing of what they called were immoral programmes on private and state-owned TV channels. The resolution was moved by JI's lawmakers Sahibzada Tariqullah, Sher Akbar Khan, Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan and Ayesha Syed.

However, the resolution moved by PPP's Shazia Marri to lift the ban on YouTube was deferred by the chair when Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Shaikh Aftab Ahmad said the government wants to lift the ban on the website but after necessary safeguards have been put in

place to avoid repetition of incidents which hurt the sentiments of Muslims. Marri, who agreed to move the resolution on the demand of the treasury, said that around one billion people, including students, use YouTube across the world for research. She pointed out that YouTube was accessible through proxy websites and there was no point in maintaining the ban. Later, while submitting the resolution relating to seminaries, PPP MNA Nafisa Shah said majority of the madrassas were playing a constructive role but many were also engaged in promoting sectarianism and extremism. "Science subjects should also be taught as a subject in religious schools," she proposed.

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Mohammad Yousuf pointed out that 8,000 seminaries were teaching science as a subject. He said that consultations were underway over the formation of a regulatory authority for the religious schools. Meanwhile, the lawmakers from across the aisle called upon the government to include attacks on polio workers in the agenda of peace negotiations with the TTP. They pointed out that the dangerous disease now only exists in three countries, including Pakistan, and 96 cases have been detected only in the last six months. Speaking on the motion for eradication of polio from the country Qaumi Watan Party's chief MNA Aftab Sherpao suggested the government include the matter of attacks on polio workers in the agenda of peace talks with the Taliban.

Daily Times - April 02, 2014

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### **NA Body Approves Protection of Pakistan Amendment Bill**

The National Assembly's Standing Committee for Interior approved the Protection of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill 2014 by a majority. The bill was jointly opposed by the PPP, PTI, MQM, JI and JUI-F. The in-camera session of the committee, convened by Rana Shamim, also witnessed spats between PML-N's Tehmina Daultana and MQM's parliamentarians. Tehmina reacted angrily to MQM's reservations, citing equal sufferings by the PML-N, while other members intervened timely to ward off any escalation of the conflict. The JUI-F's opposition of the bill stemmed from reservations about the government not taking Maulana Fazl into confidence; while the PTI's Arif Alvi had reservations over numerous sections of the bill, promising many amendments, at the time of debating the bill in parliament. Alvi was critical of the armed forces being given the right to arrest citizens who were subject to civil arrests only. He was also critical of the section according to which the government had the right to relocate a case from regular courts to special courts.

State Minister for Interior Baleegh-ur-Rehman said a few amendments had been introduced after a consensus with the opposition, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the bill. Replying to a question, he quoted the Article 10 according to which every citizen had been provided full security and safety; assuring that no legislation contrary to the Constitution would be carried out. He brushed off fears of abduction of citizens and relocation of any cases to anti-terrorism and special courts without any profound logical reasons. Meanwhile, the Senate Committee on Interior has deferred four bills presented on the agenda in its meeting. The four bills include Private Member Bill, Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2014, Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Bill and Honor Killings (Amendment) Bill with directions. The meeting of the committee was chaired by Chairman Senator Talha Mehmood. While deferring the Private Member Bill for two weeks, Senator Talha directed the activists of Private Member Bill to give briefing on the bill by participating in the meeting. The chairman has formed a three-member committee on Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2014 after former Interior Minister Rehman Malik pointed out theft of electricity and corruption in WAPDA. The committee would present its recommendations

within two weeks. While deferring the bill on honor killings for two weeks, the meeting directed the activists of the bill to give briefing by attending the meeting about the bill.

The News - April 02, 2014

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### **Protection of Pakistan Ordinance: Government moves controversial bill in NA**

The government finally presented the controversial Protection of Pakistan (Amendment) Ordinance (PPO) 2014 in the National Assembly, amid resistance from both major opposition parties and some members of the treasury. Debate on the bill could not commence, however, due to two walkouts and a vociferous protest by an ally of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz in the lower house. Lawmakers from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) walked out of the session to lodge a protest against what they said were the 'extra-judicial' killings of their workers by security forces in Karachi. MQM parliamentarian Asif Husnain accused certain departments of the security forces of having formed 'death squads' to target workers of his party. Shah Gul Afridi, an MNA from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) also spoke out against the negligence of the government and complained that nothing had been done for the region over the last eight months. All lawmakers from Fata then also walked out of the session, criticizing Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for not giving the issues of their areas any time or attention.

An MNA from the Khyber Agency said the Fata lawmakers decided to boycott proceedings because they have not been consulted over major policy decisions in the region. "We are the main stakeholders [in the peace process] and it is the prime minister's responsibility to take us into confidence... but no one has even met us so far," he said. Similarly, he said Fata parliamentarians have been given no role in other decision-making processes. "Everyone is doing his or her own politics in Fata, but we, the elected representatives of the region, have been ignored," complained MNA from South Waziristan Moulvi Jamal Din. As soon as Rana Shamim Ahmad, chairperson of the NA Standing Committee on Interior, presented the bill before the house for approval, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) MNA Maulana Mirzaman rose up and said: "We are part of the ruling coalition, but we still oppose this bill." The committee, which cleared the bill, did not take JUI-F into confidence while doing so. "Some clauses of the bill are against the people of the country and we will oppose it until the government addresses our concerns," said Mirzaman.

The Express Tribune - April 03, 2014

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### **Government May Rely On Majority for Controversial Bill**

A much awaited standing committee report on a controversial bill seeking to tighten terrorism prosecution came to the National Assembly, indicating the government will press its house majority into action after a consensus remained elusive. But contrary to the government's comfortable position in the 342-seat lower house, the Protection of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, some of whose provisions like permission to shoot suspects at sight, secret trials and longer detentions, have aroused fears of opposition politicians and rights activists, could get stuck up in the opposition-controlled Senate. The standing committee on interior and narcotics control said in its report that it was with an "overwhelming majority" that its last meeting approved bill with some of its own amendments. The bill, referred to it on Jan 30, seeks to turn a presidential ordinance into permanent law, which amends the original Protection of Pakistan Ordinance of 2013. The amending ordinance is already in force and it was for fear of its uncertain fate in

parliament that the government got its extension for a second period of 90 days through a vote of the National Assembly during its previous session.

The opposition leader in the house, Khursheed Ahmed Shah, had then advised the government to try for consensus on the bill to ensure its passage also by the 104-seat Senate, where his Pakistan People's Party and its allies form the majority. But his counsel that a consensus in the National Assembly would reflect in the Senate lost much credibility after some PPP senators and their allies blocked another government bill that was passed by the lower house with PPP support to pave the way for the appointment of a consensus chief election commissioner. Standing committee's report, recommending that the lower house pass the bill with some amendments proposed by it, included a dissenting note from two members of the opposition Muttahida Qaumi Movement, but none from the main opposition parties like the PPP and Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf. But even without giving a dissenting note, the government-allied Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-F thought it fit to embarrass the government when one of its senior members, Maulana Amir Zaman, declared his party's continued opposition to the bill if its concerns about what he called "anti-people" clauses were not removed.

More protests were in store for the government in the form of walkouts by the MQM and usually pro-government lawmakers from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas before the house was adjourned for a previously unscheduled recess. That recess was an apparent concession to the PPP to facilitate its members' travel to the mausoleum of their party founder, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, at Naudero, Sindh, to mark the 35th anniversary of his April 4, 1079, execution after a controversial conspiracy-to-murder conviction. Seven MQM members present at the time walked out of the house quite early in the day, and did not return for the remainder of the sitting, to protest against what one of them, Asif Hasnain, called a continuing appearance of mutilated corpses of his party's followers in Karachi over the past 10 days. He urged the president, the prime minister and the chief justice to take notice of what he described as "extrajudicial murders" by police and unspecified intelligence agencies.

The walkout by six Fata members came after one of them, Shahji Gul Afridi, shouted at the top of his voice his complaint that the government had "done nothing" for the good of the militancy-plagued Fata during nine months of its rule and that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had not even granted their request for a meeting with him. Mr. Afridi threatened that the Fata members would continue protesting until a commission was set up to redress "these reservations" as he waved a paper without revealing its contents.

**Dawn - April 03, 2014**

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### **Senate to Take Up Bill on Cyber Security**

A bill seeking establishment of a 'National Cyber Security Council (NCSC)' is on the first day's agenda of the Senate session beginning. The NCSC Bill 2014, submitted by Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed of PML-Q, suggests formation of a 30-member council to formulate a national cyber security policy and evolve coordination among various government organizations and departments working on the issue. According to the bill, the council will comprise members from public and private sectors and federal secretaries of defense, interior, planning, information technology and communications will be its ex-officio members. The council will recommend measures to counter emerging cyber security threats to the country and facilitate communication between the government and private sectors. Senator Hussain said last year's disclosures about America's secret surveillance of electronic communications across the world demanded that Pakistan should take measures to check online spying. Mr. Hussain said he had

prepared the draft of the private member bill after consultation with stakeholders who believed that the country was facing a “new kind of non-military security threats”.

**Dawn - April 13, 2014**

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### **Faisal Raza Abidi Quits As Senator**

PPP firebrand Faisal Raza Abidi tendered his resignation as senator, complaining that the Upper House of Parliament could not deliver him justice with regard to the case he had filed against the then chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. The PPP leadership asked Abidi the other day to quit. His resignation was accepted by the Senate Chairman, Nayyar Hussain Bokhari. Abidi said he was happy to resign but was leaving a question for the Senate that failed to address his complaint filed with the House under the Supreme Judicial Council. “If parliament can’t give justice to a senator, one can imagine the state of the common man’s issues,” he contended. Abidi, who is known for targeting Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry on the floor of the House and in the media, regretted that he knew well about those who took oath before the camera to safeguard the Constitution and ensure the rule of law but in fact treated the Constitution as a piece of paper. Clad in usual black Shalwar Qameez, the senator from Karachi was repeatedly asked by Deputy Chairman Sabir Baloch to talk on such matters outside the House. “Justice should be provided to me or should I take a gun in my hands if you make a commitment as the chairman and it is not honored?” Abidi handed his resignation over to the Senate Secretary and waved to the senators before exiting the House.

**The News - April 18, 2014**

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### **Opposition Blocks Anti-Terrorism Law In Senate**

The opposition managed to prevent the government from pushing its controversial new anti-terror law through the Senate. However, the bill has now landed in the Senate Standing Committee on Interior, which is dominated by members of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). When the bill was moved by Minister for Science and Technology Zahid Hamid, opposition members including Pakistan Peoples Party’s Raza Rabbani, Awami National Party’s Haji Adeel and Pakistan Muslim League’s Kamil Ali Agha were quite vocal in their opposition to the bill, in its current shape. Shouting “Black Law! Black Law!”, opposition members managed to block the passage of the bill, which was passed by the National Assembly on April 7. The bill began life as the Protection of Pakistan Ordinance, which was promulgated on October 20, 2013. Following its lapse, a draft bill was tabled in the lower house on January 27 this year.

Opposition parties have been unanimous in their opposition to two of the most worrying provisions in the proposed law. The first provides for individuals to be detained for up to 90 days at an undisclosed location. The second allows law enforcers to shoot suspicious individuals on sight. Both are seen as attempts to give retrospective legal cover to enforced disappearances and extra judicial killings. Senators called for the constitution of a special committee, with representation from all major parliamentary parties, which would review the bill. But despite their best efforts, they could not prevent the bill from going to the Senate Standing Committee on Interior. Raza Rabbani told Dawn the bill had been bulldozed through the National Assembly, adding that in blatant disregard for individuals’ fundamental rights, the bill give unprecedented powers to law enforcers. Kamil Ali Agha, acknowledging the need for anti-terrorism legislation, maintained that certain controversial provisions of the bill must be reviewed. The sentiment was echoed by ANP senators Zahid Khan and Haji Adeel, the MQM’s Tahir Mashhadi and Abdul Rauf Lala of the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party.

The PPP's Farhatullah Babar, talking to Dawn after the Senate session, said that all parties agreed that effective anti-terrorism legislation should be enacted, but the proposed law was not acceptable in its current shape. He said the Senate chairman had asked all members of the upper house - who wished to move amendments - to attend the standing committee meeting which will now take up the bill. "A lot of amendments are going to come from different political parties", he added. The PPP spokesperson said that the bill needed to be purged of stipulations such as those that gave security agencies permission to shoot suspicious individuals on sight, legitimized enforced disappearances with retrospective effect or made confessions obtained by police admissible as evidence. Separately, opposition members staged a walkout from the house to protest the withdrawal of a subsidy on wheat flour, provided to the people of Skardu. Debate around foreign policy issues was dominated by the elections in India and Afghanistan and their impact on Pakistan's relations with its immediate neighbors. Farhatullah Babar emphasized the need to reclaim the ground lost by civilians to the security establishment over past decades with regards to foreign policy formulation. He asked the government to sever any alleged links it may have with insurgents inside Afghanistan.

Dawn - April 19, 2014

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### **Opposition Parties Devise Joint Plan To Block Protection of Pakistan Bill**

Opposition parties in the Senate will be meeting to devise a joint strategy to block the government's move to get the Protection of Pakistan bill passed from the upper house. The meeting, according to opposition senators, has been convened to prepare a consensus document containing amendments to the controversial bill which is expected to be taken up by the Senate's Standing Committee on Interior in the next few days. The bill was referred to the standing committee by the chair amid strong protest by opposition members when it was tabled by the government in the house. In a significant development, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), which had been playing the role of an independent opposition for the past one year, has announced that it will attend meeting so that the opposition parties could come out with a united stance on the bill.

Mr. Mashhadi, who is also a member of the Senate's Committee on Interior, said that his party had already prepared amendments to the bill which he would present before members of other opposition parties. He said that the MQM did not consider itself a part of the opposition alliance led by PPP, but it had decided to join hands with other opposition parties to block the government's move to get the bill passed as it contained a number of clauses against fundamental rights of citizens. The MQM senator said that the government was wrongly saying that the bill had been passed by the National Assembly unanimously since a number of parties, including the MQM, had opposed it. Two specific provisions of the bill - giving powers to law-enforcement agencies to arrest a suspect without warrants and keep him under detention for 90 days and to shoot a person merely on the basis of suspicion - are seen by opposition senators as an attempt to give a legal cover to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

PPP's parliamentary leader in the Senate Raza Rabbani, when contacted, said that the bill had been bulldozed in the National Assembly and that his party would not let the government repeat this in the Senate. Describing it as a 'black law', Mr. Rabbani said it was against the fundamental rights to give unbridled powers to law-enforcers. Mr. Rabbani, who accompanied his party co-chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari at the latter's meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on April 16, said the prime minister had assured them that the opposition's proposals would be accommodated in the bill. He, however, denied that there had been any understanding between the PPP and the PML-N on the bill. When asked as to why the

opposition which is in a majority in the Senate did not block even the presentation of the bill, he said the PPP believed that the country needed such laws to deal with terrorism but there should be no curbs on fundamental rights of citizens. Moreover, he declared that if the government did not incorporate the opposition's amendments, it had the option to reject the bill completely at the committee or in the house. Besides the PPP and the MQM, the meeting would also be attended by members of the Awami National Party and the PML-Q.

**Dawn - April 21, 2014**

## Provincial Assembly

### PHC Wants Amendment to Sub-Article 7 of Article 247

Declaring sub-article 7 of Article 247 of the Constitution inconsistent with articles related to fundamental rights, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) advised the federal government to submit a reference in the parliament for suitable amendments to the said article. "We are advising the federal government to submit a reference in the National Assembly and Senate for suitable amendments in sub-article 7 of Article 247 of the Constitution. People of Fata are citizens of Pakistan, but imposing restriction through this article of the Constitution against tribal people to get fundamental rights is discrimination against them," the PHC ruled. Sub-article 7 of Article 247 states that, "Neither the Supreme Court, nor a high court shall exercise any jurisdiction under the Constitution in relation to a tribal area, unless Majlis-e-Shura (Parliament) by law otherwise provides." The bench also directed the PHC registrar to fax copies of the judgment to federal government through secretary Ministry of Law and Justice Division, Speaker National Assembly and Chairman Senate.

About jurisdiction of the high court over matters related to illegal detentions and government servants, the PHC chief justice observed that the court had given its findings about all these questions in the detailed judgment. However, due to the signature and additional note of one of the judges of the full bench the detailed judgment was not released to media and parties. After hearing arguments of the additional attorney general for Pakistan, Attique Shah, an amicus curiae in around 60 writ petitions, the full bench on April 4 reserved judgment until Monday about its jurisdiction in the tribal areas over matters related to illegal detentions and government servants. However, the Fata Lawyers Forum (FLF) president Muhammad Ijaz Mohmand and other members hailed the PHC decision and advised the federal government to file a reference for making amendments to sub-article 7. He said that hopefully the federal government would soon submit a reference in the parliament to mitigate sufferings of tribal people.

**The News - April 08, 2014**

## Musharraf's Case/Trial

### Interior Ministry's Reply: Government 'Unable' To Take Musharraf's Name off ECL

The government responded to former military ruler General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf's request to remove his travel restrictions with an ambiguously worded communiqué, shifting the burden of responsibility on the courts. The interior ministry informed Musharraf that the government was "unable to accede to his request" of removing his name from the Exit Control List (ECL) "on the basis of record pronouncements of the superior courts." Officials' privy to the development and the meeting say, however, that the vaguely worded statement has its reasons - mostly

political. It has been suggested that Musharraf's legal team will approach relevant courts in order to have the defendant's name removed from the ECL. Last year, the Sindh High Court (SHC) had put Musharraf's name on the ECL, asking him not to leave the country without seeking prior permission from the courts concerned over his alleged involvement in several cases. The special court, however, had said that it did not have jurisdiction over the matter and it was for the government to decide.

Commenting on the government's response to Musharraf's application, Anwer Mansoor, one of Musharraf's lawyers, said that by writing, "[...] federal government is unable to accede to your requests in public interest," shows that they have political motives. Referring to several criminal cases against Musharraf in different courts, he explained that the travel restrictions come in case there was some order passed. Court proceedings should not be a hurdle in removing his name from the ECL, he added. Musharraf's new lawyer Dr Farogh Naseem subsequently filed an application with the interior ministry. Naseem told that he was waiting for the government's response and that he had several options including knocking the doors of the Supreme Court. Another member of Musharraf's legal team also said that they "will file the writ petition in the SHC." Separately, advocate Salman Akram Raja said Musharraf could move either the Islamabad High Court (IHC) or the SHC to have the travel ban lifted. "The process might take at least two weeks as the government will be asked to submit its reply."

On the other hand, political analysts are of the view that although the government has left the matter for courts to decide, this is more of a political than a legal matter. Former information minister Qamar Zaman Kaira from the Pakistan People's Party said, "The government should have a clear position on removing or not removing Musharraf's name from the ECL instead of citing pending cases as a reason." He, however, appreciated the fact that for the first time someone is being held accountable for subverting the constitution. "This is a good beginning." Kaira said whatever decision is taken on the ECL issue, Musharraf "should be tried." In addition, he said that Musharraf should also be tried for toppling an elected government on October 12, 1999 along with his "aides and abettors."

**The Express Tribune - April 03, 2014**

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### **Musharraf Case Proves Supremacy of Law: LHC CJ**

Lahore High Court Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial has said the judiciary is committed to dispensing justice to the affected people. He was addressing a seminar on the topic of 'Court Reporting and Dispensation of Justice', organized at the Punjab Judicial Academy by the Press Council of Pakistan (PCP). About the Pervez Musharraf issue, the LHC CJ said he did not want to comment on the case as it was a sub-judice matter. But, he added, he would like to say one thing that the developments in the Musharraf case had proven the supremacy of the law. The CJ said justice could not be judged by the number of verdicts but by the authenticity of the verdicts. He said the services of the legal fraternity would be remembered for long. The LHC CJ hoped that in the future the judiciary, lawyers, civil society and the media would jointly ensure the supremacy of the rule of law.

**The News - April 13, 2014**

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## Talks with Taliban

### 19 Taliban Freed As 'Goodwill Gesture'

The government announced on Thursday that it had released 19 non-combatants Taliban as a goodwill gesture for bolstering the peace process with the outlawed TTP. But surprisingly, the claim made by the interior ministry was rebutted by the Prime Minister's Secretariat which said that "release of some prisoners involved in petty crimes by the political administration has been wrongly connoted as release of Taliban prisoners". The statement emanating from the Prime Minister's House was in fact a reaction to a report by an international wire service claiming that the prisoners were freed with the approval of the prime minister. "It is clarified that there has been no authorization given from the prime minister in this regard," the brief statement said. The interior ministry has announced the release of the first large batch of people since the launch of military operation in South Waziristan in 2009. A spokesman for the ministry said the prisoners released were non-combatant Taliban belonging to the Mehsud tribe.

However, the confusion created by the contradictory positions taken by the interior ministry and the PM Office was soon over when hours after the denial, the latter confirmed the release of non-combatants and said the measure had been taken at the local level on the directives of the interior ministry. An official told that the confusion was the result of some media reports which had attributed the release of the prisoners directly to the PM Office. He said Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan was the focal person in the ongoing talks with the TTP and, therefore, the decision was taken at his level. He added that those released were local people who had been investigated by the political administration and declared innocent. "The interior ministry has now conveyed the details about the development to the prime minister and there is no room for any confusion at all," the official said.

Later, the interior ministry came up with some information about the freed Taliban, but did not release their names. It said three of them had been released on March 21, five on March 25 and 11 on March 28. They were arrested on suspicion or on the basis of intelligence reports. "The government and the armed forces have a policy to free those proved to be innocent as a result of investigations," the ministry spokesman said. Meanwhile, talking to reporters in Islamabad, Chaudhry Nisar rejected a perception that there was a deadlock in peace talks and said he would soon meet the Taliban committee. It will be followed by another round of direct talks with the TTP Shura. Earlier, speaking at the launching ceremony of a think tank, 'Centre for Policy Research and Dialogue', the minister expressed optimism about progress in peace talks and said a meeting would soon be held to review the process. He said he hoped that the efforts being made by the government would restore peace in the country.

After 9/11, he said, former rulers imposed a war on Pakistan which continued for over a decade. He regretted that nothing had been done in the past to resolve the conflict through dialogue. Those responsible for this state of affairs, he said, were now criticizing the government. He said it should be acknowledged that there were no acts of terrorism between 2001 and 2004 in tribal areas. No Pakistani citizen was involved in the 9/11 incident. Our Peshawar Bureau adds: An official said most of the people released had been rounded up during search operations and declared "white" implying that they were innocent. Some of them belong to the Khan Said alias Sajna group which is widely believed to have been in contact with security agencies to cut a peace deal prior to the start of talks with the mainstream TTP. It is clear that the government has taken a conscious decision to please the Sajna group whose representative Azam Tariq is part of the militants' team holding direct talks with the government. A militant commander, however, told our correspondent in Miramshah that those released did not belong to the TTP.

They belonged to the Wana-based Maulvi Nazir group which already had a peace agreement with the government, he claimed.

Dawn - April 04, 2014

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### **TTP Extends Ceasefire till April 10**

After days of deliberations, the defunct Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) finally agreed to extend the ceasefire till April 10 and made it clear that it won't be extended further in case the government didn't come up with solid steps during the peace talks. Shahidullah Shahid, the spokesman for the outlawed outfit, said that some of the militant factions were not convinced of the sincerity and seriousness of the government regarding the peace process and, therefore, were not in favor of extending the ceasefire. "We once again decided to show seriousness and responsibility and in order to wait for an answer from the government and its negotiation committee, we have decided to extend the ceasefire till April 10," the TTP spokesman said.

"During the ceasefire, we have ordered our Mujahideen to stop their activities and attacks against the government and security forces in the country," he added. He said after the expiry of the six-day ceasefire, the Taliban Shura would meet again to discuss whether to further extend the ceasefire or not. "It depends upon the government's intentions. If the government is sincere and serious in the peace talks and it takes some practical measures, we will definitely extend the ceasefire," Shahidullah Shahid said. He said that they had demanded of the government to release their 800 civilian prisoners from jails and secret cells of the security agencies, stop the crackdown on their people in settled districts and torture on their prisoners. Another important demand the Taliban made from the government was to provide them a 'peace zone' in the tribal areas.

Regarding the 'peace zone', a senior Taliban commander and member of the TTP Shura said, "We want to have a separate place in Fata, favorably in South Waziristan, without the presence of security forces, where we can easily meet the government negotiators," he said while pleading anonymity. About the release of 16 to 19 civilian prisoners by the security forces in Wana, the headquarters of South Waziristan, on March 31, the Taliban spokesman said it had not been confirmed to them yet whether the names of the freed men were included in the list of 800 civilian prisoners handed over to the government negotiation committee.

According to sources, all the 16 prisoners freed in Wana belonged to the Mehsud tribe from South Waziristan. They said the men were detained two years ago and were finally declared innocent by the security agencies. The Taliban announced the ceasefire on March 1 but were subsequently divided over the issue of its extension when it expired on March 31. They remained indecisive till April 4 but finally announced a conditional extension in the ceasefire. The Taliban said they had spoken to Omar Khalid Khurasani, a feared militant commander and the TTP leader in Mohmand tribal region, and convinced him to abide by the ceasefire. Omar Khalid Khurasani had announced two days ago that his faction would not extend the ceasefire. Rather, he threatened to launch fresh attacks against the government and its installations.

The Taliban sources said that members of their political Shura were likely to meet the government negotiators somewhere in the tribal areas or in settled districts adjacent to Fata. They said the venue for the meeting would be selected after consultations between the two committees.

The News - April 05, 2014

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### **Making Headway: Government to Free a Dozen More TTP 'Non-Combatants'**

The government decided to free a dozen more Taliban 'non-combatant' prisoners as a goodwill gesture. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has called for the release of its 'non-combatant' prisoners and establishment of a 'peace zone' before the second round of face-to-face dialogue. The decision came three days after the government handed over 19 tribesmen based in South Waziristan Agency, calling them 'non-combatant Taliban prisoners'. And it came a day after the TTP decided to extend their one-month ceasefire for another six days. "We've decided to release 12 to 13 Taliban as a goodwill gesture," Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan told journalists following a meeting between the TTP intermediaries and the government's negotiating committee.

The government publicly admitted that 19 Taliban 'non-combatant' prisoners were released. However, Taliban spokesperson Shahidullah Shahid denied on Friday the men had been sought by the TTP or were its members. Last month, the Taliban handed over a list of 300 people, including women, children, and old men, to the negotiators and demanded the government release them. Expressing satisfaction over the pace of peace talks, the interior minister said the TTP should also reciprocate and release the prisoners in their captivity. "We've asked them for the release of Professor Ajmal [former vice chancellor of Islamia College University], sons of former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and slain Punjab governor Salmaan Taseer, some foreigners and public servants," he added. This would be the formal start of the release of non-combatant prisoners from both sides, he said.

These exchanges are sort of confidence-building measures while the real demands from both sides have yet to be spelled out. "We'll send our [negotiating] team with real demands and expect the other side to let us know about their demands when they sit face-to-face for a second meeting next week," Nisar said. "The government has a one-point agenda: the restoration of peace - but within the ambit of the Constitution." He said that both sides were working out the date and venue of the second round of direct talks. About TTP's demand for the establishment of a 'peace zone', the interior minister clarified that by 'peace zone' the Taliban meant a place where they could easily travel and "we have responded to that".

The TTP chief intermediary, Maulana Samiul Haq, said the second face-to-face meeting between the government negotiators and Taliban Political Shura was expected over the next two to three days. He said Saturday's meeting was meant to work out such measures that could help promote an 'atmosphere of goodwill'. The steps taken by the government reflect its sincerity and more such goodwill gestures would be witnessed in the coming days, he added. When asked about the ceasefire, Maulana Sami said: "We'll definitely ask them [Taliban] to extend it. We wish for a permanent ceasefire from both sides so that we [the intermediaries] do not feel the pressure of any deadlines." About the government's call for the release of prisoners, Maulana Sami said that they would ask the TTP to reciprocate and free the prisoners. Asked about the release of 'combatant prisoners', he said, "This issue, as it happens everywhere in the world, will come up for discussion in the final stage of talks."

**The Express Tribune - April 06, 2014**

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### **No Deadlock in Taliban Talks: Nisar**

Admitting some uneasiness in civil military relations following some provocative statements, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan denied any rift between the government and the military leadership. Addressing a press conference - focusing Taliban talks and Islamabad fruit market blast - he said the government and armed forces are on the same page on the issue of

Taliban talks as well as release of prisoners. "There is positive, frank and honest response from the military... I have not seen such response from them (army) in the last 30 years of my political career," he told media men at the Punjab House. However, the minister did admit that an irritant had come between the two sides but he said "we will get over it soon". Nisar said there were very complex issues ranging from internal security to foreign policy but the line from both sides was right and straight. "If they (military) had not supported us hundred percent (on peace talks), we would have not travelled so far on this matter." About release of prisoners, he said, "This impression is wrong that army is not on track regarding release of (Taliban) prisoners... Earlier, 19 non-combatants of Mehsud tribe were released with the consultations of the army and 12 or 13 more were being released." Most of the prisoners being released were in the internment centres of the army, he informed, asking how they could be released without taking the army on board.

Interior minister also ruled out that combatants would be released at the moment, saying that stage has not come yet as it would be decided when talks process would be in the concluding stage. "Taliban had not demanded release of combatants and the demand was only of non-combatants," he said. "There is warlike situation, army is in Fata and prisoners are being held by the army then how one can say that combatant prisoners would be released," he remarked. He said that the government had also demanded from Taliban to release some prisoners, including sons of former governor Salman Taseer and former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani as well as Professor Ajmal Khan and others. About the status of ongoing talks with the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Nisar said that dialogue process was neither suspended nor deadlocked. He said all the reports suggesting such things were speculative and devoid of facts. He said that next round of talks could not be held because the government team was incomplete as some members were abroad and the process would resume next week. Another issue was that of fixing a date for the meeting as there is curfew except on Tuesday where talks would be held.

The next face-to-face meeting between the government committee and Taliban would be on a comprehensive agenda and formal comprehensive talks would start with that meeting, he said. The next round of talks was crucial as both sides would put their main agendas on the table, and the agenda of the government was clear that is to attain peace in the country. He said the government could flush out militants from Waziristan within weeks but who would stop them from exploding bombs in the bazaars and at the public places. Replying to the question as to how many groups of militants the government was talking to, Ch Nisar said, "It is not just about the TTP rather there are half a dozen groups other than it". He said 37 factions of militants were under the umbrella of TTP. "(But) there are other groups too who don't come under TTP umbrella and who are involved in recent acts of violence." Responding a question about Islamabad fruit market blast, the minister said that there was ceasefire and both sides were abiding by it. About cessation of violence and hostilities, he said ceasefire held since talks started a couple of weeks ago was still in place and there have been just five to seven acts of violence since then.

Chaudhry Nisar said that the claim of United Baloch Army (UBA) about his involvement in Islamabad blast was rejected on the basis of intelligence report as well as police investigation. "Viable intelligence report says that roots of the incident were somewhere else." He however refused to name any group. He said that initial investigation shows that explosive material was placed in guava crates and these were transported through public transport from southern Punjab and not through any goods transport vehicle. "These crates were reloaded in a pickup from Rawalpindi/Islamabad. The police have focused the area from where crates were transported, specific vehicle and laborer who unloaded the fruit and then reloaded it," he informed. The minister went on to explain that fruit market was in the suburbs of the capital

covering 400 kanals of area where 10 to 15 thousand people daily gather and it could not be closed at all. "Slums of foreigners are adjacent to it and 200,000 people were living in these slums." He criticized last government purchased scanners at Rs1 billion and Rs420 million were paid of it but these were ineffective. He informed that the capital had been divided into sectors for surveillance and Punjab Police Elite Commandos and Rangers would do surveillance round the clock. Permanent Islamabad IGP and SSP will assume the charge of their duties from next week. Security cameras would be installed in Islamabad within a year through Safe City project and two busy roads would be covered in the project, he added.

**The Nation - April 14, 2014**

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### **Split within Taliban Comes To Surface**

Differences between two groups of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have come to the forefront. According to a private TV channel, spokesman of TTP's Hakimullah Mehsud group, Haji Daud said that Khan Saeed Sajna wanted to seize control of South Waziristan. Daud added that he was opposed to Sajna's steps. The TTP Hakimullah group spokesman further said he had complete confidence in TTP chief Mullah Fazlullah and would accept his decision about the next amir (chief) of South Waziristan. In a recent statement TTP shura member Maulana Azam Tariq downplayed the infighting between the Taliban groups. Azam Tariq said the issue was hyped up by the media, and misgivings between the two groups had been removed. The political shura of the Pakistani Taliban met at an undisclosed location in North Waziristan in a bid to chalk out its plan of action for the next direct talks with the government. However, instead of ironing out the agenda for the talks with the government negotiators, the focus of TTP leadership shifted to the infighting between two rival factions of the Mehsud clan, sources monitoring developments in North Waziristan revealed. The political shura of Pakistani Taliban met at an undisclosed location in North Waziristan.

The government negotiating committee is expected to meet the Taliban side any day now, but clashes in South Waziristan between groups associated with slain Taliban leaders Hakimullah Mehsud and Waliur Rehman have so far kept the government team away. According to sources, the highest decision-making body of the Taliban focused on four issues during the meeting - ceasefire with the government, exchange of non-combatant prisoners, creation of a free zone in South Waziristan and infighting between two rival factions of the Taliban, which had so far claimed more than 50 lives. The meeting, according to sources, couldn't resolve the thorny issue of infighting in the Mehsud clan amidst claims of Shura members that the issue has been settled. The meeting was attended by several Taliban leaders, including Qari Shakeel, head of Taliban political shura, Azam Tariq, shura's member, and Khalid Haqqani, deputy chief of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. Although some members expressed opposition to extension of expired ceasefire but the most intricate issue for the participants of the meeting remained the unresolved animosity between the two Mehsud groups over the control of TTP's resources.

Qari Shakeel and Azam Tariq, the sources said, tried to convince the militant commanders that resorting to violence at this stage would further dent the umbrella organization's image. Although the defunct TTP has claimed that internal clashes between Mehsud groups have been resolved but locals say that the blame-game still continues. While the shura meeting was underway, members of Khan Said Sajna and Sheheryar Mehsud were accusing each other of having "despicable intentions". Haji Daud, claiming to be a spokesman for Sheheryar's group, said that Sajna was planning to take full control of the Islamic Emirate of Waziristan, media reports said. He did not specify whether Sajna wants to replace Maulana Fazlullah, nicknamed Mullah Radio, as TTP's chief. Daud, however, demanded that any leader nominated by TTP chief

to head Waziristan region would be acceptable to them. Meanwhile, the unyielding internal strife has also drawn attention of the Afghan Taliban. According to sources, several Afghan commanders held separate meetings with both sides in a bid to patch up their differences, but to no avail. They also distributed pamphlets among locals in the region pleading to pray for resolution of the dispute between the rival Mehsud factions.

Daily Times - April 15, 2014

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### **Despite Ceasefire Setback: Government Stands Firm on Peace Talks**

The government resolved to continue talks with the Taliban but at the same time stated that talks without a ceasefire would not be possible - an apparent bid to push the group into reconsidering its decision to end the ceasefire. While the government seemed steadfast on pursuing dialogue, security forces, however, were given the green signal to retaliate if the Tehreek-i-Taliban (TTP) carries out attacks in the country, according to officials privy to a high-level meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) held in the capital. The meeting chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and attended by ministers of defence, finance, information and interior as well as three services chiefs and heads of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Intelligence Bureau (IB), was called soon after the TTP refused to extend the ceasefire over what it claimed is the government's lack of positive response to its 'peace overtures'. A government official familiar with details emerging from the high-level huddle told that while the civil and military leadership voiced concern over the TTP announcement, they remained resolute on the policy of peace talks.

An official statement issued after the meeting also indicated that the government would still push for an elusive peace deal with the TTP. "The NSC endorsed the vision to put Pakistan on the crossroads of opportunity rather than conflict to spur growth for prosperity of the people," said the statement. Minister for Interior Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan briefed the participants on the internal security situation as well as talks with TTP. The NSC also discussed other issues related to internal and external security including situation in Balochistan and on the western border. Nawaz said the committee is an apex forum where every state institution gets an opportunity to provide its input so that all national security related decisions are taken through collective thinking. He also agreed that national security was of paramount importance for consolidating economic gains that the government had achieved through macroeconomic policies and diligence of the economic team.

### **Nisar Is Skeptical**

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan issued a statement expressing uncertainty about the peace process in the aftermath of the terminated ceasefire agreement. After meeting with the TTP committee coordinator Maulana Samiul Haq, Nisar said it would perhaps not be possible for the government to carry forward purposeful dialogue. "I do not think that purposeful dialogue can move forward in the absence of a ceasefire," the statement read. Haq was quoted as saying that he was still optimistic for the resolution of all issues through talks. The interior minister convened a meeting of the Taliban committee on Saturday to devise the future plan of action in the backdrop of recent developments. Responding to the assertion by the Taliban that the government is not serious about talks, Nisar said, "It would be inappropriate to say that the government was not serious in dialogue with the TTP."

Giving reference to the first round of face-to-face talks with the TTP shura in which the government committee had traveled to South Waziristan, he said, "Had there been no seriousness on the part of the government, it would not have been to South Waziristan,". While

talking about the reservations expressed by the TTP, Nisar said, "If the Taliban have reservations over some issues, then we also have several but we carry forward the talk's process with sincerity." "Reservations on both the sides can be addressed on the dialogue table and not through media statements," he added. On the other hand, negotiators have not given up yet. "We are trying our level best and are contacting both sides for the resolution of issues which have emerged," member of the Taliban committee Maulana Yousaf Shah said to *The Express Tribune*.

Shah was upbeat about convincing the Taliban for the ceasefire. "We are hopeful that they [Taliban] would agree." Talking about the Taliban's decision, he said that "I would not term it a deadlock rather would say that they have expressed their reservations." Intermediary Professor Ibrahim on Thursday said the TTP have raised some complaints about the government. Ibrahim told that the TTP committee tried to convince the group's top leadership to continue peace talks. "We will take up their complaints after taking stock of them and discuss with the government," he said.

**The Express Tribune - April 18, 2014**

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**BALUCHISTAN WATCH****Governance Watch****Cash-Strapped: Balochistan Projects Received Only 25% of Allotted Funds**

During the last nine months, the federal government has released merely the 25% of the funds, allocated for Balochistan - a situation which may adversely affect the development projects in the province. Due to shortage of funds, it has become impossible for Balochistan to complete the ongoing development projects of Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) in the current fiscal year. Balochistan Chief Minister Dr Malik Baloch along with his cabinet members took up the issue with Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal during the meeting in Islamabad. "The delay in release of funds by federal government will not only affect the ongoing projects but also the projects earmarked for the next fiscal year," the CM told Iqbal as he discussed in detail the federal policy for releasing funds for the most backward province. Dr Malik pointed out that the federal government would face more difficulties in the next fiscal year when it failed to finance the on-going projects in Balochistan during the current year.

However, the federal minister assured the CM that Balochistan would be provided with funds on priority basis, adding that the far-flung areas in the province would get electricity through solar system instead of transmission line. "Balochistan will be given complete attention. Plans are underway to develop its infrastructure," Iqbal said. Some senior provincial government officials, however, do not believe in the promises of the federal government. "It had been an established fact that the federal spending on development projects in Balochistan remains below 40% in any fiscal year. And in spite of that an outcry is rarely raised against slashing of development funds of the province, where more than 60% of people are living below the poverty line," said a provincial government official on condition of anonymity.

In its first fiscal year, the outgoing PPP government had spent merely 26% of the development fund allocated for Balochistan. However, after a protest by the provincial government, the federal government had announced it would compensate the lapsed funds during the next fiscal year - a promise that was never fulfilled. The commitments - made in the federal budget with regard to allocation of fund for Balochistan - have never been honored and people have always doubted them. The credibility of the federal budget and the promised federal spending in Balochistan has come to simple zero.

**The Express Tribune - April 07, 2014**

**Water Woes: No Access to Potable Water in Balochistan**

A parliamentary panel was told that people in Balochistan were getting only 0.3 per cent clean drinking water. "We conducted a study in which 12,000 samples were collected from 95 districts of the country and it has been found that 99 per cent drinking water in Balochistan is not safe for drinking," said Secretary Ministry of Science and Technology Kamran Ali Qureshi. The startling revelation came during a meeting of National Assembly Standing Committee on Science and Technology to review the performance of Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) and objectives achieved during the last five years. According to PCRWR's report, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) is ranked second, where 93 per cent of water samples in the province were found contaminated and unsafe for human consumption. In Punjab only 21 per cent water samples were safe for drinking, whereas in Sindh 28 per cent water samples were

safe. Similarly, in the federal capital, 59 per cent water samples were safe for drinking. Perturbed by the revelation, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf's Ali Muhammad Khan raised questions about the remedial measures, but he was told that provincial governments were responsible for providing clean drinking water. "There is no doubt that clean drinking water is a major cause of concern but our purview is merely to test samples in the laboratory and give report to the provincial governments," said Minister for Science and Technology Zahid Hamid. Referring to the 18th Constitutional Amendment, Hamid said that his ministry could not take any action. He said that the local governments needed to be sensitized and activated over the issue.

**The Express Tribune - April 16, 2014**

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## POLITICAL &amp; ELECTION WATCH

## Political Parties

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

**PML-N Government Outshines PPP in Performance: Poll**

Even before completing a year in power, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government has outshined the previous Pakistan People's Party (PPP) regime, with a majority of Pakistanis satisfied with its performance and policies, shows a recent Gallup Pakistan report. The report said that despite inheriting a fragile economy, deteriorating law and order, strains ties with neighboring countries, rampant corruption, and uncontrollable inflation, the PML-N government managed to put the things in order through independent and prudent policies since coming into power in June last. The Gallup's Annual Public Pulse Report 2014 reveals that the PML-N government's overall performance ratings showed a huge improvement over that of the PPP government by 59% points. It got a 'green card' (favorable views exceed unfavorable views) in the overall running of the government. 55% of population gave favorable rating. The Gallup's study is based on findings from a nationally representative poll in the rural and urban areas of all the four provinces.

Sample size was 2,596 adult men and women, face to face interviews, selected through probability sampling method; error margin was kept at 3-5% at 95% confidence level. Fieldwork was carried out from January 6 to 13, 2014. For the six key indicators - economy, Pak-India relations, overall foreign policy, terrorism control, corruption control and inflation control - the present government received positive comparative net performance ratings. "Economy recorded a positive 48% comparative net performance, Pak India relations 22%, foreign policy 33%, terrorism control 31%, corruption control 36% and inflation control 20% net change," says the report. The net performance ratings for political leaders rated Nawaz Sharif (PML-N) at the top with 18% favorable rating. Imran Khan (PTI) was rated at minus (-) 5%, Asif Ali Zardari (PPP) at -28%, Altaf Hussain (MQM) -39%, Maulana Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) at -21% and Asfandiyar Wali Khan (ANP) as -34%.

The rating of former JI chief Syed Munawar Hassan remained unchanged. On issues of controlling inflation, terrorism and corruption, the present government showed an improvement over the previous government by 20%, 31% and 36%, respectively. The Gallup Pakistan survey shows that the government performance still needed improvement but it was far better than that of the PPP government. However, despite some issues needing attention, the PML-N government got a green card in the overall running of the government, with 55% favorable and 40% unfavorable score, with a positive balance of 15% points. A year ago, only 27% had given favorable and 71% negative ratings to the PPP government, with a negative balance of 44% points. Another aspect covered by the Gallup Pakistan Survey is the performance of provincial chief ministers (CMs). Performance of Punjab CM was rated as 'very good' by 21% people and 'good' by 28%. Sindh CM obtained 6% 'very good' while KP CM and Balochistan CM got mere 4% rating as 'very good'.

Daily Times - April 13, 2014

## Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

### PTI Wins Provincial Assembly Seat Vacated By PML-N

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf won the PK-86, Swat-VII provincial assembly seat in by-election. The seat fell vacant after an election tribunal disqualified Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz MPA Qaimoos Khan over fake degree. According to unofficial results, PTI candidate Dr Haider Ali Khan won the by-election by securing 17,420 votes at all the 85 polling stations in the constituency. Sardar Khan of PML-N stood second by bagging 16,346 votes, while JUI-F candidate Ali Shah secured third position by getting 10,072. The overall turnout was 40 per cent. The constituency has 134,614 registered voters for whom 85 polling stations were set up, including 29 for men, 29 for women and 27 for both. The administration had declared 42 polling stations the most sensitive, 36 sensitive and seven normal. Polling the seat took place peacefully between 8am and 5pm without break. The Khwazakhela police briefly arrested two women for polling bogus votes. The two, including Muskan and Rukhsan, both residents of Peshawar, were later freed. The local administration had put in place tight security checks at polling stations. After the announcement of the unofficial results, the PTI activists and sympathizers in different parts of the district came onto the streets to celebrate the party's victory in the by-election.

Provincial Chief Minister Pervez Khattak has congratulated Dr Haider Ali for winning the PK-86, Swat by-election and attributed his victory to the PTI's growing popularity in the province and the people's confidence in the policies of the party's provincial government. The chief minister the tsunami of change, which began its journey under the leadership of PTI chairman Imran Khan, had not subsided and instead was moving ahead with more strength and vigor. He said the PTI tsunami would sweep the entire country with the people's support. In a message of congratulation to the party candidate, Mr Khattak said the people were sick of the decades long exploitative and anti-people policies of the traditional hereditary politicians, so they wanted practical change and PTI had provided them with a ray of hope. "The brave and politically aware people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had accorded support to that voice to begin the journey towards massive change in the province. Now, this change will happen in the whole country," he said.

The chief minister expressed the hope that the newly-elected MPA would work for the progress and development of the area, resolve the local residents' grievances, play an effective role for effective legislation in the province and make sincere efforts for strengthening the party," he said. Mr. Khattak said he expected that the MPA-elect would play a pivotal role in the elimination of corruption and nepotism from the public sector organizations to make them reflective of the people's expectations. Also, provincial information minister Shah Farman congratulated the MPA-elect and said the PTI-led government's revolutionary steps in education, health and other sectors were appreciated by the people. He said the public support of the provincial government was fast increasing and that was why a number of political figures were joining PTI.

Dawn - April 25, 2014

## Other Political Parties

### Pkmap Demands New Province

Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) demanded a separate province comprising Pakhtuns-inhabited areas. The PkMAP leaders demanded a separate province through a resolution at public rally in Khwazakhela in connection with the by-election campaign of his party candidate

in the provincial assembly constituency PK-86. The province should be named 'Pakhtunistan' or Afghanistan. It should be comprised of Pakhtun areas from Chitral to Bolan. Earlier, addressing the rally, PkMAP chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai said that the government should take measures to improve education, infrastructure and industries instead of establishing cantonment in Swat district. The stability of the country would be ensured through the rule of law and stopping foreign interference, he added. Achakzai asked US and India to stop interference in Pakistan's internal affairs. He lamented that Pakhtuns were being declared as terrorists under a conspiracy. "Innocent Pakhtuns are being killed without any justification," he added. PkMAP central secretary Usman Kakar and candidate for by-election from PK-86 Mukhtar Khan Yousafzai and others also spoke on the occasion.

**The News - April 13, 2014**

### By-Elections & Local Government Elections

#### **KP Ready for LG Polls On 30<sup>th</sup>**

Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Chief Minister has said that his government was ready to hold LG elections on April 30th as delimitations had been done and nobody had objected over this issue. He expressed these views at PTI's Core Committee meeting held. The Core Committee urged the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa government to move urgently to pass the Conflict of Interest Law. In addition, the Core Committee also decided that no PTI Core Committee member will do any business with the government in that province. The only delay was the ECP go-ahead, the Committee said. Core Committee members were told that the KPK government had also asked the ECP and NADRA to allow it to hold LG elections in KP through biometric system and Electronic Voting Machines but these organizations had shown absolutely no interest. The Core Committee expressed dismay at this lack of response on the part of NADRA and ECP. The Core Committee demanded the ECP expedite the LG elections in KPK. The Core Committee also decided to hold its 18th anniversary convention in Islamabad on April 25. The Core Committee also demanded the government immediately complete all procedures for allowing overseas Pakistanis to vote. The Core Committee also directed its MNAs to introduce a bill in Parliament to make the necessary Constitutional amendments. The Core Committee also reiterated that no legislator, provincial or central, will accept any official US invitation until the US apologizes for its humiliation of Pakistani leaders viz their travel. Finally the Core Committee commended its workers for standing firm on the anti drone issue which has resulted not only in US stoppage of drones but also pushed the Pak government to move a resolution in Geneva against drones.

**The Nation - April 03, 2014**

#### **Fazl Demands Fresh Polls for Sindh Assembly**

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has claimed that the Sindh Assembly stands dissolved after it passed a resolution against the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) and its recommendations. He said the Sindh Assembly through a resolution had demanded dissolution of the CII and abolishing its recommendation/resolutions which he said was negation of the ideology of Pakistan and a matter of concern. The maulana said the Objectives Resolution had taken the final decision about the ideology of Pakistan. However, the Sindh Assembly had questioned its credibility by passing a resolution for abolishing the CII and scrapping the resolutions passed by the council, which was an unconstitutional step. "The Sindh Assembly is no more representative body of the people of Sindh and has lost its constitutional

and legal status after passing such a controversial resolution,” the JUI-F leader said. He demanded fresh elections for the Sindh Assembly. Maulana Fazl said he had directed his party leaders in Sindh to launch a mass contact campaign and devise their future strategy on the issue. He said the CII was working for the protection of Islamic ideology in the country and legal experts, scholars from all schools of thought and ulema were part of it. He said the CII was a constitutional body and nobody had the right to work against it. Maulana Fazl asked the PML-N to clarify its position as the party was also part of the resolution which had demanded abolishing the CII.

Dawn - April 04, 2014

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### **ECP Decides To Hold Local Bodies’ Polls by November 15**

The Election Commission of Pakistan has expressed its readiness to hold local bodies’ elections in Sindh and Punjab as per the Supreme Court’s orders if the provincial governments amended laws to empower it to undertake the delimitation process. ECP Director General Syed Sher Afgan told newsmen that the commission would need at least 45 days to complete the delimitation process after local government laws were amended. He said elections could not be held by the end of the month in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa because the commission had not received a formal request from the provincial government. He said the commission had reviewed the LG election rules of the KP government and suggested certain changes last week. It would return the delimitation rules to it in two to three days with some suggestions. About holding LG elections in the federal capital territory and cantonment areas, he said no decision had been taken because the matter was still in court.

Dawn - April 04, 2014

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### **KP to Prepare For LB Polls in One Month**

The Supreme Court (SC) told Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government to complete within one month arrangement for local bodies (LB) elections in the province. Earlier, the provincial government informed the apex court about completion of delimitation process for LB polls in the province in pursuance of its orders. A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani, heard the LB polls case. Appearing on notice, KP Advocate General (AG) Abdul Latif Yusufzai informed the court that the provincial government has completed delimitation process for holding LB polls and issued notification in this regard. He said copy of the notification was also provided to Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). He submitted that the KP government has issued notification but the issue of delimitation process in Sindh and Punjab is still pending with the apex court wherein the apex court is yet to decide as to whether the process of delimitation could be assigned to the ECP or not. He said if the court may assign the task to the ECP, then delimitation exercise done by the provincial government would stand abolished. He requested the court to find an amicable solution in the instant matter.

The court observed that its decision about delimitation in Punjab and Sindh will be announced soon but in the meantime, the KP government should complete arrangements for holding the elections in the province. The court adjourned the hearing of the case for date in office. Also, the same bench heard review petition of Watan Party on election reforms, and sought comprehensive reply from the ECP within 15 days regarding the implementation of its orders in the instant matter. Bilal Minto, counsel for Watan Party, submitted that some portions of two decisions of the court have not been implemented for which the ECP could be asked for its reply. At this, the court asked DG ECP Sher Afgan to appraise the court about the reasons due to

which its orders were not yet implemented in letter and spirit. The DG ECP sought some time to submit reply. The court then directed him to file the reply within 15 days. Meanwhile, the court ruled that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf petition, filed for the verification of thumb impressions of voters, will be clubbed with the instant case and adjourned the hearing till filing of the ECP reply.

The News - April 04, 2014

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### **Supreme Court: Hold LG Polls Before Mid-November**

The Supreme Court (SC), in its detailed verdict, ordered that all the provincial governments should hold the local government (LG) elections before November 15 this year. In its detailed decision in the case of delimitation of Sindh, which was written by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Tassaduq Hussain Jilani, the court instructed the Sindh government to make necessary corresponding amendments to the Sindh Local Government Act, 2013. The court directed the provincial governments to make necessary amendments to the laws pertaining to the LG polls. Moreover, the verdict stated the federal government should make necessary enactments to empower the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to carry out the delimitation of constituencies for the local governments. In the light of the verdict, the old delimitations in Balochistan would not be affected. The court, however, rejected the plea of the Sindh government regarding the LG polls. According to the detailed judgment, the court directed that “as the holding of election of local government has been delayed for more than nine years, which is in violence of the constitutional command, the justices are persuaded to direct the governments, federal and provincial, to carry out appropriate amendments, legislation to empower the ECP to initiate and carry out the process of delimitation of constituencies for local government elections”. The court ordered to complete the exercise within a period of five months from and the ECP shall, thereafter, take requisite measures to carry out the process of delimitation of constituencies for the local government expeditiously so as to complete the same within a period of 45 days of the enactment and amendments in laws in terms of this order.

Daily Times - April 09, 2014

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### **Schedule for Second Phase of LG Polls in Balochistan**

A total of 7,169 directly elected members of local bodies in Balochistan will elect 4,561 members on reserved seats on May 29, according to the schedule for the second phase of LG polls in the province announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Returning officers will issue notices inviting nomination papers on April 24 to be received from April 28 to 30. The notice regarding the received nomination papers will be published on May 2 and objections against them will be received the following day. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place from May 4 to 6 following the publication of names of valid candidates. Appeals against acceptance or rejection of nomination papers will be received for two days starting on May 7 and disposed of on May 9, 10 and 12. May 13 has been fixed as the last date for withdrawal of candidature and the final list of contesting candidates with their election symbols will be published on May 14. Polling will take place on May 29 and results will be declared by the returning officer on June 2.

The first phase of LG polls in Balochistan took place on Dec 7 and by-elections were held on Jan 19. An ECP official told that the second phase was delayed because of lacunae in the LG law pointed out by the commission, which now stand removed. He said in the third phase of the polls, heads and deputy heads of local bodies would be elected. With a view to guarding against

corrupt practices, the ECP has directed all executive authorities at the federal and provincial levels not to use state resources in the LG polls to influence electors in favor of a particular candidate or a political party. It said any person in government service found to be misusing his position in any manner would be liable to be proceeded against under Section 60 of the Balochistan Local Government Act, 2010. The commission placed a ban on postings and transfers of civil servants without its approval till the publication of election results.

The prime minister, governor, chief minister, federal and provincial ministers and other public office holders have been barred from visiting the area of any union council to announce any development scheme or to canvass or campaign for any candidate or political party. No deputy commissioner or district coordination officer will perform protocol duty with the public office holder till the conclusion of the electoral process. Any holder of public office found to have violated any provision of election laws or the commission's instructions will be proceeded against as mandated in the law.

**Dawn - April 15, 2014**

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### **ECP Let Banned Outfit Contest 2013 Polls**

Taking advantage of loopholes in the electoral system of the country, an alliance of five politico-religious parties, including a banned outfit, managed to be recognized by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and contest the general elections last year without any legal hitch or challenge. The Muttahida Deeni Mahaz, formed in Dec 2012 under the leadership of Maulana Samiul Haq, the head of his own faction of JUI, also comprised Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, an organisation banned by the government in Feb 2012. But a document available with Dawn shows that the fact had been concealed from the ECP to allow the outlawed ASWJ chief Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Ludhianvi to contest polls under the alliance's umbrella. Instead of the ASWJ, the Pakistan Rah-i-Haq Party, led by former Vice President of ASWJ Maulana Muhammad Ibrahim Qasmi, was shown as a component of the alliance when a request was made for allotment of an election symbol. Informed sources told Dawn that Pakistan Rah-i-Haq Party was in fact the political wing of the ASWJ. The ASWJ's Punjab Information Secretary, Ghulam Mustafa Baloch, confirmed that the party was a component of the Muttahida Deeni Mahaz. He, however, did not reply to a question as to why the fact was concealed from the ECP when the alliance applied for the election symbol before 2013.

The chief of ASWJ, formerly known as the Sipah-i-Sihaba Pakistan (SSP), Maulana Muhammad Ahmed Ludhianvi, contested elections from NA-89, Jhang, but was defeated by Sheikh Akram of PML-N by around 3,000 votes. He challenged the eligibility of the winning candidate alleging that he was a loan defaulter. On the basis of his petition, an election tribunal in Faisalabad disqualified Sheikh Akram and declared Ludhianvi as the winning candidate, a decision which surprised many legal experts who believe that the tribunal has overstepped its powers. An expert said that under Section 67 (C) of the Representation of People Act, 1976, the tribunal had powers to declare the election of the returned candidate void. He, however, said it was not a discretionary power and applied only if some apparent error in vote count was discovered or some manipulation in the result was proved. "In such circumstances, normally the election is declared to be void and a re-poll is ordered," he said.

An ECP official confirmed that the ECP had received a copy of the tribunal's order, which would soon be placed before the commission for appropriate orders. Another ECP official said that under the law, the ECP had no powers to set aside a judgment of the tribunal appointed by it. The Supreme Court was the only forum to challenge the decision. The disqualified MNA of PML-N, Sheikh Muhammad Akram, said he would challenge the tribunal's decision in the Supreme

Court. In the 2002 general elections, head of Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) Maulana Azam Tariq contested the polls as an independent candidate from NA-89, Jhang, from jail and won the seat. He contested against two political stalwarts, Dr Tahirul Qadri of Pakistan Awami Tehreek and Sheikh Waqas Akram. Maulana Tariq secured 41,425 votes while Sheikh Waqas Akram bagged 31,959 votes, followed by Dr Tahirul Qadri who clinched 31,483 votes. Maulana Azam Tariq's vote gave majority to the PML-Q government led by Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who went to see him to muster his support. Maulana Tariq was killed in Islamabad and Sheikh Waqas Akram won his seat in by-elections by defeating Maulana Alam Tariq, the brother of Maulana Azam Tariq.

In the 2008 general elections, the contest in NA-89, Jhang, was mainly between Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Ludhianvi of SSP (as an independent candidate) and Sheikh Waqas Akram of PML-Q. Mr. Akram defeated Maulana Ludhianvi by securing 51,976 votes while Maulana Ludhianvi bagged 45,216 votes. In 2013 elections, Mr. Akram was to contest polls on a ticket awarded to him by the PML-N, but he was disqualified for possessing a fake degree and the ticket was awarded to his father Sheikh Mohammad Akram, who won the polls. He has now been disqualified by the election tribunal and is set to fight a legal battle against Ludhianvi in the Supreme Court as the latter has been declared winner by the tribunal.

**Dawn - April 16, 2014**

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### **ECP Seeks Nine More Months to Hold LG Polls**

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has appealed to the Supreme Court (SC) to give it at least six and maximum nine months to conduct the local government (LG) elections. The Election Commission of Pakistan has demanded this space keeping in view the time required to carry out delimitation of constituencies in order to hold local government elections in Sindh and Punjab Provinces. Earlier, in its detailed judgment, the apex court had directed the Election Commission of Pakistan to make early arrangements for holding local government polls in Punjab within next five months. The court had also directed the commission to take all possible measures to carry out delimitation of constituencies within a period of 45 days. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Tassaduq Hussain Jilani ruled that holding the elections was prime responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan. The detailed judgment also directed carrying out necessary amendments to the Punjab Local Government Act, 2013. The judgment said that Sections 8 to 10 of the Punjab Local Government Act, 2013, and relevant rules framed there under were ultra vires of the constitution in so far as they empower the provincial government to carry out delimitation of constituencies for the local government elections. The apex court had directed the federal and provincial governments to carry out appropriate amendments/legislation to empower the Election Commission of Pakistan to initiate and carry out the process of delimitation of constituencies for the local government elections.

**Daily Times - April 16, 2014**

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### **LB Polls May Evade Past 2014**

With the provinces sleeping over new legislation required for delimitations of constituencies and the election authorities seeking more time to complete the ground work after the enactment of new laws, the local bodies' elections do not seem to be taking place this year. The Supreme Court, in its decision on March 19, had asked the federal and provincial governments (of Sindh and Punjab) to come up with new legislation on delimitations in five months, and

ruled also that only the ECP was mandated to carry out delimitations in federal and provincial constituencies. The court had given 45 days to the ECP to complete the demarcation of constituencies after the federal and provincial governments make required legal changes. But ECP Additional Secretary Sher Afgan told, "It is impossible to complete the delimitation in just 45 days. The ECP has requested the Supreme Court to give six months for this job. So far the provinces have not moved an inch on making new laws." ECP Director General Afzal Khan told this reporter, "The ECP is solely dependent on political parties (PML-N, PPP) to amend Article 224 of the Constitution so that the commission is able to carry out delimitations at grass-roots level. This job (of legislation) is to be done by federal and provincial governments in five months."

The Supreme Court in its decision had also asked the ECP to hold local government elections in the country by November 15 this year. However, the election authorities fear that LB polls cannot be held even if the provinces and the federal government timely enact the new law as directed by the apex court. Mr. Afgan said that in case the new law was enacted by July or August, the ECP would require at least eight to 10 months because the commission will modify the existing voters lists in accordance with the latest delimitations for which a door-to-door campaign was needed. "I don't think 2014 will see LB polls in a country where political parties are given five months for a piece of legislation that can otherwise be done overnight. The conduct of election is the sole duty of ECP that has been given just 45 days to complete the exercise," remarked former ECP Secretary Kanwar Dilshad.

Chief of the Awami Muslim League (AML) and MNA Sheikh Rashid observed that the government was not sincere in empowering people at grass-roots level. "A single amendment in the constitution needs only an hour for federal and provincial governments. So far there is no development in the National Assembly to help the ECP so that it could start delimitations," he added. Federal Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Sheikh Aftab said that the provincial law departments would first request his office through a written statement for enactment of any law, adding that his office had so far not received any intimation from the provinces in this regard. "So far I have not read Supreme Court's decision that wants federal and provincial governments to make new legislation for empowering ECP to carry out delimitation. We will abide by the directions of the apex court," the minister added. PPP Senator Farhatullah Babar said the Sindh Assembly would soon come up with legislation in order to empower the ECP to carry out delimitations in the province. "Let me ask Sindh Information Minister Sharjil Memon about the progress made on the issue," Mr Baber said in reply to a further question.

**The Nation - April 21, 2014**

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### **Political Parties Call For Referendum in Tribal Areas**

Political parties' joint committee on Fata reforms with ten representatives asked the government to hold a referendum in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (Fata) to ascertain which type of government the locals aspire. "The legal system in Fata is very colonial. The people of the tribal areas must be given the same rights as other Pakistanis enjoy in other parts of the country. The people of Fata are still treated as subjects instead of citizens," said Ajmal Khan Wazir, a member of the committee, while addressing a press briefing that was held here, after the committee members met a group of senators to discuss the need for Fata reforms. Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence Mushahid Hussain Sayed and Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights Afrasiab Khattak also joined the briefing and expressed their support, saying that the issue of Fata reforms would be raised. "Only in Fata

do the authorities have right to destroy people's houses as a punishment for an alleged crime. This must be changed," Mushahid said.

The senator also said that Fata has consistently been denied the democratic rights adding that the Reconstruction of Opportunity Zones Law has yet to be passed and false promises have been made. Senator Afrasiab Khattak said that the senate has passed a resolution on Fata reforms. He stated that Fata has been used for strategic purposes and intentionally denied any political status. "Fata is administered through the Frontier Crimes Regulations and civilians have no liberty to hold political rallies, same is the case with freedom of expression," he said, adding, "If National Assembly elections can be held in Fata, then why not local government elections." Member of National Assembly from Fata Ayesha Gulalai said that the people of Fata were contributing to the tax net, which was not recognized by the political administration. She said that it was the fifth geographical unit of Pakistan and deserves a share in the National Finance Commission Award.

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz's Fata committee member, Arsallah Hoti, said that this year was very important for Afghanistan and for Fata, due to the geo-political situation. "This is the year that our 11 point reforms should be implemented," he said. Ajmal Khan Wazir, spokesman for political parties' joint committee on Fata reforms, informed the media that almost ten political parties, represented in the committee, acknowledge that the people of the Fata deserve the same rights, freedom, protection and economic opportunities as all Pakistanis. Therefore, to continue with unified political party efforts initiated in 2010, we have made an 11-point recommendation for reforms in the tribal areas," he said. He said that the committee has also had meetings with the leaders of other parties and they all agreed with the recommendations. He said that the committee had presented its reforms recommendations to Minister of States and Frontier Regions Retired Lieutenant General Abdul Qadir Baloch and also plans to meet the president, the prime minister, parliamentary committees and the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in this regard.

**Dawn - April 24, 2014**

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## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

### Human Rights Related Issues

#### **Sindh Government Striving Hard To Achieve MDG 2: Nisar Khuhro**

The Sindh government is striving hard to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 - achieve universal primary education - sending each and every child to school by 2017. Sindh Senior Education and Literacy Minister Nisar Ahmed Khuhro talking to journalists said, "We are striving hard to achieve MDG 2017 so that 'education for all' programme could be succeeded. And for that we are taking a number of steps," he added.

**Female Education:** Encourage female education, the education department Sindh has decided providing annual stipend to every female student, a practice that was not carried out in the recent years. Although the amount for annual stipend is not that big, but again for remote areas stipend would be Rs 3,500 and for other students it would be Rs 2,500 per female student, he told. The stipend would start from May this year.

**Free Books:** Khuhro said in around 49,000 schools in Sindh, every child would be provided with free books. Supply of 5 million books of class 6 to 10 has already been started from April 7 this year. In the provision of free books a formal procedure would be adopted in this regard. In every school a gathering would be made compulsory to disperse the books to the students. The distribution would be made under the supervision of supervisor and headmaster, said Khuhro. Video of books distribution would be made compulsory. The headmasters and supervisors fail to submit videos would not remain at their jobs, he added. We have revised the curriculum from class I to 4, therefore there are few problems in distribution of books of these classes as they carry some proofreading errors, he informed. He made it clear some private schools purchased books of Sindh Text Book Board. Sometime confusion occurs because price is listed for only those books, which are suppose to be supplied to private schools only. I appeal to the non-private school kids parents' that do not pay while getting books. If anybody insists make a video from your mobile and send us. We would take the action, minister said.

**Libraries At Primary Schools:** Minister told reporters he wanted to introduce concept of library in every primary school. To enhance the vocabulary of students, every child of class 4 and 5 would be provided English to Sindhi and English to Urdu pictorial dictionaries. He said dictionaries would be school property. Apart from dictionaries every library would also be provided atlas.

**Evening Shifts At Schools:** Nisar Khuhro said he wanted to start evening shifts in schools, which were running morning shifts only. The purpose is to bring those poor children to schools that cannot go to schools, as most of them are child labors, he added. I appeal communities to come forward and play its role in sending those kids to schools, he said.

**Enhancing Sports Facilities at Schools:** Education minister vowed to encourage sports facilities at schools that children should play cricket, hockey, football, throw-ball and other games.

He said for pre-primary students eight thousand units would be made for the students in primary schools so that kids who are busy in playing in streets could be tilted towards schools.

**Sindh Education Foundation:** Minister said Sindh Education Foundation at the moment was running 1,500 schools from its fund through community-based system. We want to enhance the

enrolment of students so that more students should be enrolled, he told. Through community level we would provide Rs 250 to Rs 350 for each child monthly.

**Ghost Schools:** Minister said numbers of non-functional schools in Sindh were up to 4,000. He said steps were being taken to reduce such schools. Instead of calling ghost schools, call them shelter less schools. We have directed revenue department/district administration department to identify shelter less schools. Also we have sought public representatives to report such schools. We have asked them to identify at least 10 shelters less schools or closed school in their area.

**Endowment Fund:** Providing the endowment fund to the lesser-privileged areas, we are taking every step. My efforts are to support students of less privileged areas for higher education. Generally endowment fund is kept for students to get quality and higher education. Bifurcation of endowment fund at district level would be made compulsory.

**Model Schools:** He said at least one boy and one girl high school in every tehsil of Sindh out of 130 tehsils would be made a model school. They will be called 'Happy School'. These schools would be fully equipped with library, laboratory and sports facilities.

Daily Times - April 11, 2014

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### 115 Men Killed In Encounters Since Operation Began

A report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) revealed that between January and March this year, around 71 men have been killed in police encounters while 44 have been killed by paramilitary soldiers. This is a significant rise from last year when around 189 men were killed over 12 months - this year has reached a similar figure in merely three months. These 189 people killed in 2013 were victims of encounters and incidents of police torture. More than half of them were, however, killed in the last four months of the year when the targeted operation was launched. Meanwhile, around 118 people were killed by the police and paramilitary soldiers in 2012.

HRCP chairperson Zohra Yusuf said there is a credibility issue since in many incidents the police team is not injured. "But then there are cases of gun battles too," she added. Yusuf felt that because of the operation, the police are active and there is pressure from the federal government to control the law and order situation in the city. She feared, however, that if the Protection of Pakistan Ordinance is enforced, it will result in an increase of police encounters and extrajudicial killings. "Initially, the law enforcement agencies did not have the permission to open fire," she said. "Now if this law comes in, they can shoot over suspicions. It will legalize such killings and the situation may get worse."

On the other hand, a former chief of the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee, Jameel Yusuf, said that the performance of the law enforcement agencies should not be doubted or demoralized. "Today's criminals are fully armed and they fight back with full strength when the police go to capture them," he said. "If there are fake encounters, then the law enforcers are prosecuted and brought to justice." The line between human rights and citizens rights should be defined, he stressed, adding that there is a limit to which one can speak of human rights when terrorists and criminals are killing thousands of people. The HRCP report for the current year also revealed that the targeted operation has had no significant impact on violence, despite the tall claims made by the police officials.

Between January and March, 800 have died or have been killed in violent incidents - with 273 killings or deaths in January, 246 in February and 281 in March. Not everyone laid down their lives for political causes. In fact, around 228 people killed during this time had no political

affiliations. The report also said that the police found 102 bodies. The law enforcers were also not spared. Between January and March, 46 policemen have been killed, along with 34 political activists and 26 suspects involved in the Lyari gang war. A total of 19 people were killed by robbers and 25 were killed due to enmity. Fifty-five women and 30 children were found dead while 17 men were killed by stray bullets.

The Express Tribune - April 15, 2014

### Violence In The Name Of Islam Is Haram: Fatwa

Religious scholars and political leaders issued and backed an edict, declaring that terrorism and violence being committed in the name of Islam was in violation of Islam; and hence haram. The edict was part of a seven-point code of conduct unanimously approved at the Ulema-o-Mashaikh National Peace Convention held in Karachi. Speakers said that rights of all Pakistanis living in the country were equal, whether they were Muslims or not, and that targeting anyone on the basis of religion or faction was a sheer violation of the constitution of Pakistan and Islamic teachings. They said that denying the fundamental rights of every Pakistani - on the basis of religion or otherwise - was against the Islamic laws and the country's constitution. They agreed on a point that anyone found involved in violation of others' rights should be dealt with according to the law. The code of conduct says that terrorism and violence being committed in the country in the name of Islam is "a violation of Islam and the leaderships of all religions and sects announce their disassociation with such acts". Moreover, it said that no prayer leader, cleric or speaker would debase or induce his followers to debase any holy prophet; companions, family members or wives of the Prophet [PBUH]; four caliphs and Imam Mehdi in his speech or sermon.

It also said that no Muslim sect would be declared non-Muslim and no Muslim or non-Muslim would be declared worthy of being killed unconstitutionally. "Apart from Azan and Arabic sermon, the use of loud speakers will be completely banned. Moreover, people belonging to all religions and sects will seek permission from [the] local administration before holding their gatherings," read another point of the code. It also said that publication and distribution of offensive and hateful books, literature and pamphlets would be stopped and there would be a complete ban on cassettes and online websites containing objectionable and hateful material. "Hateful and offensive slogans will also be avoided." It read that joint gatherings would be held on a public level to express solidarity with each other. In the last point of the code of conduct, it was declared that since non-Muslims also live in Pakistan along with Muslims, as per the Islamic shariah, it was the responsibility of the government and Muslims to protect the lives, properties, honor and worship places of non-Muslims. "The government should also take stern action against those who attack worship places, holy figures, lives and properties of non-Muslims."

Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Maulana Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that blood was being shed in the country in the name of religious divide. He strongly condemned the recent attacks on worship places of non-Muslims in Sindh and demanded immediate arrest of culprits behind the incidents, urging the government to take them to task. "We have one agenda - how to bring peace - and our message is tolerance. Bloodshed of religious scholars and students was going on in Karachi. To stop the killing, it was high time for political leadership and ulema to come forward and take steps in resolving the matter." "It is often said that maulvi and madrassa are responsible [for religious hatred and divide]. Let me tell you that maulvis called this convention... We are not among those who do not act according to their statements. We do what we say," he asserted. Addressing the gathering, Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) leader Dr Farooq Sattar said that a few people were

hatching conspiracies against Pakistan and Islam. "To bring peace and harmony, we would have to be united against lawlessness." He stressed the need for stopping any act that was being implemented by force. "Whether cases of forced conversion to Islam or forced marriages of Hindu girls, we are against them," the lawmaker said. He also called for stopping the misuse of the blasphemy law.

Daily Times - April 20, 2014

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## GENDER WATCH

### Women Empowerment

#### **Legislative Agenda: Women's Caucus to become An 'Influential Group'**

The priority agenda of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus charted at a two-day consultation includes recognition for the caucus in the provincial assembly, legislation on domestic violence, violence against domestic workers, women's rights to reproductive health, and analysis and amendments to the Punjab Vocational Training Council Act . The two-day consultation, organized by the United Nations Development Programme and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, concluded. The priority agenda was a result of interactive sessions, consultations and debates by members of the caucus. The members discussed various issues related to women's rights and gender mainstreaming in the parliament. Experts on women's issues and civil society representatives also gave presentations and participated in interactive sessions.

The first day of the workshop included inputs from senior members of the parliament and women activists. The media were not allowed in the sessions on Tuesday. Marvi Sirmed and Dr Fauzia Saeed, a gender rights' activist, were the lead facilitators at the workshop. Women MPAs at the sessions charted out their plans of action on issues of gender equality, poverty alleviation and sustainable development in the province. The priorities chalked out by the caucus focus not only on legislation on women issues in the province but also the need for liaison with other institutions for enhancement of women parliamentarians' capacity. The members resolved to work together to transform the caucus into a strong voice within and outside the assembly.

Later at a media briefing, convener Azma Bokhari, said that the members were committed to making the WPC a strong platform. She announced the names of the district focal persons and division coordinators who would apprise the caucus on main local issues of concern. Hina Pervaiz Butt, general secretary of the caucus, said she hoped that the women members of parliament would work together to achieve gender equality in the province. Marvi Sirmed said the United Nation Development Programmes had worked with the Women Parliamentary Caucus at the federal level during the previous assembly's tenure. Provincial Women's Parliamentary Caucuses will be assisted during the next four years as part of the United Nation Development Programmes's parliamentary support strategy.

**The Express Tribune - April 09, 2014**

#### **South Asian Women Asked To Play Proactive Role in Political Process**

Speakers underlined the need for a proactive role for women in the political process as a means of economic empowerment. They were speaking at the concluding session of a two-day regional conference on "Women, Work & Poverty", organized by the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC). "Women need to improve their political participation as a means to strengthen their economic participation and empowerment," they said adding that fewer young women in Pakistan were 'economically inactive' and more illiterate women were a part of the labor force now than at the turn of the millennium. They need to improve their political participation by electing women candidates who can fight for their issues in the legislatures, they said. Panelists discussed economic opportunities for women and the impact of conflict and climate change on women among other topics in the two days.

In one session, Iffat Ara, a principal economist at the SPDC, shared a research study on the gender dimension of Pakistan's youth bulge. Using data from the Labor Force Surveys of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Ara said there has been a decrease in the percentage of Pakistani women who were economically inactive - a category which included people who were not looking for jobs or were students. "Young women are moving towards employment," she said. Between 1999 and 2012, the percentage of economically inactive women has fallen to 79 per cent from 90 per cent. During the same 14 years, around three times more illiterate Pakistani women joined the labor force. Employment rate for women with vocational training also increased during this time period, Ara said. She said there was also a positive correlation between higher level of education and unemployment means that the government should focus to promote labor-intensive economic growth.

Economically independent women are more likely to invest in children's education and health, said Sunimalee Madurawala, a research officer at the Institute of Policy Studies in Sri Lanka. Madurawala spoke about the state of gender equality in Sri Lanka, which she said was not satisfactory. She said girls face gender discrimination in some academic fields such as sciences and commerce because of socio-cultural pressures and lack of facilities. An enabling environment is required to increase Sri Lankan women's economic participation, she said, for which women will also have "to be vigilant, to vote and elect women candidates" who are ready to work on women issues. In Sri Lanka's northern parts, some women election candidates have started to rally for demands of women voters and they have received a good response from the women electorate, said Aaranya Rajasingam, programme officer at the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies in Sri Lanka.

Chairperson of Urban Environment Management Society in Nepal Prem Maharjan said women will have to take leadership positions. "Women have to come into power, the reserved seats are not enough," Maharjan said. Panelists also spoke about the rise in violence against women in South Asian societies. Rajasingam said there has been an increase in reports of violence in southern Sri Lanka, which might be due to violence with impunity in the country's north where post-civil war, the military has had a carte blanche situation. Nazish Brohi, a researcher and activist, said Pakistani women were creating space for themselves in society but there was also an increase and a change in the nature of violence against them. "The forms of violence against women are changing," she said. "The violence is becoming more brutal." Brohi said it is not certain if this might be the "dying throes of a tall (patriarchal) order" that might lead to a new era for women or if this is a regressive trajectory. She suggested a change in approach. "Instead of looking at narratives of women as victims or agents, let's look at these as moments- the moment of victimization, the moment of agency - and the intersection of these moments," Brohi said.

**The Express Tribune - April 19, 2014**

## Girl Child Rights

### Progress Promises Hope in Fight against Child Marriage

Child marriage is one of the most debated topics in the province and the positive response to awareness campaigns shows that parents may be willing to change the worrying trend of underage marriages. Members of various organizations shared their experiences on the issue at a seminar organized by Rutgers World Population Foundation (WPF) in collaboration with the Health and Nutrition Development Society (Hands). Speakers at the seminar also claimed that a bill on the issue is almost ready and will soon be tabled in the provincial assembly. "A couple that doesn't have an understanding of social responsibilities cannot start a healthy family and

there is no evidence that says that this [underage marriage] is allowed in Shariah," said religious scholar Dr Mohsin Naqvi. "One does not need to be an expert to understand the consequences of such marriages." Speaking about the campaign against child marriage, Rutgers WPF country representative Qadeer Baig was happy with the progress. "Dealing with the issue of child marriage in Sindh has been a daunting task but we have come a long way in realising girls' rights to education, health and better life opportunities," said Baig. "It is a big achievement for us that our efforts have caused people to question their methods."

Other speakers at the seminar were also happy with the progress made, especially with the announcement of the bill. "While the bill is a commendable achievement, the main issues start after it is approved in the assembly," said additional law secretary Aslam Shaikh. "Implementation of the law is just as important as the bill itself." Shaikh added that before the formation of a Women Development Department, no provincial department was willing to own the bill and also praised the media for taking an active interest. Despite the importance given to the issue, nearly 70 per cent of the country's population gets married after the age of 18, according to Hands chief executive officer Dr Tanveer Sheikh. "Only 30 per cent of the total population is married at an early age," he claimed. The issue is, however, most rampant in two districts of Sindh - Jacobabad and Matiari. "The main reason for this is poverty," said Saira, a social worker from Jacobabad. "We have tried our best to educate people about the problem and the numbers [of child marriages] are decreasing." Action Aid's Aroosa Khatri said that the bill, if passed in the assembly, will serve as an example for other provinces. During her speech, Khatri highlighted one of the biggest problems with child marriage - a rise in infant mortality.

The Express Tribune - April 02, 2014

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### **KP Set To Legislate Against Domestic Violence, Child Marriage**

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is set to legislate to table bills for women and child rights, especially against domestic violence, child marriage, women trafficking and acid attacks, in the provincial assembly soon. Bills for the purpose are almost ready and will be tabled in the provincial assembly shortly, special assistant to the provincial chief minister on social welfare Dr Mehr Taj Roghani told a seminar here. The seminar was organized to disseminate findings of a study on 'advocating for improved maternal neonatal health and sexual and reproductive health policy and practices for adolescent girls and young mothers.' Rehnuma Family Planning Association of Pakistan and Care International jointly organized the event, where current and former MPAs, health professionals, social activists and journalists showed up in large numbers.

Dr Mehr Taj expressed concern over high school dropouts in the province, especially among girls, and said the government had decided to pay monthly stipend of Rs500 to schoolgirls after fifth grade to encourage them to continue studies. She said the government had to face resistance from certain quarters on the proposed amendments to the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, for enhancing permissible age for a girl's marriage, so it was trying to develop consensus on the matter before tabling a bill on it in the provincial assembly. The special assistant regretted that the family planning programmes had failed to achieve the desired results and they had to go to grassroots for creating public awareness, especially among the poor people, of the harms of overpopulation. She proposed that religious scholars be taken on board on the issue, which was still considered a taboo in large part of the society.

Rahnuma regional director Gohar Zaman and vice president Haji Sattar Gul said the rate of child marriages was higher in rural areas than urban centers. They called for better media role to improve MNH and SRH policies for adolescents. Senior health researcher Dr N Rehan presented a review of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and maternal neonatal health (MNH) data and

research compiled in the country between 2001 and 2011. He said in 2011, the population of Pakistan was 177.1 million and of it, 38 million (21.4 per cent) were adolescent (between 15 to 24 years of age). Dr N Rehan said according to UNESCO, the literacy rate for adolescents in 2010 was 79 per cent for male and 51 per cent for females. He said as in many Islamic societies, issues concerning sex, including sexually transmitted infections, were seen as taboos, so people didn't discuss them openly.

The researcher said in Pakistan, abortion remained a controversial issue due to social, cultural and religious factors, which often translated into discrimination against women. He said the most common reason for induced abortion was completed family size (44.1 per cent), followed by premarital/ extramarital affairs (25.1 per cent) financial constraints (21.9 per cent), contraceptive failure (3.7 per cent) and domestic violence (0.2 per cent). He added that nearly half of the abortions (49 per cent) were conducted by unskilled operators. Another health sector researcher, Dr Ahsan Ahmad, presented study on 'understanding maternal, neonatal, SRH of adolescent girls and young mothers (AGYM) for advocacy in Pakistan', which was conducted in four cities, one in each province. He said one of the identified key preventive reproductive health needs of AGYM was knowledge about menstruation as there was general lack of awareness about menstrual health problems and appropriate sources to seek care among both married and unmarried girls.

"Low levels of awareness giving (about physiological and reproductive health changes) to adolescent girls at the household and community level was prevalent and understood to be one of the main inhibiting factors towards appropriate knowledge of AGYM," Dr Ahsan said. Director adolescent of the AIMS Project Amna Aksheed said her project was focused on identifying the SRH needs of AGYM in Pakistan and highlighting the issue pertaining to access and utilization of services according to the needs. She highlighted the achievements in the previous phase of the project, saying resolutions were presented in three of the provincial assemblies and was passed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly last year asking government departments to include adolescents as specific target groups in all plans and programmes with due attention on their sexual and reproductive health.

**Dawn - April 23, 2014**

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## SECTARIAN CRISES & CONFLICT WATCH

### Conflict & Sectarian Crisis Incidents

#### Security Briefs for the Month of April

DATE	INCIDENTS	KILLED	INJURED
April 02, 2014	Unidentified militants opened fire at a car and killed three people and injured two women inside it in Satellite Town area of Quetta in Balochistan.	3	2
April 07, 2014	FC claimed to have killed more than 30 militants in Parodh area of Kalat District in Balochistan.	30	10
	At least four TTP militants, including a local 'commander' of the Hakimullah Mehsud group, identified as Kashed Khan Mehsud were killed and another was injured in Shaktoi area of South Waziristan Agency in FATA.	4	1
April 08, 2014	At least 17 people, including a woman and five children, were killed and 44 others were wounded when a passenger train, Jaffar Express was bombed at Sibi Railway Station in Sibi District of Balochistan.	17	44
	At least 14 TTP militants were killed in clashes between two factions of the militant outfit in South Waziristan Agency of FATA.	14	0
April 09, 2014	At least 23 people were killed and many others were injured in a bomb explosion at Pir Wadhai area near Sabzi Mandi locality in Islamabad.	23	-
	Nine more Persons were killed in a fourth day of fighting between two feuding factions of the TTP in South Waziristan Agency of FATA.	9	0
	Unidentified militants killed three unidentified students of an Islamic seminary near Continental Bakery in Gulistan-e-Jauhar area of Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town in Karachi of Sindh.	3	0
April 11, 2014	At least 10 militants were killed in the ongoing infighting in the TTP in Shawal tehsil of Miranshah in North Waziristan Agency of FATA.	10	0
	Several militants (unspecified numbers) were killed in infighting between two factions of TTP in South Waziristan Agency of FATA.	-	0
	Three Haqqani Network militants were killed and two wounded when a vehicle hit a roadside bomb in the Dattakhel area of North Waziristan Agency of FATA.	3	2
April 13, 2014	At least five TTP militants, including a key commander, were killed in Darra Adam Khel area of Kohat District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.	5	0

DATE	INCIDENTS	KILLED	INJURED
	At least three suspects, identified as Amjad Farooqui, Shahid Qadri and Shakeel Qadri, were killed when two unidentified militants opened fire at a car near Gulfam Sweet in Cant Bazaar area on Drigh Road within the limits of Shahrah-e-Faisal Police Station in Shah Faisal Town of Karachi in Sindh.	3	0
April 18, 2014	At least three seminary students were shot dead at Sakhi Hasan Chowrangi in North Nazimabad Town of Karachi in Sindh.	3	0
April 20, 2014	Three unidentified militants were killed in an exchange of fire with FC troops in Tasp area of Panjgur District in Balochistan.	3	0
April 21, 2014	Five Policemen and a civilian were killed and four others injured in an attack at Zangli checkpoint on Kohat-Peshawar road in Badhaber area of Peshawar (Peshawar District), the provincial capital of KP.	6	4
April 22, 2014	At least four persons, including a Policeman, were killed and 30 others injured in an explosion near a Police vehicle in Farooq Azam chowk of tehsil Bazaar in Charsadda town (Charsadda District) of KP.	4	30
April 24, 2014	Thirty-seven militants were killed and more than a dozen injured in air strikes by the PAF fighter aircraft in Bara and Tirah Valley of Khyber Agency of FATA.	37	24
	At least seven members of a family were killed and seven others injured in firing incident in Yar Hussain area of Swabi District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.	7	7
	Four persons including a senior Policeman Inspector Shafiq Tanoli were killed in a suicide attack in Old Sabzi Mandi area of Karachi in Sindh.	5	0
	Unidentified militants fired a rocket at and then opened fire on a Police mobile in Chhattar area of Dera Murad Jamali town in Nasirabad District of Balochistan, leaving four Police personnel dead.	4	0
April 25, 2014	A bomb explosion took place on the Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman Road in Gizri area of Karachi, the provincial capital of Sindh, leaving six persons, including a woman, dead and 30 others injured.	6	30
April 27, 2014	At least three soldiers were killed and three others sustained injuries in an IED explosion in the Bobar area of South Waziristan Agency in FATA.	3	3
April 28, 2014	Three seminary students were killed and nine others were injured in a hand grenade attack that occurred inside the Jamia Masjid-wa-Madrassa Islamia Tahiria seminary located in Frontier Colony of Orangi Town in Karachi.	4	8
April 29, 2014	Three militants were killed and two FC officials injured in an encounter in Khujal Khel area of Landikotal tehsil in Khyber Agency of FATA.	3	2

DATE	INCIDENTS	KILLED	INJURED
April 30, 2014	Four unidentified dead bodies were found from Memon Goth area in Gadap Town of Karachi in Sindh.	4	0

*Compiled from different dialies*

### News & Updates on Crisis Incidents

#### Hamid Mir to Issue Official Statement on Attack

Senior journalist and Geo News' anchor Hamid Mir will issue an official statement pertaining to an attack that left him severely injured with six bullet wounds, his wife told Geo News. Mir's better half thanked the nation for praying for her husband's health and life, and said that it is due to the Almighty's blessings and peoples' wishes that Hamid Mir got a new life. She appealed to continue praying for Hamid Mir's health who is recovering from his injuries at a private hospital in Karachi. The doctors have extracted three bullets from Mir's body; however, three bullets are still lodged in his legs and thighs that require major surgeries. Karachi police registered an FIR against unidentified assailants into an armed attack on Hamid Mir. The case was registered on behalf of sub-inspector Shahadat Khan under section 15 of Anti-Terrorism Act and 324/34 and 427 of PPO at the Airport Police Station. It may be mentioned that Hamid Mir was attacked in Karachi while his car was leaving for the airport. The attack took place when a single gunman wearing shalwar kameez stopped his car right outside the airport and opened fire. The driver of the car sped away but the gunman and his accomplices in two motorcycles and a car followed Hamid Mir and continued firing. The attackers followed Hamid Mir's car till Karsaz and disbursed. While being chased Hamid Mir spoke to his colleagues over the phone and informed them of the attack.

**Daily Times - April 20, 2014**

#### Unabated Honor Killings: Over 200 Women Killed in Sindh Last Year

As many as 202 women were murdered in the name of honor in Sindh during 2013, with the number of reported cases reaching 28 during the first three months of the current year, the Senate functional committee on human rights was informed. Sindh's Special Home Secretary Nawaz Shaikh told the panel that the Karo-Kari trend is on the rise in rural Sindh due to the Jirga system. As many as 202 women were murdered over Karokari in 2013 while honor killing cases have already reached 28 so far this year. "Weaknesses in the legal system and encouragement of the Jirga system in the rural areas are responsible for the unabated killing of women in the name of honor," he said. Special cells are functioning in all districts of Sindh to encourage the civil society to join and report such cases to prevent violence against women, he told the senators and added that special seminars were also organized from time to time to create awareness. The committee chairman, Senator Afrasiab Khattak, expressed serious concern over the alarming increase in 'honor killing' cases. He directed the provincial government to take effective steps to discourage the menace.

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa home department informed the committee that 18 cases of 'swara' were registered between January 1 and March 31, 2014, and 173 persons were charged and 165 arrested, whereas eight are absconding. As per the report provided by the Punjab police chief, six cases of 'Vani' were registered during 2013 under 310-A PPC in Punjab and one case was cancelled and five were challenged and 38 out of 39 accused were arrested. Additional Secretary

of Punjab Home Department Chaudhry Asadullah Faiz informed the committee that the provincial government has started the registration of brick kilns to check the exploitation of workers. Thirty-three cases of bonded labor were registered between April 2013 and February 2014. The Sindh Labor Department also informed the committee that a campaign was started to register brick-kilns in the province since 2009. According to the document, 741 brick kilns, where 14,257 laborers were working, were registered.

The Express Tribune - April 22, 2014

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### **Sectarian Violence: Over 2,000 People Killed In 5 Years**

The Senate was informed by the Interior Ministry that the monster of sectarianism had devoured at least 2,090 lives over past five years, with militancy hit Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on top with 867 killings. The figures were revealed in a written reply from the ministry of interior during the question hour.

**Balochistan:** has seen deadly attacks on the resident Shia Hazara community, witnessed 737 killings.

**Sindh:** a number of doctors, professors religious leaders belonging to the sect have been targeted in recent years, 252 were killed over sectarian differences from January 2008 to January 2009.

**Punjab:** some of the worst riots in the country last year following a clash of two groups in Rawalpindi on Ashura that resulted in a curfew, 104 people were killed in sectarian violence over five years.

**Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa:** 22

**Gilgit-Baltistan:** has belied its largely peaceful outlook with incidents of sectarian violence, saw 103 people falling victim to sectarian violence. Five people lost their lives in Islamabad in sectarian attacks.

The exact number will probably be a bit higher since the reply provided covered the period from January 2008 to January 2014. Senators from different political parties contested the figures provided by the ministry and also asked the state minister about number of convictions of those who were arrested on charges of sectarian violence. However, the minister did not answer that question, further irking the members.

The Express Tribune - April 24, 2014

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### **Violence against Religious Minorities Rising Alarming In Pakistan: HRCP**

Sectarian killings rose by more than a fifth in Pakistan last year, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said, warning of an alarming increase in violence against religious minorities. The HRCP said 687 people were killed in more than 200 sectarian attacks last year, a rise of 22 percent on 2012. The group warned that ongoing peace talks between the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the hard-line militants of the Pakistani Taliban could make minorities even more vulnerable. Violence against Shias, who make up around 20 percent, has been growing in recent years, much of it led by extremist sectarian groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. The country's small Christian, Hindu and Ahmadi communities also suffer discrimination and occasional outbursts of violence. At the launch of the HRCP's annual report on Pakistan's rights situation, Secretary General IA Rehman said minorities were facing

increasing violence. "Minorities in Pakistan are increasingly feeling insecure since the present government came to power in June last year," he told reporters.

"It is a choice of the government if it wants to have negotiations with the Pakistani Taliban but these negotiations should not come at the cost of religious minorities and women," said Rehman. Nearly 200 Shias were killed in the first seven weeks of 2013, most in two huge bombings in Quetta, a flashpoint for sectarian violence. The rights group said that since the present government came to power the trend had shifted from large-scale attacks to individual killings targeting Shia doctors, lawyers and intellectuals. The report also called 2013 "one of the darkest years" for Christians in Pakistan, with the deadliest ever attack on the community mounted in Peshawar in September. Nearly 100 worshippers were killed when two suicide bombers blew themselves up at All Saints Church after a Sunday service. The State of Human Rights 2013 report, which was launched, said 869 women were killed in the name of honor. More than 800 women committed suicide in 2013. Only 18.3% women had secondary or higher level of education and only 28% were formally counted in the workforce.

At least 56 women were killed solely for giving birth to a girl child. There were only 560 women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 60,000-strong police force. In Punjab, only 9 out of 146 SPs were women. Out of 474 DSPs in Punjab, only 35 were women. Women's participation as voters and candidates grew in the 2013 election. According to HRCP over 14,000 murders were reported to police in 2013 and 694 people died in 45 suicide bombings. It stated that parliament made around two dozen laws. Eight presidential ordinances were promulgated. Several security-specific laws were adopted. The report said there was a heavy backlog of cases across all tiers of the judicial system. 20,000 cases were pending in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court continued to use suo motu powers, as legal experts' highlighted lack of guidelines governing how the court took up and prioritized such matters. The report said 357 police encounters were reported, 503 suspects were killed and 49 injured in the encounters. 50 policemen were killed and 99 injured. Thirty-one drone attacks killed 199 people, while 91 aid workers were attacked in Pakistan in 2013. Hundreds of cases of kidnapping for ransom were reported, 2,576 rape cases were reported from Punjab. Violence in Karachi killed 3,218 people, up 14% from 2012. Over 64,000 firearms, 561 grenades and 2.7 million bullets were seized and 72 million kilograms of explosives were confiscated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

**Daily Times - April 25, 2014**

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**ECONOMIC WATCH****Facts & Figures****Going Up: After a Brief Stability, Inflation Starts Rising**

After stabilizing for a brief spell, consumer prices on an average rose 8.5% in March compared to the same month a year ago as the government prepared to announce a third phase of increase in gas and electricity tariffs, heightening chances of further tightening of monetary policy. The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation increased 8.53% in March, driven by higher prices of food items and reversing a decline over the previous three months, according to figures released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The higher inflation numbers coupled with upcoming rise in utility prices have lessened the prospects of any fiscal stimulus to boost the country's economic growth. The CPI - the main national indicator reflecting the change in prices of a basket of goods and services - had been standing at 7.9% for the past two months because of decrease in prices of perishable food items on the back of improved supplies in the market. The increase in March was the result of a surge in food prices. Food inflation swelled 9.3% compared to the same month a year ago and 7.6% in February, according to the PBS.

Prices of household kitchen items like tomatoes, potatoes, eggs and fresh fruits rose significantly, with a maximum increase of 93% in potato rates. "Further adjustments to electricity and gas tariffs as well as levy to support gas infrastructure development are expected to keep inflation elevated over the forecast period," said the Asian Development Outlook, released by the Asian Development Bank. In the current financial year, inflation in Pakistan would remain at 9%, said Farzana Noshab, Senior Economic Officer of the ADB. The uptick in inflation will heighten chances of a further increase in the key policy rate, which the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) left unchanged at 10% in the monetary policy announcement in March due to reduced price pressures. Earlier, the SBP had twice revised upward the policy rate in the current fiscal year as agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). But despite the uptick, the underlying inflationary pressures appear to be easing, as core inflation, which excludes food and energy items, slowed down to 7.6% in March over a year ago.

Price rise in the commodity group of housing, water, electricity, gas and fuel remained stable at 9.2% in March over the corresponding month of last year, according to the PBS. Inflation rate for the group of clothing and footwear stood at 11.7%. Average inflation in the first nine months (July-March) of the current fiscal year was recorded at 8.7%. The average figure is below the IMF's projection. In the second review of Pakistan's economy under the \$6.7 billion loan programme, the IMF kept its inflation projection at 10%. For the current fiscal year 2013-14, the federal government has set the inflation target at 8%.

**The Express Tribune - April 02, 2014**

**Pakistan's Economy Will Slow down To 3.4%: Asian Development Bank**

If government officials are to be believed, Pakistan's economic indicators are positive. But the forecasts of global lenders are not promising. Pakistan's economy will slow down for a second consecutive year to 3.4%, according to the latest Asian Development Outlook forecasts. It has urged Islamabad to implement the unfinished agenda of structural reforms in energy and taxation sectors. Unveiling Outlook 2014, the flagship report of the Asian Development Bank, ADB's chief in Pakistan Werner Liepach said that a slowing growth rate will reduce the fiscal

space needed to increase public spending on education and health sectors. Currently, Pakistan spends less than 2% of its national output on education and just 0.7% on healthcare, Liepach said, adding that bulging public debts will also affect spending on healthcare and education. Continued fiscal consolidation will keep the growth rate on the lower side, he added. "It [2014] is a difficult year because of fiscal adjustments." For the current financial year the government has set a 4.4% growth target while it claims the national economy grew by a 'surprising' 5% in the first quarter of the current fiscal. But the ADB says the growth rate will moderate to 3.4%, which is slightly above an IMF projection but far lower than the official target.

While the US and India is going to pick up, Pakistan is a bit stagnant and will grow by 3.4% in the current fiscal, said Liepach. Oil prices will relatively remain stable and the agriculture prices will also remain flat, he added. "The risk to uptick is that if China slows, Asia slows." Liepach said Pakistan's economy was showing signs of recovery but "for the ADB, recovery means that a declining trend in economic indicators has been reversed, though a lot more needs to be done". He said there was still a big unfinished agenda of structural reforms in the areas of energy, taxation and state-owned enterprises. The ADB has a different view on the pace of privatization as the money earned may not come as quick as expected, said Liepach. While the government remains committed to energy sector reforms, these need to be comprehensive and should expand to administrative measures, he added while stressing on the appointment of permanent heads of energy sector companies. "Actual actions have either not been taken yet or have to show results," he said. "What Pakistan is going to achieve this and next fiscal is not enough to get this country out of poverty and put it on the path to development," he added.

Outlook-2014 states that various macroeconomic and security challenges continue to weigh on the economy, which need to be addressed to continue and sustain the current momentum. Farzana Noshab, senior economic officer at ADB's country office, said the budget deficit is expected to remain in line with the IMF-agreed annual target of 5.8% of GDP. But she cautioned that a resurgence of circular debt and any delay in projected foreign flows could pose a risk to the target. She said the recent improvements in foreign exchange reserves are encouraging but potential risks to external sector come from a delay in the expected inflows in the second half of the fiscal year. Noshab said a reliable supply to the industrial sector led to 6.8% growth in large scale manufacturing in the first half of the fiscal - but within LSM, the textile sector grew below 2% in that period. She said the industrial growth will drive growth in retail and transport sectors but the agriculture sector output will remain modest this year. The external sector showed positive signs but the current account deficit will remain 1.4% of GDP, she added. Liepach said the bilateral grant from Saudi Arabia was a surprise and a windfall as well. Noshab was of the view that the State Bank of Pakistan did not have the luxury to intervene in foreign exchange market due to a low level of official forex reserves.

**The Express Tribune - April 02, 2014**

**DEVELOPMENT WATCH****Education Projects****50% Projects of Vision 2025 Related to Education: Ahsan**

Although focus of the projects of the government's Vision 2025 is energy crisis yet around 50 per cent of projects are related to education and they will be launched in April. The government will also hold national research workshop to streamline the funding for research at higher education level. Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said this while talking to media persons here at Planning Commission. He said that in the next annual budget, ministry of planning and development along with ministry of science and technology was planning to launch a new scheme aimed at harnessing the potential of high school students in the field of science and technology. "Under this scheme, talented students will be identified and facilitated through scholarships and other incentives so that they can pursue their dreams and become useful human resource for the country," he added. In the next financial year, he said, the federal government would establish endowment fund for deserving students on the pattern of the Punjab government in addition to creating researchers fund for PhD students. "The fund would encourage research that is aligned with the national development agenda."

Regarding the appointment of chairman Higher Education Commission, he said he would meet the prime minister to discuss the issue. The prime minister constituted the new committee without taking him on board and he would request the PM to reconsider three names sent to him earlier short-listed after interviews. Iqbal remarked that they were also focusing on decreasing the gap between industry and academia. "The contribution of our textile industry in economy is 65 per cent whereas the number of PhDs produced in this field during past decade is not more than 10 out of the total 7,000 PhDs and you will hardly find any expert," he said. He said the government had decided to increase the budget for higher education in the next fiscal year too. He said that he had sent a letter to all chief ministers of the provinces about curriculum, medium of instructions in schools and other things, adding the CMs had not yet replied to him. He said that in Vision 2025, the government had also planned to initiate development communication programmes with the assistance of media for capacity building of journalists along with active engagement and sustainable partnership of the government.

**The Nation - April 03, 2014**

**KP's Education City Concept Paper Copied from Project in India**

The concept paper of the proposed Education City has been copied from a similar project executed in India. It exposed those at the helm of affairs. The establishment of Education City is an iconic project of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-led provincial government. Initial work has already been started on it. PC-1 for the project has been made and would be discussed at a meeting in the Planning and Development (P&D) Department this month. In a sequel to the meeting a summary would be submitted to the chief minister and after his approval formal execution of the project would be started. The site has already been identified. It encompasses 30,000 kanals of land near the Karnal Sher Khan Interchange on Motorway in Swabi district. Universities of international repute would be invited to open sub-campus in the city. The provincial government would provide free land and other facilities to them.

However, the concept paper aimed at attracting potential donors for the project was copied from the pre-feasibility report of the Knowledge City in Karnataka India. Complete paragraphs and tables have been copied from the original text and pasted on a plain document to compile a mere three-page 'project concept'. Except the maiden sub-head of the 'project concept' - Education City (Col Sher Khan Interchange) - and the last two paragraphs under the head of 'Education World Forum' the entire remaining document is an exact copy of the Indian Knowledge City concept. The compiler has not even bothered to replace the terms 'India' and 'Indian Students' that can be seen in two instances in the three-page document. The first one is under the sub-head Public Private Partnership (PPP) model, stating: "Considering the vast investment that is required a PPP is the way ahead to set up Knowledge City in India."

Similarly under the sub-title of 'benefits of Knowledge City' it is stated: "Indian students and researchers get better platform to hone their skills". And a copy of the 'project concept' for the proposed Education City in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can be acquired from the education authority formed for the purpose. Reached by phone, a senior official in the Higher Education Department said the concept paper was drafted by the department and no consultant had been hired for it. "Establishment of Education City in the province is no doubt the most emergent need of the hour. It would not only bring investment to this militancy-affected and less developed province, but would also help eradicate militancy," said a senior academician on the condition of anonymity when his comments were sought.

However, he added that proper deliberations should have been made on the project. Local needs, problems and requirements should be taken into consideration before going ahead with the project, he said. "I don't know how much deliberations with academicians and other experts had been made on the project. A working group has already been engaged for promotion of higher education. The project has not even been discussed in that group," remarked the academician, who is also a member of the working group. Another academician told this reporter that it was not wrong to follow the good projects of other countries. "But having a ditto copy of the projects of others cannot be justified by any means. It is wrong both ethically and technically," he argued. A senior government official told The News that concept papers occupy the basic role in any project.

**The News - April 05, 2014**

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### **In K-P, 159 Girls Schools Remain Shut**

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Assembly was informed that 159 schools for girls remain closed across the province. The issue was raised during the question hour. In response to a query made by JUI-F lawmaker from Hangu, Mufti Syed Janan, the primary and secondary education department shared data about the closure of schools. The written reply from the department stated presently there are no non-functioning girls schools in Chitral, Buner, Bannu, Malakand, Torghar, Karak, Dir, Haripur, Kohat, Abbottabad, Lakki Marwat and Nowshera. However, it provided a list of 12 middle and 147 primary schools for girls that are shut across the remaining 12 districts. A breakdown of this list shows 12 primary and 1 middle school were non-functional in Peshawar due to security threats. Fifteen primary schools in Hangu, 15 in DI Khan, 14 in Charsadda, three in Swabi, two in Tank and two in Shangla have been closed due to a lack of female teachers. Twenty-seven primary and a middle school in Battagram, and 17 primary and seven middle schools in Kohistan were also closed due to a dearth of teachers. Thirty-nine primary and two middle schools are closed in Swat; some due to security threats. A middle school in Mansehra was destroyed in an earthquake, while a primary school in Mardan was occupied by the landowner. However, Janan contested these figures and presented another

set of statistics from the department that was submitted before the house on February 21. According to that data, 385 schools were shut across K-P, of which 295 were girls schools. Mufti then accused the department of deception. PML-N lawmaker Aurangzeb Nalotha also informed the house about eight girls schools closed in his constituency of Abbottabad, contrary to the department's claims. K-P Minister for Primary and Secondary Education Atif Khan claimed the statistics may have changed due to one factor or another and it is not necessary that the department was misinforming the house. The matter was then referred to the relevant committee.

**The Express Tribune - April 18, 2014**

## Health Projects

### Health Reports/Controls

#### **New Infections Constantly On Rise in Pakistan: UN Envoy**

As 90 per cent of people living with infections belong to up to twelve major cities across Pakistan, the country must develop strong city-based health programmes in order to achieve the 6th Millennium Development Goal, according to J.V.R Prasada Rao, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for AIDS in Asia and the Pacific. Rao said that at least 2 to 3 per cent of Pakistan's GDP needed to be allocated to the health sector in order to improve current social indicators; at the moment, 0.9 per cent of Pakistan's GDP is allocated to the health sector. In an interview with The Express Tribune, Rao said that as Pakistan is the fourth largest country in the region affected by transmittable diseases, it was of significance for the United Nations from a global perspective. He said that Indonesia, Philippines and Pakistan were amongst the three countries where the total number of new infections was constantly on the rise.

While expressing commitment and technical support, Rao said that the Global Fund has allocated a total of US\$34 million to combat HIV/AIDS in Pakistan. He said that although the HIV count has been stagnant here for the last 34 years, it does not mean the figure has been declining. In 2010, the last time a survey was conducted, a total of 87,000 people identified were affected by infections, which is a conservative figure according to Rao. Rao said that the UN has expressed its interest in assisting the government to conduct a new round for a case-based survey. "This is something that needs to be done this year," he said. "Pakistan is entering a new development syndrome and new initiatives can be gainful." Rao and Director UNAIDS Asia and Pacific Steve J Kraus met with Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Saira Afzal Tarar, Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal and members of civil society and the judiciary. To reduce stigma and discrimination in the country, Rao said that engaging religious leaders and learning from Iran and Indonesia, who have engaged scholars for health programmes, could be beneficial. Rao said that an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 women today might be HIV-positive in Pakistan.

**The Express Tribune - April 25, 2014**

## ENERGY CRISIS

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

#### Energy Crisis to Vanish in a Few Years: Prime Minister

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has assured the nation that a shortfall in the energy sector would be overcome by his government in a few years as the steps taken by the government for overcoming the energy crisis are yielding positive results, and 3G Spectrum Technology will usher in a new era for the country. He said this while talking to a three-member delegation belonging to the telecom industry, comprising Jo Lender, CEO Vimplecom, Augie K Fabela, co-founder and Chairman Emeritus, and Rashid Khan, CEO and President Mobilink. The meeting took place at the PM House. Prime Minister Nawaz said that growth in the country's economy was evident from the economic indicators and the trust shown by the multilateral donors. "The introduction of 3-G technology will lead Pakistan into a new era of Information Technology (IT)," he noted. He said that the economy was growing at a fast pace, the stock exchange had seen a rise while the rupee gained value against the dollar.

The prime minister said that Pakistan had embarked upon an aggressive privatization policy. "The government should not only run businesses but also facilitate businesses and for this purpose, we have to raise the trust of investors," he opined. The delegation appreciated the government's policy of privatization and said that the policy would provide an impetus to the economy. The members of the delegation were of the view that introduction of the 3-G Technology in Pakistan would provide necessary momentum to the growing economy. PM Nawaz said that the 3-G license would be open for all the national and international competitors and it would be awarded in a transparent manner. "We expect that the international bidders will also compete for the 3-G license," the premier hoped. Nawaz Sharif said that IT sector was observing fusion of different sectors, including telecom and banking sectors, and the investors needed to take its advantage. "It will create job opportunities for the youth," he said.

The prime minister said that the Pakistani youth were energetic and if provided opportunity and space, they could excel in the IT sector through their creativity and innovation. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif chaired a high-level meeting on Pakistan Railways (PR) at the PM House. He was apprised of the functioning of PR, its history, present status and future direction. He was told that the present PR administration was focusing on the core business of transportation of goods and people. PM Nawaz commended the ministry's focus on improving governance based on rules and regulation, merit-oriented human resource policy and transparency. He directed that all railway stations should be modernized with better services for citizens. He was briefed that the target of Rs. 4.5 billion of additional revenue had been achieved this year and, with better management, there had been a reduction of Rs. 5 billion in railway losses. It was decided to reconstitute the Railways' Board with better representation from the private sector. The premier was told that work on the Karachi Circular Railway would be initiated soon.

The News - April 04, 2014

#### Energy, Security Biggest Obstacles to Investment

President Mamnoon Hussain said the revival of national economy by ensuring an investment and business-friendly atmosphere was top priority of the government. The president told the

2nd LCCI OIC Ambassador Conference-2014 held at the local hotel that effective measures were being put in place to overcome the energy shortage as well as improvement of law and order. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was now scaling up due to viable policies of the government. The president said the LCCI was playing a crucial role in Pakistan's overall economic development and congratulated its office-bearers and other quarters concerned for successful holding of the second OIC trade conference. The government, he said, was aware of the problems of business community and was taking solid steps accordingly for their early and durable solution. Mamnoon said all resources were being mobilized for provision of an atmosphere conducive to the business community as well as improvement of law and order. All available means are being explored and utilized for energy generation because the government was committed to transforming Pakistan into a business and investment friendly country.

The president termed public-private partnership need of the hour, which, according to him, could produce better results in all sectors of the economy. He said there were vast opportunities in areas of energy, infrastructure, rail and roads, and assured that the government would extend all-out support for investment in these sectors. Special attention was being given to the agriculture and livestock, which could jack up the process of economic development in the country, he observed. Mamnoon said the OIC states had great potential for economic cooperation with their immense natural and human resources, but unfortunately intra-OIC trade did not reflect this potential. He said, "The LCCI 2nd OIC Trade & Investment Conference is a giant leap towards bringing the members of the Organizing of Islamic Countries in close proximity. Such initiatives would not only enhance trade and economic cooperation between the Muslim countries, but would also pave the way for progress and prosperity in the Muslim countries." Mamnoon said role of the private sector must be emphasized in trade promotion and economic development and it had to be involved by the governments of the OIC member states in their endeavors to achieve this goal.

The president said the Pak-China Economic Corridor would usher in a new era of economic development in the whole region as it would not only benefit Pakistan and China, but also Middle East, Central Asian Republics and other neighboring countries. He said efforts were being made to improve the energy and security situation in the country that were the biggest impediment to foreign investment and it was not the GDP alone that would get a boost but foreign investment would also increase considerably in next few years. He said presently Pakistani merchandise was going to 216 countries, but the 70 per cent of the total trade was with only 20 countries that should be expanded. The president said, "It is the utmost desire of Pakistan that the trade among the OIC countries may flourish. I see it expand further and the OIC Bloc being the second biggest bloc emerging as a big economic power on the economic map of the world. Pakistan wants unity amongst the Muslim countries as harmony is the key to every success." He said the OIC member states had to increase their inter and intra trade and added that the groups like GCC, D-8, ECO and African Union could be more interactive within themselves and with the rest of the groups for a healthier economic activity.

Daily Times - April 13, 2014

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### **Petroleum Prices Likely To Drop by Rs. 2.98/Liter**

The prices of petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) are likely to be slashed by up to Rs 2.98 per liter with the start of May, if the impact of declining trend in the price of crude oil in global oil market and depreciation in the value of dollar is passed on to the consumers, it has been learnt. According to the estimation made so far by the quarters concerned, the POL prices are expected to be scaled down in the next month under a monthly oil price review mechanism. The step will

give some respite to the inflation-hit Pakistanis. The final decision to this effect will be made by the Finance Ministry on April 30. "The POL prices are to go down with the dollar's depreciation against the rupee and decline in crude price in global market," a senior official at the Finance Ministry said. A significant cut in petrol and diesel prices would decrease the inflation, he claimed. Due to the declining trend in the price of crude oil in the international market, coupled with depreciating value of US dollar, per liter price of petrol is estimated to see a decrease of up to Rs 2.98; high speed diesel (HSD), Rs 2; high octane blended component (HOBC), Rs 2.65; kerosene oil, Rs 1.95, and light diesel oil (LDO), Rs 1.35, sources in the Petroleum Ministry said. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) would hold consultations with the oil marketing companies on April 28 to work out per liter price of POL products for the next month, the sources said. OGRA would reportedly submit a related summary to the ministries of finance and petroleum for final approval of the government. Economic experts say the government should consider substantial cut in the prices of petroleum products for the month of May in the backdrop of downside in the value of US dollar.

Daily Times - April 22, 2014

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## REGIONAL WATCH

## Pakistan &amp; India

**'Trade to Improve Pakistan, India Relations'**

Pakistan and India should put aside all the conflicts and increase the trade between both countries. Once the economic relations are strengthened, there will be no chance of war, because even enemies turn into friends due to trading. This was stated by the speakers at a briefing titled 'Prospects of upcoming Indian elections and their impact on Pak-India relations', organized by Pakistan-India Parliamentary Friendship Group, of the National Assembly, and a non-government organization, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Studies. The chairman of Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS), Dr Rasul Bakhsh Rais, speaking to the participants, said that India and China will never go for a war because they have been doing a trade of about USD 100 billion, with each other, annually. "The issues between Japan, Germany and the European countries were resolved because of trade. Pakistan and India should also adopt same way, and after a while, Pakistan can relate the issue of water with trade," he said.

"According to a new survey, 63 per cent Indians are going to vote for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and only 19 per cent Indians will vote for Congress, in the upcoming elections. In India, political parties can't cash the names of their leaders, so they have to deliver," added Dr Rais. "If Narendra Modi becomes the prime minister, he will insist on taking confidence building measures and stop terrorism, but he will never agree to resolve the issue of Kashmir," he said. Dr Rais suggested that the national security policy of Pakistan should be changed, because that is how the issues within the country can be resolved. Former foreign secretary, Salman Bashir, who also served as the high commissioner in India, said that, in Pakistan, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has a majority in the federal government, so it can easily take the decisions, due to which Pakistan has developed good relations with the neighboring countries. "It seems that, in India, BJP will form a collation government, so the government will not be in a position to take the decisions. Moreover, the Indian establishment thinks that Pakistan is an enemy," he said.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed said that the power is diverting from the west towards the east, and in the new scenario, the importance of Pakistan has increased. "USA has to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, and for that, the weapons and machinery, worth of USD 35 billion, have to be transported through Pakistan, because of the recent tensions between Russia and USA," he said. "It is the first time in the history of Pakistan that in all four provinces, there are governments of different political parties, which shows that there is a political stability in the country. So, Pakistan can get an advantage of the situation, and resolve issues with India," he said. "On the other hand, in the last 30 years, not a single political party in India has achieved absolute majority," he said. "There are 600 districts in India, out of which, in 200 districts, there are insurgencies. India has been facing two issues that are security and economic development, because in 2013, the growth rate of the Indian economy was only 4.5 per cent, which is very low," he said. "Because of these issues, Pakistan and India can start trading, which will be beneficial for both of the countries. However, Pakistan should keep in mind that there will be no solution of the Kashmir issue, in the near future," he said.

A member of National Assembly (MNA), Maulana Muhammad Khan Shirani, who belongs to Jamiat Ulema e Islam - Fazal ur Rehman Group (JUI-F), said that before building relations with

India, we have to see what we will lose and what we will gain. The Kashmir issue arose because of India, he said. MNA Marvi Memon said that the issues between both countries should be resolved, especially the issue pertaining to water. MNA Dr Ramesh Kumar said that good relations should be established with the neighboring countries. "In Pakistan, 33 per cent people want good relations with India, but, in India, only 11 per cent want good relations with Pakistan. We should analyze the reason behind it," he said.

Dawn - April 04, 2014

## Indian Elections

### India's Hindu Nationalists Tipped to Win as Poll Looms

India's frontrunner for premier, Narendra Modi, exhorted voters to give him a strong mandate in polls starting next week as a new row flared over his Hindu nationalist party's ability to protect the country's secular traditions. The controversy on the last day of campaigning for the nine-stage elections kicking off was spurred by remarks by the Bharatiya Janata Party leader's right-hand man, Amit Shah, who spoke of "revenge" in a part of India hit by Hindu-Muslim violence last year. "This election is about voting out the government that protects and gives compensation to those who killed Hindus," Shah said in India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh, leading daily The Indian Express and other media reported. "If you want revenge, vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)," said Shah, who faces murder accusations over allegations he ordered the killing of a man whom police said was an Islamic militant. Shah denies the murder allegations, calling them a political vendetta, but his proximity to Modi has long been a matter of public controversy.

Congress leaders accused Shah, who heads the BJP campaign in northern Uttar Pradesh state, of making a "provocative hate speech" and complained to India's Election Commission. The BJP defended Shah, saying he was only urging people to "vote for the BJP and Modi" in the election in which over 800 million people can vote, making it the world's biggest democratic exercise. Shah was asking voters - both Hindus and Muslims - to use the ballot box as "a weapon of every citizen" against a government that has failed to halt religious violence in the state, BJP spokeswoman Nirmala Sitharaman. Indian opinion polls, while notoriously unreliable, point to a strong win for the BJP under Modi, 63, a tea-stall owner's son and a charismatic politician with a booming voice, who has said only he can revive the country's once red-hot economy.

The secular left-leaning Congress, which has led India for a decade, has fallen out of favor with voters over a sharply slowing economy and massive corruption scandals. - 'Monk with a mission' -Modi, a bachelor who likes to be seen as a "monk with a mission" according to his biographer Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, is supported by many business leaders who admire what they say is his corporate-friendly administration as chief minister of prosperous Gujarat state. But critics worry about his Hindu nationalist rhetoric, fearing it could stoke religious tensions, and recall 2002 riots that swept Gujarat in which at least 1,000 people, mainly Muslims, were hacked, burnt and shot to death. Some 13 per cent of India's 1.2 billion populations is Muslim. The bearded, barrel-chested Modi has repeatedly rejected opponents' accusations he did not act decisively to halt the Gujarat riots and may even have encouraged them, and official investigations have never found grounds to charge him.

Meanwhile, in a show of unity, Modi joined Lal Krishna Advani, 86, as the party patriarch filed his nomination papers in the Gujarat capital of Gandhinagar for the election that starts in India's far-flung northeast. Advani had earlier voiced unease with Modi's ascendancy and he was still guarded, telling reporters he would not call Modi his "protégé", but saying he had never seen a

“more brilliant and efficient manager”. Modi was more lavish, recalling the “illustrious” political career of the party doyen and urging voters to give the BJP a “huge” margin of victory. The final day of campaigning saw release of new opinion poll by CNN-IBN which said the BJP and its allies could get 234 to 246 seats in the lower house of parliament.

Congress and its partners, led in the campaign by Rahul Gandhi, 43, whose diffidence about taking up his inheritance as scion of the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty has won him the nickname of the “reluctant prince”, may win just 111 to 123, the poll suggested. The winning party needs 272 seats for a majority but the BJP is expected to strike more alliances to reach that crucial number when results come in on May 16. Newspapers Saturday carried full front-page ads with a photograph of Modi and the party’s slogan: “Time for a Change, Time for Modi.” Congress won backing from the imam of India’s largest mosque, Maulana Syed Ahmed Bukhari, who said “secularism is the need of the hour”.

**The News - April 06, 2014**

### **India Voters Kick off World’s Biggest Election**

Indians began voting in the world’s biggest election, which is set to sweep the Hindu nationalist opposition to power at a time of low growth, anger over corruption and warnings about religious unrest. The 814-million-strong electorate is forecast to inflict a punishing defeat on the Congress party after its decade-long rule and elect the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by conservative hardliner Narendra Modi. The first voting was held in six constituencies in India’s northeast, part of a grueling nine-phase contest winding up May 12. Turnout was near 73 percent in tea-growing Assam state, where separatist militancy is rife, and 84 percent in Tripura, latest official figures showed. “I want the government to reduce poverty and do something for the future of my children,” said tea plantation worker Santoshi Bhumej, 30, at a polling station in Assam’s Dibrugarh city.

Dense queues of men and women shuffled slowly into tightly guarded booths to press the button for their candidates on electronic voting machines. The voting began after a bad-tempered campaign hit new heights of rancor. Simmering religious tensions in the campaign, which has mostly focused on development, flared into the open late last week, when a top Modi aide was accused of inciting communal violence. Amit Shah faces a judicial probe after reportedly telling voters in a riot-hit north Indian region to see the election as “revenge” against a “government that protects and gives compensation to those who killed Hindus”. Rahul Gandhi, leading the Congress into his first national election as scion of the famous dynasty, said Sunday a BJP victory would threaten India’s officially secular fabric. “Wherever these people (the BJP) go they create fights. They’ll pit Hindus and Muslims against each other,” Gandhi said.

The BJP said talk of “revenge” was normal ahead of an election and insisted the remarks were taken out of context. Prime ministerial front-runner Modi, son of a tea seller, is a polarizing figure whose rule as chief minister of prosperous Gujarat state has been clouded by deadly anti-Muslim riots that erupted in 2002. Releasing Monday the party’s delayed manifesto which mixed promises of development and protection of Hindu interests, Modi promised to lift the nation’s mood. “The country has become stagnant. It is drowned in pessimism. It needs momentum to move forward,” he said. He urged voters to give him a clear majority in the 543-seat parliament. Surveys have predicted the BJP will need coalition partners when results come May 16. In Assam, a Congress stronghold, some disgruntled voters they were swayed by Modi’s promises of better infrastructure, strong leadership, jobs and a clean administration.

**Daily Times - April 08, 2014**

## India Votes: First Big Day of Polls Draws to a Close

Although the turnout in almost all the 91 constituencies that went to the polls - the largest chunk of constituencies to go to the polls so far - surpassed previous levels, it was the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that was the most jubilant, and enthused by the way the vote would help the Uttar Pradesh outcome. The only disappointment was Maharashtra which saw a lower than expected turnout. The Election Commission's satisfaction over turnout levels was marred by bomb blasts in two constituencies - Munger and Jamui - in Bihar and discovery of unexploded bombs in Aurangabad. Two soldiers died in the blasts. There was some exchange of fire in Gadchiroli, an area inhabited by Maoists in Maharashtra. Ten seats in western UP went to the polls today. The turnout in the region was 70 per cent, 14 per cent more than in 2009. BJP sources are confident that the Muslim vote has split between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in western UP. They say the SP has shown a late surge among Muslims.

In Delhi, a dipstick survey of polling booths suggested that barring New Delhi - where there was a sizeable presence of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) flags and activists - in six other constituencies, the Congress and BJP had a matching presence at polling booths with a slight edge for the BJP. In Kerala where all 20 Lok Sabha seats are going to the polls, a turnout upwards of 70 per cent is normal. Pollsters said what was important was that the Badgara constituency - where the BJP has high hopes - had the highest turnout in the state. Both fronts, Congress-led United Democratic Front and CPM-controlled Left Democratic Front, claimed that high polling percentage would help them. Muslim-dominated areas in Malabar (north Kerala) witnessed an unprecedented turnout. In 2009, UDF had won 16 and LDF four. Haryana with 10 seats saw complaints of rigging being registered by AAP within one hour of voting. In Gurgaon, supporters of Yogendra Yadav complained of "massive rigging" at 10 am when barely 15 per cent had voted. Candidates who sense they are winning rarely say the election is rigged. Maharashtra's 10 seats saw a lower turnout than expected. Officials said it was because of the searing heat. In Jammu and Kashmir, the Jammu constituency saw long queues of people waiting to vote.

The Express Tribune - April 11, 2014

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## Election In UP: Leaders Seek To Exploit Polarization

Inflammatory words, hate-speech, Hindu-Muslim rift and other communal tactics are being excessively applied to mobilize voters. However, no political party is talking about the core issues like inflation, unemployment and stalled development.

## Bhartiya Janata Party's Relapse

The Narendra Modi-led BJP which has been quiet on Hindutva issues and for most of the part has harped on development has changed the gears in UP. Earlier, they had reached out to appease Muslims through MJ Akbar, Sabir Ali, Zafar Sareshwalas but later they realized that Muslim polarization was too strong to be reversed in this elections - especially when the opposition has painted the BJP with a saffron color. In this scenario, Modi's lieutenant Amit Shah rose to the occasion and played communal chords by delivering a thunderous hate speech against Muslims aftermath of the Muzaffarnagar riots. He has been booked both by the Election Commission and the local police. And the BJP also brought back the Ram Mandir issue in its election manifesto, which was released very late. Now Shah has sent a clear message if polarization will happen, the party will ensure a reverse polarization to prevent a negative result.

## Samajwadi Party's Renewed Efforts

Samajwadi Party always had a strong Muslim base in UP - firstly, because of many influential Muslim leaders' (like Azam Khan's) association with it and secondly, because of the party's role in stopping attacks on Babri Masjid in the early 90s, which gave its leader Mulayam Singh Yadav the name of Maulana Mulayam. However, Mulayam's pact with Kalyan Singh resulted in Muslims dumping him in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections while communal riots during Mulayam's son Akhilesh Yadav's government have alienated the Muslim community from the political force. But the party is leaving no stone unturned to bring back the votes and remind the Muslims that the SP is the only one close to them.

## Other Desperate Players

Parties like Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Aam Aadmi Party and Congress too have gone on the same lines, branding the BJP as communal and the SP as betrayers. The statement by Congress's Imran Masood against the 12002 Gujarat riots alleged mastermind - Narendra Modi in Saharanpur have already polarized the town. Their aim is simple to buy Muslim votes at any cost. And there is clear anti-Modi consolidation in the Muslim vote in UP. This stand is intended primarily to harvest Muslim votes, which constitutes for about 18% of the states' electorate. UP is one of the most important states in Indian politics as it sends the greatest number of members (80) to Lok Sabha. It has sent a various number of ministers to a high political mileage, often some of them turning out to be Indian prime ministers too. They say if you can win in UP, you can win the nation.

Even after 65 years of independence, caste- and religion-based politics vividly exists in India, where people are divided along various fault lines. UP has borne the burden of this communal divide, which is used by politicians, and faced consequences every time in form of still being one of the worst performing state in terms of development. Probably it is time for the people to look beyond the horizon of communal politics towards development.

**The Express Tribune - April 15, 2014**

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## Indian Voters Lured By Cash Handouts, Drugs, Bootleg Liquor

Indian election officials have seized a record \$36 million dollars of cash concealed in cars, private planes and even ambulances that they say was destined to buy off voters and pay for expenses over and above the spending limit. Opinion polls show the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies coming to power thanks to the popularity of Hindu nationalist leader Narendra Modi and widespread disgust with the Congress party, whose last years in power have been dogged by corruption scandals and a sharp economic slowdown. Despite the dramatic political change it could bring, the 2014 election would appear to be the same grubby game of cash-for-votes that has marred previous ballots in the world's largest democracy, only this time on a far bigger scale. Cash seized in the three weeks since the staggered election was announced has already surpassed the 1.9 billion rupees for the whole of the 2009 ballot period, the commission said. Voting in this year's election began on April 7 and winds up on May 12.

The Election Commission has also recovered 100 kg (220 lb) of heroin, most of it in the northern state of Punjab that has long been a transit point for drugs from Afghanistan, but is now itself India's heaviest consuming opium state. More than 10 million liters of liquor have been seized, too, over the past 20 days as politicians pour resources into an election that will cost an estimated \$5 billion by the time it ends, second only to the last US presidential election. "The seizures that we have made of cash, liquor and drugs are far bigger than we had

anticipated. He attributed the increase to the growing number of business leaders getting involved in politics, as Asia's third-largest economy gears up for an expected second generation of reforms to restore rapid growth. "A couple of elections ago it was not such a game of money," Dash said. "Now you have business people in politics, whereas earlier they were involved in managing their empires."

### **Spending Goes Underground**

Political funding remains opaque in India, with political parties refusing to disclose fully their sources of finance. State funding has been mooted in the past to stop illicit spending, but the idea has never taken off. Critics say a first-past-the-post system for electing lawmakers means the pressure on candidates to outspend their rivals is intense. And in a country where nearly a third of the population of 1.2 billion is estimated to live on less than \$1 a day, relatively little money can go a long way. With a legal spending limit of 7 million rupees (\$116,200) for each parliamentary seat at stake, much of the money being spent by candidates has been driven underground. They splash out on political rallies, luring voters and party workers with free meals, cash in envelopes, plastic pouches of alcohol and - in the case of the youth of Punjab - small black balls of opium paste that they drink with tea. Dash said his team had found cash in the dashboards of cars, liquor in milk vans and synthetic drugs in trucks carrying vegetables.

One man caught with 40 million rupees in a small car at a checkpoint in the northern town of Ghaziabad three days before polling there said he was a businessman. But he could not explain what his business was and he seemed to have no source of income. Police filed a case against him, one of 9,000 lodged across the country since the campaign began. In two southern states, vans carrying banknotes for bank ATMs were discovered with sacks of unaccounted-for additional money. Cash was also found in an ambulance in Odisha after a policeman noticed a suspiciously high number of the vehicles on the move in a remote corner of the eastern state. To escape detection, politicians are handing out coupons to voters that they can use to get free alcohol and food. In Punjab, the commission has seized cartons of pink coupons that voters can exchange for a free chicken, blue coupons for local liquor and green ones for branded spirits.

### **Rolling Pin Brigade**

More worrying is the distribution of drugs that is worsening an already serious problem in Punjab. Besides heroin smuggled from over the border with Pakistan, record seizures of synthetic drugs have been made in the past month, the state's additional electoral officer Raminder Singh said.

**The Express Tribune - April 16, 2014**

### **Biggest Chunk: Turnout Remains Low in Muslim Majority Areas**

An average 65-70 per cent turnout, despite the searing heat, marked the end of polling in 121 constituencies out of 543 going to the polls in the general elections-the largest chunk to vote on one day. Turnout in constituencies with a higher Muslim population, like Rampur in Uttar Pradesh with 48% Muslims, was generally low. Earlier this week, the All India Muslim Majlis e Mushawarat, an umbrella body of Muslims across India passed a resolution urging all secular voters to use their voting right wisely, with a resolve to defeat fascist and communalist candidates by resorting to tactical voting, making sure not to allow votes to be wasted by division. This stance was reiterated by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Thursday who asked voters not to waste votes by dividing them between the Congress and the

Samajwadi Party because this would ensure BJP's win. In first overt pro-Muslim pitch, Mayawati warned that if Modi were to become prime minister, "the country would stand ruined with communal riots" akin to the one in Gujarat in 2002. At least one Muslim candidate - Mukhtar Ansari of the Qaumi Ekta Dal in UP - has withdrawn from the polls as to not create the divide amongst Muslim voters. Ansari was to contest against Narendra Modi in Varanasi.

### **BJP's Stance**

The BJP, highly criticized for its anti-Muslim stance, too tried to clear its name. One of the few Muslims representing the party, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi argued that BJP's poor reputation among Muslims was 'undeserved'. "The BJP's image has been tarnished by its political opponents through malicious conspiracy," he said. From his perspective there has been a positive shift in the mindsets of many Muslims over the past two decades. Recent events, however, have been in stark contrast to the BJP's stance. During the communal violence that took place in Muzaffarnagar last year, claiming 65 lives and displacing over 50,000 people, mostly Muslims, BJP refused to condemn the incident, and avoided references to religiously motivated rioting in its campaign speeches. With most Muslims reluctant to vote for the BJP, the question still stands to who the community will vote for.

Amitabh Kundu, a professor at the New Delhi-based Jawaharlal Nehru University and chairman of a government committee which has evaluated the situation of Muslims in India is of the opinion that if "Given the very limited performance of the present government, I feel there will be some level of dissatisfaction because the Muslims certainly expected a lot from Congress." "It is impossible to even think that 180 million people make a unanimous decision and vote along the same lines?" questioned Hilal Ahmad, who researches voting trends among Muslims in India for the Center for Developing Societies of New Delhi. Supporting Ahmad's stance, analyst Yashwant Deshmukh said there are about 35 constituencies where Muslims make up approximately 30 per cent of the electorate. "Then there are another 150 constituencies where Muslim population is close to 10 per cent of the total voters," said Deshmukh, the founder of a company called CVoter. "Which means, in the House of 543 seats, there are about 200 seats where Muslim vote can somewhat affect the outcome."

**The Express Tribune - April 18, 2014**

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### **Regional Leaders Take Aim at Modi**

Even if the Bharatiya Janata Party does become India's biggest party after the elections, its controversial prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi will face the unenviable task of forming a coalition with regional parties - the most prominent of whom have sharply criticized the man, his record and his policies in separate statements. Mayawati, the leader of the Bahujan Samaj Party, which is predominantly supported by lower castes and minorities, warned her supporters at a rally in Uttar Pradesh that if Modi came to power, India would "stand ruined by communal riots." She was referring to the Gujarat riots of 2002 in which at least 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in a spate of violence under Modi's watch as chief minister. In her 30-minute speech, the BSP leader asked the Muslim electorate to play a decisive role in ensuring victory for her party and stopping BJP from coming at the Centre, the Press Trust of India reported. She isn't the only one. J Jayalithaa, the leader of Tamil Nadu's biggest party, the AIADMK, also rebuked Modi, referring to Gujarat's development under him as a 'myth'. "Till today there has been a myth created that Gujarat is the most developed state. But, this is not true," Jayalithaa said. "The truth is that, Gujarat has always been interested only in marketing itself," she said. The rebuke came after Modi told the media that he enjoyed good relations with

Jayalalithaa, a claim that she refused to endorse. Mamata Banerjee, an influential politician from West Bengal, where her party the Trinamool Congress leads the polls, also had harsh words for the prime ministerial candidate. "The projection by certain quarters that Narendra Modi will become the prime minister is like a gas balloon which will burst when the gas leaks," Banerjee said derisively. She also criticized Modi for his communal past and the alleged threat he poses to Muslims if he comes to power. Of course, one ought to take these pot-shots with a grain of salt; this is election time after all. Politicians will say whatever they think will get them votes. Still, building - and maintaining - coalitions are a challenge for the best of politicians in India. Modi's divisive record, coupled with the guile of ambitious regional leaders will severely test Modi, even in the wake of a BJP victory.

The Express Tribune - April 19, 2014

### **Disputed State: BJP Denies Any Shift in Stance on Kashmir**

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has denied a claim of Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani that its prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi had sent emissaries to meet Geelani on the Kashmir issue. The denial suggests the party is in no mood to reconsider its position on the festering disputed state, which has been a bone of contention between Pakistan and India since the 1947 partition. While campaigning in the disputed Himalayan state, Modi had said that his party would not resile from its demand of seeking changes in Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which provides constitutional protection to Kashmir. This means several laws that apply in the rest of India regarding ownership of property, etc, do not apply to Kashmir. A caveat was added by past BJP president Nitin Gadkari who said this was the BJP's position, but other parties in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) should not feel compelled to subscribe to it. Creating a political flutter, Geelani said Modi had sent two emissaries to him to discuss the Kashmir issue while he was getting medical treatment in Delhi. Geelani said he refused to meet the emissaries on a matter of principle - as Modi had collaborated in a massacre of Muslims in Gujarat.

However, today BJP denied Geelani's statement and said no one had met Geelani. From the BJP's point of view, it was important to loudly contest such a claim as such a meeting would have meant that the BJP may have been softening its stand on the status of disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir and taking a more benign view of the role of the local Kashmiri leaders in the whole discourse. Rejecting Geelani's claims as 'baseless and mischievous', BJP spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad said no representative of the Gujarat chief minister has ever met the Kashmiri leader. "We would like to demand from Geelani that he must apologise for making this false and unfounded statement," said Prasad. "The BJP is committed to development of Jammu and Kashmir where good governance is the biggest casualty and where corruption has led to loss of development and progress." Interestingly, newspapers in Kashmir reported that Jamaat-e-Islami, one of the biggest groups in the All Parties Hurriyat Conference of which Geelani is chairman, said no one sent by Modi had met them. Jamaat chief Mohammad Abdullah Wani said, "No one from Modi or BJP met me. They may have met Geelani because he is a big leader but as far as I am concerned, nobody met me."

### **Controversial Remarks**

In remarks that are bound to create a big political storm, a BJP leader from Bihar suggested at a rally on Saturday that those who oppose his party's prime ministerial candidate Modi will have to leave India and move to Pakistan after the results of the general election are announced. "Those who want to stop Modi (from becoming prime minister) are looking towards Pakistan. In

the coming days, they will have no place in India. They will only have place in Pakistan,” Giriraj Singh said while addressing a gathering in Godda district of Jharkhand. Singh made the remarks in the presence of senior party leader and former president Nitin Gadkari. He is the party’s candidate from Bihar.

**The Express Tribune - April 20, 2014**

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### **Preemptive Strike: BJP’s Website Blocked For Pakistan**

The official website of India’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been blocked in Pakistan by Indian authorities, according to a party spokesman. Internet users from Pakistan were barred from accessing the BJP website on Tuesday. However, the party’s prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi’s portal was still reachable, the website’s administrators confirmed. “Error 1009 - the owner of this website (bjp.org) has banned your IP address (-) on the country or region you are accessing it from,” says the page. According to Indian media reports, the head of the BJP’s IT department, Arvind Gupta, said that the site had been blocked in Pakistan as a security measure. The move comes a day after the Hindu hardliner party alleged that veteran leader LK Advani’s website had been targeted by Pakistani hackers. Even though memories of the 2002 Gujarat riots loom when considering a BJP win, Islamabad is hopeful that the peace train will not be derailed if the Congress government is replaced by a Modi-led coalition. Despite the stern statements from the Modi camp, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif continues to stress the need for better ties with India; he says he believes in good relations with India regardless of which party is at the helm.

**The Express Tribune - April 23, 2014**

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### **Indian Polls Enter Crucial Phase**

Indian elections are set to enter a crucial stage from now with 311 of the Lok Sabha’s 543 seats still to be decided, 117 of them to be put to vote. With a bulk of votes still to be cast, a majority of candidates are to test their luck in the remaining four stages. Key contests on Thursday will feature actor Hema Malini in Mathura. On April 30, Sonia Gandhi will fight from Rae Bareilly and Narendra Modi tackles a weak Congress opposition same day in Vadodra in Gujarat, one of two constituencies from where he is contesting. On May 7, Rahul Gandhi will figure in the Amethi race and finally on May 12, the last day of the polls, Narendra Modi’s fortunes will be tested in Varanasi against newcomer Arvind Kejriwal of Aam Aadmi Party. All the big races are being held in the main battleground of Uttar Pradesh. The initial Modi juggernaut, largely assisted by a communal polarization in western Uttar Pradesh, is now seen as abating. An indication of some insecurity gripping the Modi camp have surfaced in the form of stepped up hate speeches delivered by candidates and campaigners.

Physical assaults have increased with AAP candidates the worst casualty. AAP candidates are the least protected and most vulnerable of the main political parties in the fray. AAP’s former law minister in Delhi Somnath Bharti was beaten by alleged Bharatiya Janata Party workers after he had spoken to a TV channel on the banks of the Ganga River in Varanasi. The Congress campaign too has perked up and its star crowd-puller Priyanka Gandhi took on Mr. Modi frontally by raking up the “snoop gate” controversy surrounding him. She said leaders who indulge in wrong acts against women should be “thrown out.” Mr. Modi was said to be the main character in a sting operation on whose instructions a young woman was shadowed by all sections of the security forces in Gujarat, including the anti-terror squads. Mr. Rahul Gandhi has

raised the issue of Mr Modi's allegedly abandoned wife of 20 years being reclaimed by the frontrunner in the prime ministerial race.

Campaigning for her mother and Congress president Sonia Gandhi in Rae Bareilly, Priyanka Gandhi exhorted the electorate to reject divisive politics and those persons who believe in concentrating all powers with themselves. She observed that the standards of election campaigning had deteriorated, and deplored personal attacks, saying: "This is not politics." She told a gathering of women to make political leaders answerable and ask: "If you are talking about empowering us (women), tell us how you will do that. If you are talking about empowering us (women), then do not listen to our phone conversations behind closed doors." Even though she did not name Mr. Modi, the reference was clearly to the Gujarat Chief Minister who has been surrounded by a controversy over snooping of a young woman in the state allegedly at his behest. She then went on to add: "If there are such political leaders who indulge in wrong acts against women, they should be thrown out of parties."

Dawn - April 24, 2014

## Pakistan & Afghanistan

### Pakistan to Work with New Afghan Government for Peace: PM

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif while felicitating the people of Afghanistan on the successful presidential and provincial council polls said that Pakistan would work in collaboration with the new leadership in Afghanistan to bring peace and tranquility in the region. The prime minister hoped that the participation in the democratic process by the Afghan people would play a significant role in bringing peace and stability to the region. The message of the premier on the occasion has symbolic significance since he took the lead in expressing good wishes to the people of the brotherly country and also referred to the incumbent president of that country who is bound to vacate the office in the third quarter of this year. Diplomatic sources told that Pakistan has made it clear to all the stakeholders in the Afghan elections that Islamabad didn't bet on any of the candidates as it has no favorites among the contestants. The non-interference from Pakistan has been acknowledged by almost everyone in the run to head the war-torn country.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his statement said, "Making decisions through ballot boxes by the Afghan people reflected their determination and keen interest for adopting a democratic culture." He congratulated President Hamid Karzai and the people of Afghanistan on successfully holding and completing the election process. "Afghanistan is a brotherly country of Pakistan," he said, adding, "Pakistan would not only help and support Afghanistan in strengthening democracy but would also work in collaboration with the new leadership in Afghanistan for bringing peace and tranquility in the region." The prime minister expressed the hope that a peaceful transfer of power would take place in Kabul like in Pakistan after the last general elections and wished that democracy will flourish in the neighboring country. "This election will prove a historic moment for the Afghan people in their democratic journey," the prime minister said. He was of the view that these elections would be instrumental in creating unity and harmony among the people of the war-torn country.

Like always, the people of Pakistan stand in strong solidarity with the Afghan nation at this historic moment, as it moves forward in its peaceful democratic transition. Pakistan facilitated the Afghan refugees living on its soil in the 2004 presidential elections to exercise their right to franchise and for the purpose; polling booths were set up in all the refugee camps. Pakistan offered the same facility this time but the authorities concerned in Afghanistan opted not to

avail the offer. The Afghan election authorities also deprived the refugees to use their right to cast their vote in the 2009 presidential polls. Meanwhile, the Foreign Office has received the initial situation report regarding Saturday's elections in Afghanistan submitted by Pakistan's envoy Syed Ibrar Ahmad and the same has worked as a basis for the issuance of the message of felicitations, sources said. The United Nations has also provided assistance to the Afghan election authorities in conducting the elections.

The News - April 07, 2014

## Afghan Election

### Hekmatyar's Party Seeks Political Role Post-2014

Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), the second largest resistance group after the Taliban, which had previously stayed away from elections, is now actively taking part in the April 5 polls that is seen as a move to boost its political role in a post-NATO Afghanistan. Last month Engineer Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, former Afghan prime minister and chief of the HIA, announced support for Qutbuddin Hilal in the presidential elections after the party's central executive committee decided to take part in the crucial elections. Hilal, who once headed HIA's political council, had joined the race in January as an independent candidate as the party had not decided to contest the polls until that time. However, later Hekmatyar himself declared support for Hilal, giving him a political boost. Hekmatyar in an earlier letter, exclusively received, had instructed his party leadership to take part in the elections for provincial councils and to support those candidates who were either related to the party or have a positive view about the party. Provincial councils elect 68 senators in the 100-member Senate or 'Masharano Jirga', the upper house of parliament, and victory of some of Hizb leaders could ensure a role for the party in legislation. Other members of the Senate are nominated by the president.

An HIA leader told that some military commanders had reacted angrily to the decision. However, the leadership did not budge. Hekmatyar's decision is likely to boost the democratic process in the insurgency-torn country as it will define the future political role of his party, which is also the second major armed resistance group. HIA's political role is also being seen as a key to the reconciliation process ahead of NATO troops' withdrawal by the end of this year. The Hizb changed its stand about the elections after the party leaders inside Afghanistan and supporters approached the top leadership to review their decision of not taking part in the polls as they did not want the political space to be filled by others. Hekmatyar's whereabouts has been unknown for years, though he routinely gives recorded video and audio interviews and issue policy statements. His decision about elections is seen as very important and a major change in his stance and a move to seek a future political role for his party. The head of Hizb's political commission, Dr Ghairat Baheer, told that Hizb leaders were now actively engaged in political campaign across Afghanistan as it "does not want to leave the field open for rivals". He said the HIA decision would unite all splinter groups.

Although Hilal is not among the front-runners in the list of remaining eight presidential hopefuls, the decision assumed importance in Afghanistan and outside the war-shattered country as the party is still involved in fighting against the foreign troops. Hizb's decision was also mentioned in the UN Secretary General's annual report on Afghanistan presented to the Security Council last month. The HIA decision further isolated the Taliban as they are now the only group trying to disrupt the democratic process. The Taliban condemn the elections as a 'US-staged drama' and insist 'free and fair' elections are not possible as long as Afghanistan 'remains under the occupation of foreign invading forces'. "I want to appeal to the Taliban brethren to desist from sabotaging the coming elections as democratic process will lead to real

reconciliation,” Hilal told an election rally in north of Kabul this week, according to correspondents who attended the public meeting.

The Express Tribune - April 02, 2014

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### **Pakistan to Secure Borders as Afghans Goes To Polls**

While congratulating the government and the people of Afghanistan on the third presidential elections, and calling it a historic moment for the Afghan people in their democratic journey, Pakistan nevertheless says that, as on previous occasions, it would beef up security along the border during elections. It is not clear if the borders will be closed but Pakistan hopes that despite threats from the extremist groups, voters in Afghanistan will cast their votes in record number. “At this stage I cannot say exactly which measures will be taken but we would like to ensure security from our side. Pakistan has no interest in the Afghan elections being disrupted as it would only complicate the efforts to stabilize that country,” spokesperson at the Foreign Office told the weekly media briefing. She pointed out that there have been requests from Afghanistan for help during elections and Pakistan responded by taking additional measures for security. The spokesperson did not elaborate what kind of assistance Kabul had requested for. However in response to a query, the spokesperson said that this time Kabul had not requested that there should be assistance for more than 3 million Afghan nationals in Pakistan to exercise their right to vote, neither is there any clarity as to how many amongst them are registered voters. “These elections are an Afghan affair, with relevant Afghan institutions in the lead. We recognize the hard work of the electoral institutions in the planning and completion of technical preparations”, added the spokesperson.

The News - April 04, 2014

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### **Uncertainty about Afghanistan Polls’ Final Result**

On the day before elections, the streets of Kabul are eerily quiet. Groups of men no larger than two or three tramp down empty streets. A market stands half-open, selling essentials like meat, fruits, vegetables, and toiletries. And security checkpoints stop passersby, asking questions, checking IDs. The repressed uncertainty that has marred the last few weeks reveals itself in the silence that seems to hang heavy in the air: No one really knows what will happen when Afghans cast their vote for a new president. It will be the fifth time that Afghanistan will be voting since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, and the third time that they will be electing a president. The election is seen as a crucial turning point: NATO/Isaf troops are set to withdraw, or substantially reduce, their presence in the next few months, and a two-year term limit means incumbent Hamid Karzai, the face of post-Taliban Afghanistan, will not be running this year. But, Afghans might not know what the turning point looks like: A combination of a wide-open race and election irregularities means that it could take several days, or months, before a clear, and widely-accepted winner emerges.

With the final candidate requiring more than 50 per cent of the final vote, the election is expected to go to a second round. Three of the eight candidates vying for the top position are expected to split the bulk of the vote into three substantial slices. Dr Zalmay Rasool, a former foreign minister and national security advisor to Hamid Karzai, might run off with the vote that would have gone to Karzai: He is a Pakhtun who is said to have the backing of the soon-to-be former president. The former ophthalmologist, Abdullah Abdullah, who ran against Karzai in 2009, proved to be a serious competition in the last election. Seen as a Tajik, though he is half-Pakhtun, some say that he will not have the support of the Afghanistan’s majority ethnic group

(though some say that votes are not always ethnically driven.) And Ashraf Ghani who finished fourth in 2009, has risen to become a serious threat to the other two candidates, after picking Abdul Rashid Dostum as his running mate. An Uzbek leader from northern Afghanistan, Dostum is accused of atrocious war crimes, potentially resulting in a small loss of votes for Ghani. On the other hand, Ghani now has, as he calls it, "a winning ticket": Dostum has brought in the Uzbek vote.

### **Threats and irregularities**

According to the Afghanistan Analyst Network's Martine van Bijlert, a wide range of election irregularities might result in a fair bit of uncertainty about the final result. According to research carried out by the AAN, the maximum number of eligible voters - all Afghans over 18 - is around 13.5 million, but a total of 21 million cards are floating around in this election. "Even if every single person of voting age had acquired a voter card - which is clearly not the case - there would be at least 7.5 million additional voter cards floating around, not linked to real voters," says Ms. Van Bijlert in a report issued on the AAN website. "I would even say: though in practice the number could be as high as 10 million - or higher", she adds.

The irregularities do not end there. On the day of the vote, everything from security threats to weather and inaccessibility can mean that some polling stations will be closed on the day of the vote, potentially disenfranchising voters. If polling stations are closed in areas where a candidate expects to get a fair share of the vote, the results could prove to be even more controversial. Threats of attacks has already prompted the government to shut down 10 per cent of the polling stations around the country, and launch almost 200,000 security personnel to patrol the rest and fears of widespread fraud-stuffing ballot boxes with votes-are also being closely watched. In the last presidential election, up to one million votes were disqualified.

**Dawn - April 05, 2014**

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### **Pakistan Keeps Close Eye on Vote in Its Afghan Backyard**

Posters of turbaned Afghan presidential candidates are rolling off the presses in Pakistan, which will be keeping close watch on the election in its strategic backyard. Helped by cheaper labor and a favorable exchange rate, printers in Peshawar, less than 60 kilometers from the border, have been busy making Afghan election banners. "We have been swamped with work for the past two weeks because of the Afghan elections. One candidate has asked me to print 200,000 posters," said printer Mohammad Sajid. Business links with Afghanistan have grown in recent years and analysts say Pakistan wants a stable northwestern neighbor, shifting from the interference of the past. Pakistan wants to exert its influence on the Taliban to join a broader peace process, observers say, rather than topple Afghanistan's democratically elected government and create a new power vacuum with a violent spillover effect.

Fear of encirclement by arch-rival India led generations of Pakistani military thinkers to view Afghanistan as a zone of potential risk - and thus legitimate space for covert intervention. This doctrine of "strategic depth" saw Pakistan seek to support groups in Afghanistan it regarded as favorable to its ends, first the mujahideen fighting the Soviet occupation of the 1980s and then the Taliban during their 1996-2001 rule in Kabul. Afghan officials still regularly accuse Pakistan of colluding with the militants, most recently over an assault on a luxury Kabul hotel that left nine people dead. Pakistan vigorously denies the claims and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has worked hard to improve ties with President Hamid Karzai, who is stepping down after serving the maximum two terms in office. "I think this change started in the previous government and Pakistan sticks to the policy because probably they have realized this 'one favorite' policy has

been a disaster,” author and defense analyst Imtiaz Gul of Islamabad’s Centre for Research and Security Studies.

During the last Afghan presidential election, some Pakistani officials were more favorably disposed towards incumbent Karzai, who shared a good rapport with his then-Pakistani counterpart Asif Ali Zardari. This time, however, Islamabad has been careful not to side with any candidate in Afghanistan’s first ever democratic transition of power. Pakistan may be reluctant to antagonize whoever might emerge victorious by backing an opponent, but as Gul noted, it also does not have an obvious ally among the three leading candidates. Zalmay Rassoul is seen as the preferred choice of Karzai, with whom Islamabad’s relations are at low ebb. Former minister Abdullah Abdullah draws support from the Tajik ethnic group, who has not favored Pakistan, and economist Ashraf Ghani has “no connection” with Islamabad, Gul said. Though it may not have a candidate of choice, Pakistan remains a significant player in the election because its border areas serve as a rear base for the Taliban, who have vowed to disrupt the ballot and already claimed a series of attacks.

**The Express Tribune - April 05, 2014**

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### **First-Ever Democratic Transition: 17 Million Afghans Go To Vote**

Afghans will brave the Taliban threats and line up to vote across the war-shattered country - the third presidential poll since the fall of the Taliban. The crucial elections would pave the way for the country’s first-ever peaceful democratic transfer of power, because the constitution bars the incumbent, Hamid Karzai, from contesting again. The official Bakhtar news agency reports that nearly 13 million eligible people will go to polling centers. However, an election observer in Kabul told that the number of registered voters has increased to 17 million with the registration of new voters in recent months. Nearly half of the voters are women. President Hamid Karzai, who is scheduled to step down in May if a new leader is elected in the first round of Saturday’s election, has launched a fresh appeal to the people go to the polling centers without any fear and exercise their democratic right.

“The enemies of our peace and the involvement of foreign intelligence agencies in subversive activities further strengthen the resolve of our people to bring change,” the beleaguered President said in a TV advertisement in Pashto and Dari languages. He also urged the people to accept the results whoever is elected in the landmark election and to ignore their pre-election political differences. Karzai could stay for a few more months if the elections head to a runoff. In order to win, a candidate needs to get at least 51% of the votes. Independent Election Commission (IEC) chief Dr Ahmad Yusuf Nuristani said polling in Kabul would begin at 7:30am and will continue until 4pm, without any break. Unofficial results could start coming after counting is completed at polling centers. However, the official election result will be announced on May 14. If no presidential candidate receives more than 51% of the vote, a runoff election will be held on May 22.

### **Security Measures**

A veteran Associated Press photographer was shot dead and another reporter was wounded on Friday when an Afghan policeman opened fire at them in eastern Afghanistan. Soon after, people were alarmed and extremely apprehensive about the security situation on Election Day. Later, Afghan Interior Minister Omar Daudzai held a press conference in which he said more than 400,000 police; army and intelligence personnel have been deployed throughout the country to secure the polls. He said that “foolproof security arrangements” have been put in place and there is “complete coordination” among the country’s security branches. “We hope that the

people will come out of their homes in maximum numbers on Election Day and cast their votes with full confidence.” He asked Afghans to respond to “the enemies of Afghanistan” through their votes. “Democracy is the best response to terrorism,” said Daudzai. “We will show to the world that Afghanistan is a civilized society and their (international) investments, in generous love and treasure, during the last 13 years, have not gone in vain.” In response to a question about the role of international forces in the election security, he said the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) assisted Afghan forces in the transportation of sensitive materials in some parts of the country, but election security was “a completely Afghan-led exercise.” “Our reserve forces are also on red alert and all Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers are contributing in the security,” Ministry of Defense spokesman Zahir Azimi said in Kabul. He claimed foreign interests are behind attempts to derail the election process, echoing previous remarks made by other Afghan security officials and politicians.

The Express Tribune - April 05, 2014

### **Democratic Transfer: Surprising Turnout amid Poll Glitches, Taliban Threats**

Afghanistan’s landmark election was marred by a shortage of ballot papers that left many voters still queuing to cast their vote with polling due to close, as the organizers appeared unprepared for a high turnout. The Independent Election Commission ordered voting to be extended by at least an hour, with ballot papers being dispatched where they were needed for people to vote. In the capital, Kabul, many polling stations decided to extend voting hours way beyond the official closing time of 4 pm to allow voters to cast their ballots. In the western Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood of Kabul a line of hundreds of men and women snaked outside one polling station, with many impatient voters saying they had been waiting in the rain for most of the day.

“I have waited here for hours, but was not allowed inside to vote because there is no ballot paper,” said Hassan, who only gave his first name, as others nodded in agreement. “This is a deprivation of my right and I am unhappy at not being able to take part in this historic process.” Mohammad Hashimi, an election observer, added: “Many people stood in the rain for hours but couldn’t vote because of the ballot papers.” Independent Election Commission Chairman Ahmad Yusuf Nuristani told reporters that signs were that the turnout was good, while acknowledging the foul up over ballot papers. “The report we have so far indicates that many people participated in these elections and even in some stations we ran out of ballot papers,” he said. “We have already sent some ballots to those stations which we had reserved in provinces.”

Front-runner Dr Abdullah Abdullah told the media that he had been in close contact with the elections officials and conveyed concerns over the shortage of ballots in several polling stations. It was not immediately clear how widespread the shortage of ballot papers was around the country. Afghanistan has 12 million eligible voters, and officials say there were 15 million ballot papers printed. In Kandahar, a Taliban stronghold and Afghanistan’s second city, ballots had run out at the majority of polling stations in the city, according to a spokesman for the governor’s office. “Due to the mismanagement of election commission in Kandahar, voting materials in the majority of polling stations have run out,” said Dawakhan Menapal, the spokesman.

One young, angry voter, Mohammad, said he was upset because he was unable to vote. “I came here at 8 am to this polling station to select our candidate, it’s 11:30 and the election workers has told us that the election papers have run out and you should go to a different polling station,” he said. “People have crushed their voting cards and thrown them away.” There was no official data on turnout, but at the last election in 2009, the turnout of 4.6 million was regarded as low. Because of Afghanistan’s difficult terrain, it will take weeks for officials to gather ballot

boxes from around the country and count the votes. Official preliminary results from the Saturday vote are not expected until late April.

The Express Tribune - April 06, 2014

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### **Karzai's Successor: Millions of Afghans Vote in Historic Polls**

Polling in Afghanistan's crucial presidential and provincial councils' elections concluded relatively peacefully with more than 50% turnout as two front runners - Abdullah Abdullah and Dr Ashraf Ghani - claimed early victories. The turnout for Afghanistan's presidential election could exceed seven million - more than half of the eligible voters, said the head of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), Ahmad Yusuf Nuristani. An estimated 3.5 million people had voted by midday, five hours after polls opened, 64% of them men and 36% women, he told a news conference in Kabul. There had been fears that another low turnout would undermine the legitimacy of whoever succeeds President Hamid Karzai, who is stepping down after serving the maximum two terms in office.

Millions of Afghans ignored the Taliban threats and thronged to polling centers despite bad weather and rains in many parts of the country. More than 200 of 6,400 voting centers across the country remained closed due to security concerns. The Taliban, however, failed to launch any major attack despite their repeated threats. Some minor incidents occurred in parts of the country, officials said. Officials said the militants seized ballot boxes from two polling stations and threw them into a river in a border area between Baghlan and Bamyán provinces. Interior Minister Umer Daudzai, who flanked Nuristani at the press conference, said that at least four people were killed in elections-related violence. Afghan media had earlier reported 10 deaths.

Daudzai alleged that Pakistani forces fired rockets into several Afghan villages on the Election Day and over the past few days. "Pakistan had promised help in peaceful elections but they used artillery to fire rockets. The TTP also crosses into Afghanistan in the night and return after attacks," he claimed. The front-runner Dr Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and another candidate Gul Agha Sherzai claimed fraud in some areas. Ahmadzai told a news conference that the high turnout had frustrated Afghanistan's enemies. "We have shared evidence of irregularities with the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC)," he said and added that his supporters had not been involved in rigging.

He urged the IEC to exercise complete neutrality in filing the results. He claimed that initial results show that he has received nearly 90 per cent of the votes polled in the landmark elections. However, Ahmadzai's rival, Dr Abdullah Abdullah also claimed victory. "We are receiving initial results which show that I am leading," Abdullah told a news conference in Kabul. He criticized the election staff for failure to arrange enough ballot papers. He also alleged the 'misuse' of government resources in favor of one specific candidate, adding that his team has conveyed complaints to the IECC. President Hamid Karzai said in a televised message that the high turnout has once again proved Afghans' ability and capacity on all fronts. "By participating in the vote, the Afghans from all parts of the country had shown the world their sovereignty, political vision and democratic credentials."

The president said the people participation in the elections is a move towards peace, stability and prosperity of the country he has ruled for 13 years. The US Embassy in Kabul congratulated the Afghans on the peaceful and successful elections. "Now, it's up to the electoral bodies to impartially fulfill their duty to tabulate results, address complaints of fraud and improprieties," an embassy statement said. "Today's election is about the future of Afghanistan and the rejection of the Taliban and their murderous attacks." The NATO secretary general also congratulated the millions of Afghan men and women from across the country who cast their

votes with such an impressive turnout and enthusiasm. "Every vote counts and every single one is a vote for democracy. Afghans, young and old, have clearly shown their determination to have a say in the future of their country," he said in a statement posted on its website.

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### **Abdullah Leads Ghani in First Partial Results of Afghan Vote: Officials**

Former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah is leading his closest rival Ashraf Ghani in the Afghan presidential election, the country's Independent Election Commission (IEC). "With 500,000 votes from 26 provinces Dr Abdullah is leading with 41.9 percent; Dr Ashraf Ghani has 37.6 percent and is in second; and Zalmay Rassoul has 9.8 percent in third position." A run-off election between the two leading candidates will be triggered if no single candidate gains more than 50 percent of the vote when the final results are announced in late May. Of the eight provinces for which results have not been announced, two are in the north (Badakhshan and Baghlan), two in the east (Khost and Paktia), two in the south (Ghazni and Wardak), and one in the south-west (Ghor). Abdullah, who was born to an ethnic Pashtun father and a Tajik mother, is more associated with the northern Tajiks. More than seven million people defied bad weather and Taliban threats of violence to vote in first round of the election, earning praise from world leaders. Ahead of the vote there were fears that a repeat of the massive fraud which blighted Karzai's re-election in 2009 would undermine the winner's legitimacy at a testing time for the war-torn country.

**The Express Tribune - April 14, 2014**

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### **Afghan Voters Turn to Social Media to Fight Fraud**

Fed-up with the massive rigging that took place in previous elections, Afghan voters have been using social media to highlight alleged fraud, and officials are starting to take notice. Smartphone videos of ballots being stuffed at breakneck speed, voter harassment outside polling booths, and papers scattered in the street would raise serious questions about a vote's viability in the West. In Afghanistan, bringing such episodes to light is also seen as a major step in overcoming the corruption that has dogged every election since the fall of the Taliban. First partial results in the poll for a successor to President Hamid Karzai show former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah leading with 41.9 percent of around 500,000 votes counted so far, with Ashraf Ghani closely behind on 37.6 percent.

A second round is scheduled for May 28 if no single candidate is able to garner more than 50 percent of the seven million votes cast. In one video shared three young men and a boy who speak a dialect of Pashto associated with the city of Kandahar frantically stamp ballot paper after paper, mostly for Ghani but with some stamps for Abdullah. The footage has been shared on Facebook more than 1,300 times. Supporters and detractors of Ghani trade insults in the comment section, while one user called Kamal Naser Faqiryar notes dryly: "I waited for four hours to cast my one and only vote, and look these four men tick hundreds of votes for one candidate."

In another widely circulated clip a woman is asked on camera why she is cajoling other women in line to vote for her candidate on the polling day itself, in violation of election law. Later, other women are interviewed, saying they were punched and beaten by the alleged harasser. Still, according to Mohseni from the ECC, the rate of fraud appears to be lower than when Karzai was re-elected in 2009 in a poll widely discredited both at home and abroad.

The commission said it had received 1,892 complaints of fraud. Around 870 of these fall into the most serious category, classed as those that could affect results. Analyst Abdul Waheed Wafa cautioned that in some cases footage could be faked in order to discredit candidates. But he said the very fact the cases were being brought to light was positive. "The good thing about social media is that it turns everything into a debate, it has in fact created a platform for things to be shared and discussed and debated about. I believe social media will have its positive impact until the end of the process and thereafter". Around two million people, less than 10 percent of Afghanistan's population, have computer access to the Internet, officials say, but the figure is rising and many more have access through the increasing use of smart phones. The Taliban, who ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 and forbade the use of the Internet, deeming it a Western propaganda tool, now regularly use Twitter to promote their ideas and boast about attacks on NATO forces.

Daily Times - April 15, 2014

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### Abdullah Widens Lead in Afghan Presidential Poll

Former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah is well ahead of his main rival in Afghanistan's presidential election, officials said Sunday after half of the ballots were counted, though a run-off vote still looks likely next month. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) announced that Abdullah was in the lead with 44.4 percent followed by former World Bank economist Ashraf Ghani with 33.2 percent of the votes counted so far from the April 5 election. If no candidate gains more than 50 percent, a second-round election between the two leading names is tentatively scheduled for May 28. Hundreds of serious fraud allegations are being investigated after the eight-candidate election to succeed Hamid Karzai, who has ruled Afghanistan since the Islamist Taliban regime was ousted in 2001. "We knew and believed in ourselves that we would be leading other candidates by a huge margin," Abdullah said after the partial results gave him an 11 percentage-point lead, adding that his campaign had concerns about cheating. "We have filed our complaints with the Election Complaints Commission," he said. "We want to assure the people of Afghanistan we will defend and protect their votes."

The 2009 election, when Karzai retained power, was marred by massive fraud in a chaotic process that shook confidence in the multinational effort to develop Afghanistan and also started a sharp decline in relations with the US. Ghani also pointed to alleged fraud, in one sign that the final result could be disputed. "There is still vagueness, and the point is that these votes are still changing," he said after the latest batch of results. "Fraud is not allowed in law at all, and it is not acceptable." Ghani would be a serious contender in a head-to-head run-off as he is more favored by Pashtuns, the country's largest ethnic group, than Abdullah, who gains much of his support from Tajiks. With 3.45 million votes now counted, the overall turnout is set to be nearly seven million voters from an estimated electorate of 13.5 million - well above the 2009 turnout. "The figures are partial, and the result is changeable," Ahmad Yousuf Nuristani, the IEC chief, warned, adding that only votes that had cleared fraud tests had been counted.

The eventual winner will have to lead the fight against a resilient Taliban insurgency as US-led combat troops leave Afghanistan this year, and must also strengthen an economy that is reliant on declining aid money. A week ago, the first 10 percent of the vote was announced with Abdullah collecting 41.9 percent and Ghani on 37.6 percent. Both leading candidates have expressed confidence they will win the election in the first round, but they also vowed to fight on if a run-off is necessary. Abdullah, who came second to Karzai in 2009, has signaled that he may be open to constitutional changes that could allow for a power-sharing deal before the run-off. Ghani has also alluded to possible negotiations, but it is uncertain how any new system

could accommodate the two rivals or how long it would take to implement. Karzai, who is constitutionally barred from serving a third term, has dominated Afghanistan's violent post-Taliban era and is set to play an influential role behind the scenes in the next administration. He pledged to stay neutral in the election, but was widely thought to have backed former foreign minister Zalmi Rassoul, who performed poorly with just 10 percent of the results announced on Sunday.

Abdullah was a close friend and adviser to Ahmad Shah Massoud, a revered anti-Taliban leader who was assassinated two days before the September 11, 2011 attacks on the United States. Polling day was hailed a success by Afghan officials and foreign allies as the Taliban failed to launch a major attack despite threats to disrupt a process it dismisses as a US plot to install a puppet government.

Daily Times - April 21, 2014

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### **Preliminary Results of Afghan Presidential Poll Delayed by Two Days**

Afghanistan's electoral authorities have delayed the announcement of the complete preliminary results of the presidential elections by two days to recount votes. "We have delayed the [announcement of] complete preliminary results in order to accurately count votes," spokesman for Independent Election Commission (IEC) Noor Muhammad Noor told a news conference in Kabul. The IEC had earlier set April 24 for announcing the complete unofficial results of the April 5 presidential election. "Around 98% of the votes cast in the polls have been counted so far," Tolo television reported Noor as saying. Recounting was still under way at many polling stations, the spokesman said. He added, however, that the third batch of preliminary results will be declared. The IEC has so far announced results based on 49.37% of the votes cast in the polls. The results so far posted on the IEC website place Dr Abdullah Abdullah as the frontrunner for the country's top slot with 44.4% votes. His rival, Dr Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, is not too far behind with 33.2% votes. Dr Zalmi Rassoul, although in third place, has only secured 10.4% so far. The IEC says it has officially asked for a probe into irregularities at 1,446 polling stations. Votes from 666 polling stations from across the country have been submitted for recounting. The results from these polling stations are not included in the aforementioned results. After these audits and recounts are complete, the IEC shall determine and release preliminary election results. On the other hand, in view of some criticism at the partial results, the election officials insist the results must not be considered final. In case of complaints and objections, they may be subjected to change, the IEC says.

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