

# REVIEW OF URDU PRESS

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## Efforts to Incite Muslims Against Government on Delhi Masjid



● Popular Front accused of collecting crores of rupees from abroad

● Qatar commutes death sentence awarded to former Indian Navy officers

● 10-nation coalition to counter Houthi attacks in Red Sea

● Split in Muslim organisation Imarat-e-Shariah

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## Summary

It is well-known that Indian Muslims are highly sensitive when it comes to Quran, Islam and the Prophet. On the pretext of these issues, a few mischievous leaders are trying to incite Indian Muslims against the government. Recently, these elements raked up the issue of the demolition of Sunehri Bagh masjid situated near the Central Secretariat and Parliament House in New Delhi. However, the chairperson of New Delhi Municipal Corporation made it clear that no decision has been taken in this connection yet. In spite of this, Muslim leaders have jumped in to utilise this issue in the forthcoming elections.

Urdu newspapers from across the country have been running a well-planned campaign to save this masjid. A fundamentalist Muslim leader and former Rajya Sabha member Mohammad Adeb has announced that a meeting of Muslim MPs will be called in Delhi on this issue. Now, this matter will not be limited to Sunehri Bagh Masjid, instead efforts are being made to include many controversial masjids, dargahs etc in it.

The controversy over hijab has not calmed down yet in Karnataka. Congress had used this issue to polarise Muslim votes in the Assembly elections in the state and had announced that if it comes to power, then the party will remove the ban imposed on hijab in schools in Karnataka. Following this, state Chief Minister Siddharamaiah had announced the lifting of ban imposed on hijab during a public meeting.

His announcement was strongly opposed by the BJP and Hindu organisations. BJP also declared that a massive agitation would be held across the state on this issue and it would also be made the main election agenda in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Following this, Siddharamaiah, while taking a U-turn, said no decision has been taken on the hijab issue and the matter is still under consideration. Muslim organisations and Urdu newspapers have been stressing again and again that the Congress party fulfils its promise to lift the ban imposed on hijab in schools so that the trust of Muslims will remain with Congress and its government.

The Houthi rebels have been continuously attacking the commercial ships of Israel and its supporting nations in Red Sea. In view of this, the US has declared that an alliance of 10 countries has been formed for the uninterrupted movement of ships in this region. The navies of these countries will do joint patrolling in the region. They have also been provided with information collected from intelligence sources to take action against the Houthis. As of now, it is not clear which all Arab nations are part of this alliance.

It is a well-known fact that Houthis get open support from Iran. The US has alleged that Iran has not only been helping them with preparations of the attacks, they are also providing them with arms, ammunition and other material as well. However, Iran has rejected this allegation of the US. This apart, the Houthis have recently taken a dangerous step. They have started recruiting the youths of Yemen to carry out attacks on Israel. In this connection, two military parades for newly trained soldiers were organised in Yemen capital Sana'a. The US has expressed a serious concern on this step.

The Modi government has got a diplomatic victory recently. A court in Qatar, which had awarded death sentence to eight former Indian Naval officers on charges of spying, has converted the punishment to life-term. It is to be noted that these former officers of the Navy were working with a private company in Qatar. They were arrested nearly a year ago, allegedly on charges of spying for Israel. Informed sources claimed that the Indian government is trying to ensure that their punishment is reduced further.



## Efforts to incite Muslims against government under the guise of masjid



A massive propaganda has been unleashed these days in Urdu newspapers in the country against the Central government on the pretext of a so-called plan to demolish the Sunehri Bagh Masjid located in New Delhi.

**Inquilab** (December 26) has given headline for its main news as 'Preparations on for demolition of historical Sunehri Bagh Masjid, only formality is left.' In this news, it has been claimed that the preparations to demolish the 150-year-old Sunehri Bagh Masjid in New Delhi are almost complete. Now only the formality is left. In this connection, the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) has sought the opinion of the people. It is to be noted that the commissioner of traffic police in Delhi had written a letter to the NDMC seeking to remove the masjid due to traffic issues in and around the masjid. Following this, an NDMC team conducted an inspection of the masjid. Once the issue came to the knowledge of Muslim leaders, they approached the court and the court ordered a status quo on the matter.

It is being said that the Delhi Waqf Board is not serious about the issue. Senior

advocate Wajeeh Shafiq, who argues the cases of Waqf Board, told a representative of **Inquilab** that the high court had directed to maintain the status quo in this connection. Later, on the directions of the Waqf Board, another lawyer withdrew the petition saying that the government will not take any action contrary to the law. Following this, the matter was sent to the religious committee, which comprises a senior official of the government. However, instead of strongly placing its stand before the religious committee, the Waqf Board sent an ordinary employee to place its viewpoint and the committee did not pay any attention to the employee's arguments. Later this so called committee claimed that a decision has been taken to demolish the masjid.

**Roznama Sahara** (December 28) stated that the publication of the news regarding the possibility of demolition of Sunehri Bagh masjid has created a stir among the Muslims in the country. Now, the religious committee and the Delhi Waqf Board are facing a slew of questions due to their lax stand. Similarly, questions have been raised over the stand of the Central

government, Delhi Police and NDMC. The question that arises here is whether the demolition of a heritage building comes under its jurisdiction? On this issue, a clarification has also been sought from the chairman of NDMC, Amit Yadav. He said that public opinion had been sought on the letter written by the Delhi Traffic Police in connection with the masjid and their opinion will come within the prescribed time limit. Following this, it will be sent to the heritage committee. He clarified that it was a heritage building and hence the NDMC cannot take a decision to demolish it. In this connection, only the heritage department has the power to take a decision. He said that the matter has been forwarded on the basis of the letter written by the religious committee, where the directions of Delhi Police, Delhi Waqf Board and the High Court have been cited.

It is to be noted that a public notice has been issued recently on behalf of the NDMC with regard to the demolition of Sunehri Bagh masjid located at Gol Chauraha in front of Udyog Bhawan in which public opinion has been sought till January 1, 2024. It is being said in the public notice issued by the chief architect of NDMC that this region has been redeveloped under the Central Vista project and in order to keep a smooth flow of traffic, it has been proposed to remove the masjid from its current location. It is to be noted that the Delhi High Court on December 18, 2023 had stayed any action on the possibility of demolition of Sunehri Bagh masjid on a petition filed by the Delhi Waqf Board, because the NDMC said there was no basis for the apprehensions of the petitioner.

**Inquilab** (December 21) states that the chief of Jamiat Ulema, Arshad Madani, while speaking to correspondents, said they will stand firm in favour of maintaining the mosque at any costs.

**Inquilab** (December 20) states that leader of Barelvi sect and the chief of Ittehad-e-Millat Council, Maulana Tauqeer Raza Khan, said we had given away Babri

Masjid and has abided by the decision of the court in order to maintain peace in the country, but now we will not give up any other masjid.

**Inquilab** (December 27) states that the chairman of Jamiat Ulema, Maulana Arshad Madani, announced that he would go till the high court and the Supreme Court to save the Sunehri Bagh masjid in Delhi.

**Etemaad** (December 29) states that the chief of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, Asaduddin Owaisi, had written a letter to the chief architect of NDMC and demanded that he immediately withdraw the decision to remove the Sunehri Bagh Masjid in Delhi. The masjid is a Waqf property.

**Etemaad** (December 30) in its editorial has condemned the decision to demolish the Sunehri Bagh masjid and said the Sunehri Bagh masjid in Delhi is among the 123 properties of Waqf Board on which the court had imposed a ban on taking any kind of action. The newspaper said the NDMC had earlier demolished a 200-year-old mazar located near to this masjid. In the past itself, discussions had started about shifting five historical masjids that would fall under the Central Vista project of the Central government, but seeing the protests by Muslims, the issue had been kept in abeyance. Now a new controversy has erupted after publication of a notice in newspapers regarding the Sunehri Bagh masjid.

**Hamara Samaj** (December 27) reports that the chief of Jamiat Ulema, Maulana Arshad Madani, has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and demanded that the decision to remove this masjid should be withdrawn immediately as it will seriously damage the fabric of Bharat's unique culture. All India Muslim Personal Law Board also opposed this decision and said this conspiracy cannot be accepted under any circumstance and Muslims will strongly oppose this.

**Hamara Samaj** (December 28) reports that former Rajya Sabha MP Mohammad Adeb has taken the initiative



to save the historical Sunehri Bagh masjid. Shahi Imam Ahmad Bukhari has also become active in order to save this masjid. In this connection, a meeting of Muslim MPs will also be convened soon so that a joint campaign could be launched in the country to save the masjid.

**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 27) has given the headline for its editorial as 'Evil eyes on Sunehri Masjid.' It is being said in the editorial that the campaign that has been unleashed to erase Muslim culture and its identity from the country has taken more monstrous proportions now. Now the Hindutvawadi group doesn't find it necessary to take permission from any court to remove Muslim buildings. Here the question is not about any building, but about a masjid. This masjid is 150 years old. There is huge anxiety among Muslims

in the country on the decision to remove Sunehri Bagh masjid.

The newspaper said the Hindutvawadis are running a campaign to remove the Islamic symbols spread all over the country. The newspaper urged Muslims across the country that they get united for the protection of this masjid and approach the courts for the same. This apart, put pressure on the government and meet the prime minister and make him aware that demolition

of a legal masjid is not a game.

**Urdu Times** (December 28) had given the headline for its main news as, 'After Mathura, Kashi, 40 other masjids are now on the target.' 'Hindu organisation Sanatan Sangh announces they would be liberated like Ayodhya.'

**Awadhnama** (December 29) reports that on the issue of Sunehri Bagh masjid, while condemning the notice of NDMC, Jamaat-e-Islami said it would approach the court in this connection. Jamaat-e-Islami said that a decision of the Delhi High Court has come with regard to this masjid. In this verdict, it has been assured that no damage will be inflicted on the masjid, but despite this, the NDMC has published a notice in newspapers over its demolition and sought opinion of the people.

## Prime Minister's statement on discrimination of minorities targeted

**Hindustan Express** (December 22) states that in an interview given to British newspaper 'Financial Times,' Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rejected the claim that the minorities face any kind of discrimination under his government. In an answer to a question on the status of Muslims in the country, the Prime Minister said the government is not in favour of making any changes in the Constitution of the country. He said that when Parsis were forced to flee from their place of origin, it was Bharat which had given them refuge.

People belonging to Parsi community live happily in the country and they are the backbone of the economic development in the country. Prime Minister Modi said that no discrimination is done against any minority in the Indian society. He also described Bharat is a heaven for the Muslims.

Commenting on this statement of the Prime Minister, **Awadhnama** (December 23) said in its editorial that the Constitution of the country has given equal opportunity to minorities to progress in all the sectors



without any discrimination. Recently, in an interview to Financial Times, our prime minister has described the land of Bharat as a heaven for Muslims. The journalist asked Prime Minister Modi what is the future of Muslims in the country? Modi said that his critics have been running baseless propoganda against him, which are not based on facts.

**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 22) had given the headline for its editorial as ‘The reality of Modi’s claim.’ The newspaper said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had claimed in an interview to a British newspaper that Hindustan is like a heaven for Muslims. Here they are living a life of peace and happiness. Whereas they have to face a situation of harassment in different parts of the world. If this claim of the prime minister is correct, then won’t the Muslims in Hindustan get a better deal than what they currently have in education, trade and in the society? If one takes a look at the data, it is clear that Muslims have gone backward in the field of education. In the economic field, they are much behind even Dalits. As per a report in English newspaper ‘The Hindu,’ the number of Muslim youths in the age group of 18-23 years in higher education has gone down by 8.5 percent. In 2019-20, this number was 21 lakh, which came down to 19.12

lakh in 2020-21. Why it happened? The answer for this is very easy. All this happened due to the policies of the government.

The newspaper said that in any country, the responsibility to uplift the backward community rests with government policies. They can make such policies and programmes which could overcome the hurdles that come in the path of the development of the backwards, and provide them with equal opportunity in education, social and financial sectors to catch up with other communities in the society. If an analysis of the government policies from the time of Independence till now is done, then the government has done one thing, and that is to keep away minorities, especially Muslims, from the development in all sectors. There is no guarantee in the Constitution of the country that Muslims get education and employment like the Dalits and backward communities. If Dalits have progressed in the country, then the reason for it is that there is provision for reservation in the Constitution, which included employment, education and government jobs. Muslims, which included Dalit and backward class Muslims, have been kept away from this reservation.

The newspaper claimed that after the Modi government came to power, the



condition of Muslims in the country has become worse. The provisions for financial aid and scholarships meant for Muslims have been stopped. When Muslims do not have the facility to read and write, how will they progress? When they do not progress at all, how can the country be called a heaven for them? If the question is about living safely, what all have not been done with them, from mob lynching to communal riots? As of now, a campaign is on to raze their houses using bulldozers. Not only this, they have been reminded again and again that they were responsible for the partition of the country and they are traitors. Now since they are traitors, they should go to Pakistan. This is the truth about the claim of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Meanwhile, if Modi wants, he would prove his claims to be true as being the prime minister, but then why would Modi do it?

**Urdu Times** (December 18) has claimed in its main news that for the first time in the history of the country, Muslims have been ousted from power. There is not a single Muslim minister in 15 states including at the Centre. The population of the Muslims in the country is nearly 15 percent, which is the second highest population after Hindus. In the Assembly elections held in five states recently, Muslims have been completely thrown out of power. There is no Muslim minister in Telangana, Assam and Gujarat. In the BJP-ruled states, there is no possibility of even a single Muslim minister, because not a single Muslim MLA has won on a BJP ticket. In the Centre, the ministry of

minorities is looked after by Smriti Irani, who is a Hindu.

The newspaper claimed that during the first reign of Modi government, Muslim leaders like Najma Heptullah and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi were made ministers. Naqvi was made minister for the second time as well, but last year he was removed from the post of minister. Omar Abdullah and Shahnawaz Hussain were ministers in the NDA's Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, but today there is no Muslim minister at the Centre. The most notable thing is that there is no Muslim face in the seven most important posts in the country. They are of the President, Vice-President, Lok Sabha Speaker, Chief Justice of India, Prime Minister, Chief Election Commissioner and the post of the Opposition leader in Rajya Sabha. Currently, there are 28 Governors in the country, and only two of them are Muslims. There are 34 judges in the Supreme Court, among which there is only one Muslim. Out of the 29 states in the country, there is not a single Muslim minister in 15 of them.

If one talks about the data, among the chief ministers in 28 states and two Union Territories, there are 25 Hindus, two Christians, one Buddhist and one Sikh.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin said he is an atheist and he does not believe in any religion. In Jammu and Kashmir, earlier Muslims used to be the chief minister but after 2019, no elections have taken place there. After Independence, there were always five to six Muslim ministers in the Central government and they were also used to be given many important posts as well. Muslims had become the President and Vice-President. During the regime of Indira Gandhi, chief ministers of many states used to be Muslims.

**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 17) has published a report of the US Commission on Religious Freedom in which it has been said that minorities are being targeted in Bharat and their religious

freedom and rights are curtailed in a planned manner.

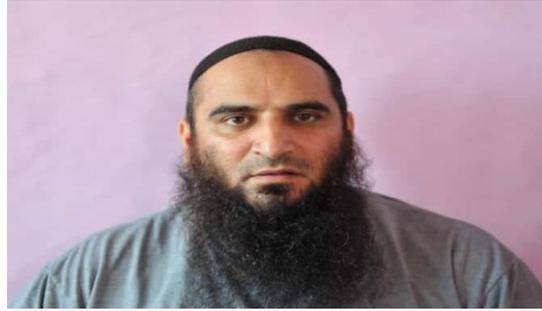
**Urdu Times** (December 26) has published a detailed report in which it has been claimed that after the BJP and the Modi government came to power, there is a huge increase in incidents of curbing the rights of minorities. In this connection, the newspaper mentioned about the ending of Haj subsidy and said that the reality is that the government has completely overlooked the facilities that have been provided to the minorities in the Constitution. Due to this, Muslims are going backwards in every sector. The cities, buildings and their memorials related to their cultural identity have been erased purposefully. In order to

keep the Muslims in the country in an atmosphere of fear, sometimes issues like CAA, anti-conversion law, love jihad or sometimes Uniform Civil Code are being used. However, under Article 25 of the Constitution, every individual has the right to freedom of religion, but who doesn't know the truth about the treatment given to our masjids, dargahs and mazaars. Along with the madrasas in Uttar Pradesh, the damages that have been done to the Jauhar University set up by Azam Khan is in front of all. Similarly, the 1,281 madrasas in Assam have been deprived of their minority tag and converted to government schools and the Urdu language is forcibly stopped.

## Ban on Muslim League Jammu - Kashmir

**Siasat** (December 28) states that the Central government has imposed a ban on Muslim League Jammu-Kashmir (Masarat Alam group). This information was given by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. He said that this organisation has been banned under UAPA due to their anti-national activities. This organisation has been involved in anti-national and separatist activities in Jammu and Kashmir and were also extending support to terrorist activities. This group has been inciting the people to establish an Islamic rule in Jammu Kashmir. Amit Shah said that it is a clear message from the government that whoever works against the unity, integrity and sovereignty of our nation, they will not be spared and stringent action will be taken against them as per the law prevailing in the country.

The founder of this organisation, Masarat Alam, has been lodged in Tihar jail in Delhi since 2019. The National Investigation Agency had filed a case for terrorist funding against 52-year-old Masarat Alam. The cadre of this organisation take part in separatist activities and collect funds from different foreign sources including from organisations belonging to Pakistan. Their aim is to flare up terrorist activities in



Jammu Kashmir and to provide funding for incidents of stone-throwing on security forces.

The Home Minister said that this organisation has been declared an illegal organisation immediately by using the powers given to the Central government under UAPA Act, 1967. He said that the founder of this organisation, Masarat Alam, was arrested in 2010 on charges of organising largescale anti-national protests in Kashmir Valley and a case was registered against him under Public Safety Act. As per media reports, cases were registered against Masarat Alam at least 36 times under Public Safety Act including 27 FIRs. Masarat Alam was released from jail in March 2015. Following this, he started protests against the PDP-BJP alliance government which was in power in the state then.

## Ban on hijab to continue in Karnataka



**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 24) states that Karnataka Chief Minister Siddharamaiah, while taking a U-turn on the hijab issue all of a sudden, announced that the ban on hijab in schools in Karnataka will remain as it is and no decision has been taken yet to withdraw the step. Earlier, while addressing a public meeting in Mysuru, he had announced that the government would be lifting the ban imposed on hijab in schools in the state and the administration had been given directions accordingly.

**Inquilab** (December 22) has claimed that politics has started in Karnataka on the question of hijab. The chief minister has bended before the communal pressure exerted by BJP and right-wing organisations in the state and a day after announcing the lifting on the ban on hijab, he took a U-turn on the issue and declared that the government had not taken any legal step in this direction. Later when the BJP threatened to launch a state-wide agitation on the issue, he, while immediately changing his colour, announced that the government has decided not to withdraw the ban.

**Etemaad** (December 24) states that Union Minister Giriraj Singh said that from the decision to lift the ban imposed on hijab

in Karnataka, it looks like the Congress government has bended before the Muslim communal elements and this step by them is in the direction of imposing Shariah law in the country. This is a planned conspiracy to destroy Sanatan Dharma. Former chief minister B S Yediyurappa condemned the decision of the Karnataka government and said that this is a part of appeasement policy of Muslims. The people will teach a lesson to the Congress in the next Lok Sabha elections. He said did any Muslim leader demanded the Congress that the ban imposed on hijab should be withdrawn?

The newspaper said that many leaders of Congress, while mentioning about the announcement made by Siddharamaiah on lifting the ban on hijab, said the Congress had promised in its election manifesto that if it comes to power, then it will lift the ban. Son of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and a minister in the state government, Priyank Kharge, while strongly supporting the decision to remove the ban imposed on hijab in schools, said the Congress government is working as per Constitution and legal framework. The ban imposed on hijab by the previous BJP government was against the sentiments of social harmony and hence there is no harm in reviewing it.



Another minister Madhu Bangarappa also said that as per the Constitution, every minority has the right to follow his faith and religion and hence this decision of the former government should be reviewed. He said that this decision of the state government is in tune with the sentiments of the secularism of Congress.

It is to be noted that a few days ago, while announcing the lifting of the ban on hijab at a public meeting, Chief Minister Siddharamaiah described the freedom on dress and food as a part of individual freedom and said that no person should interfere with it. There should not be any vote bank politics regarding this. When some people who took part in the public meeting asked him whether they can wear hijab, he said there is no ban on it. You can wear hijab and I had given this direction that there should not be any ban on this from tomorrow. The BJP has given the indication of making this announcement by him as an election issue in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections due to which the Congress chief minister had to take a U-turn on this decision.

It is to be noted that the BJP government, during its reign, imposed a ban on Muslim students from wearing hijab in educational institutions and the controversy became a political issue. This decision of the BJP government was questioned in the high court, but the court approved the decision of the government. The court said that both the boy and girl students studying in educational institutions

have to wear the uniform prescribed by the institution and the government.

**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 25) had given the headline for its editorial as 'The Congress has become more crazy.' The newspaper said that Karnataka Chief Minister Siddharamaiah, after announcing the lifting of ban on hijab, took a U-turn on his statement and said that as of now, the ban on hijab has not been lifted. It is true that it is

not easy to lift the ban imposed on hijab. The reason for this is that as soon as lifting the ban imposed on hijab was announced, the BJP and right-wing organisations started creating a ruckus and may be due to the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, the chief minister got scared. However, if he wants, he could immediately lift the ban imposed on hijab and he has all constitutional right to take any decision in this connection.

The newspaper said that hijab became an important election issue in the Karnataka Assembly elections and the Congress had clearly announced that if it comes to power, then it would remove the ban imposed on hijab by the BJP government. It is true that nowadays there is ruckus in the state over hijab and girls are going to schools and colleges wearing hijab. Now, after announcement of the chief minister, the issue has once again become a topic of discussion. In any case, it is necessary that the Congress does not come under the pressure of communal groups and make an announcement on lifting the ban on hijab. If the government does so, the faith of the Muslims on Congress will get strengthened.

**Quami Tanzeem** (December 26) in its editorial has demanded the state government that it fulfil its assurance to lift the ban on hijab and do not come under the pressure of anybody in this connection. However, the unfortunate thing is that some forces in the country are making

efforts to divide the society in order to amass votes. Those parties which do not have any credible issue to amass the votes of the people want to raise these kinds of illegal issues and polarise votes in order to come to power. Now, in view of the Lok Sabha elections, the communal parties are raising such issues and trying to polarise votes. What is needed for us is to remain alert after understanding this conspiracy.



**Siasat** (December 24) in its editorial said that after the Congress came to power in Karnataka, the possibility of the new Congress government fulfilling its promise of lifting the ban imposed on hijab by the previous BJP has increased. However, the chief minister got scared and had to withdraw his announcement as the BJP threatened to launch a public agitation on the issue in order to amass votes in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections and also declared the chief minister as another Tipu Sultan. The Congress government should clearly declare that it is withdrawing the ban imposed on hijab. This will improve

the trust of Muslims on the Congress party. The chief minister has also indicated that the government is considering the hijab issue and the state government will take any decision on the issue after holding talks with different leaders of Congress party. It is necessary for Congress and the chief minister to understand that the food and dress should be based on the choice of the people and the government should not make any interference in this regard. Hence the Congress government should take a decision in this connection as early as possible and fulfil its promise. This will be in the interest of the people and the government.

## Split in Muslim organisation Imarat-e-Shariah



**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 16) reports that 100-year-old Muslim organisation Imarat-e-Shariah Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand is on the verge of a

split like other milli organisations. As per media reports, the Jharkhand group of Imarat-e-Shariah has raised the flag of rebellion against the current Amir-e-

Shariat, Maulana Wali Faisal Rahmani. In this connection, photos and videos have been posted on social media. It was seen in the video that Maulana Nazar Tauhid Mazahiri was taking oath as the Amir of Imarat-e-Shariah, Jharkhand. It is being claimed that this decision for split was taken at a meeting held under the banner of Majlis-e-Ulema. As soon as the news of the rebellion of Mufti Nazar Tauhid went viral on social media, a wave of uneasiness spread among the Muslims in the country. Following this, many other prominent leaders including general secretary of Muslim Personal Law Board, Maulana Fazlur Raheem Mujaddidi, Amir-e-Shariah of Karnataka Maulana Sagir Ahmad Rashadi, Amir-e-Shariat of Assam Maulana Yusuf Ali, Maulana Alauddin Nadvi of Darul Uloom Nadva have condemned this action of Mufti Nazar Tauhid. They urged Muslims to foil this conspiracy and keep milli unity.

In a press release issued by the central office of Imarat-e-Shariah located at Phulwari Sharif in Patna, it was said that Imarat-e-Shariah Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand is an old and reliable Islamic organisation of the country. The foundation of this organisation was laid by great Islamic thinker Maulana Abul Muhasin Muhammad Sajjad nearly 100 years ago to enable Muslims to live as per Shariah and stay united under the leadership of an Amir as per Islamic thought. Its aim was that the Muslims of this region implement Shariah law and live as per Shariah principles and the directions of Quran in order to achieve Allah's will. In order to find solution to their Shariah problems, they should take directions from Imarat-e-Shariah and live as per the prescribed laws of Quran and Shariah as a true Muslim.

So far, seven Amirs had given guidance for this organisation. After the death of the seventh Amir-e-Shariat Maulana Syed Mohammad Wali Rahmani, the Muslim thinkers of Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand and the Alimhs of Shariah elected the eighth Amir, Maulana Ahmad Wali Faisal Rahmani. For the past two

years, he has been working and there has been lot of development in the work of Imarat-e-Shariah as well. Several organisations were set up in many places in Jharkhand for the education in Islam, Quran and Shariah. In many places, Darul Kaza (Shariah courts) are also functioning. Hundreds of the needy and widows were given allowance through Imarat-e-Shariah. A special meeting was also organised to link Shariah scholars and Islamic thinkers of Jharkhand with the organisation, but unfortunately a division started forming in the organisation soon after and Maulana Nazar Tauhid Mazahiri made efforts to start a separate organisation. The newspaper urged that it is necessary for Muslims to maintain their unity and solidarity without falling prey to political conspiracies. It is to be noted that Mufti Nazar Tauhid is a member of All India Muslim Personal Law Board and he is also a member of Imarat-e-Shariah Trust Board.

**Comment:** After the death of Maulana Wali Rahmani, a controversy erupted over the selection of his successor as well. Former Naib Amir of Imarat-e-Shariah, Maulana Shamsad Rahmani had announced that the election of the new Amir will be held on October 10, 2021 in Ranchi, but the rebel group called a meeting in Patna one day before and announced a parallel election. Soon clashes also took place between the two groups over the decision. In a press conference held in Patna, Maulana Fahad Rahmani had declared the meeting held in Ranchi on October 10 as illegal. In order to resolve this dispute, Naib Amir and his supporter Shibli Qasmi had called a meeting of the executive committee of Imarat-e-Shariah on October 30 in Ranchi, but even before it could take place, the other group organised an election in Patna and seized the organisation. In the meeting, three names were proposed, that of Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, Maulana Anees Ur Rahman Qasmi and Syed Ahmad Wali Faizal Rahmani. Later some people proposed the names of Shamsad Rahmani and Maulana Nazar Tauhid as well, but

during the ruckus, it had been declared that for the election of Amir-e-Shariat, only two candidates—Maulana Syed Faizal Rahmani and Maulana Anees Ur Rahman Qasmi—remain in the field. A huge ruckus took place in this connection during the voting as well. The two groups made charges and counter-charges against each other, but due to the intervention of Islamic scholars and thinkers, Faizal Rahmani was declared elected. Since then, the differences between the two groups have been simmering.

On January 2, 2024, Muslim scholars associated with Imarat-e-Shariah, while addressing a press conference at the office of Imarat-e-Shariah in Patna, claimed that there is no truth about the news that had gone viral regarding the split in Imarat-e-Shariah. No split has taken place in Imarat-e-Shariah Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand. This press conference was called to refute the claims of one section which claimed that Imarat-e-Shariah Jharkhand has got separated. The Muslim scholars said that Imarat-e-Shariah has



been continuously working in many fields like education, health etc. The allegation that the official funds of Imarat-e-Shariah is spent only in Bihar and Jharkhand is ignored is wrong. The annual income from Jharkhand is Rs 76 lakh. Whereas, Imarat-e-Shariah had spent Rs 1.03 crore in Jharkhand.

It is to be noted that Imarat-e-Shariah was established in 1921. It has a total of 87 offices and Imarat-e-Shariah has offices in 16 districts out of a total 24 districts in Jharkhand. After Phulwari Sharif, the second office of Imarat-e-Shariah was opened in Ranchi in 1971. In Bihar, the population of Muslims is 1.76 crore and in Jharkhand, the Muslim population is 48 lakh.

## Popular Front accused of collecting crores of rupees from abroad



**Hamara Samaj** (December 24) states that the central investigation agency Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested five persons belonging to banned Islamic

organisation Popular Front of India. Those who have been arrested are said to be the office-bearers of Popular Front. They have been accused of using crores of money



Abdul Rahman had visited Turkiye and many African countries many times along with other office-bearers of front. From 2015 to 2020, he used to operate the bank account of the front at the Syndicate Bank in Kozhikode in Kerala.

As far as Anees Ahmad is concerned, he was the chief of financial

affairs of the front. From 2018 to 2020, he was the national secretary of the front and he was responsible for handling the financial resources of the front. He had also functioned as the spokesperson of the front. The popular front used to collect money at state level. Every district used to have a district committee. When the money was collected, it was credited to the account of the state-level committee which later used to sent it to the national level. The money collected from Delhi and Uttar Pradesh used to be credited directly in the accounts at the national level.

Afsar Pasha also used to be part of different important activities of Popular Front. He used to be the regional president of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and was also the national secretary. Till 2009-10, he used to be the general secretary of Karnataka unit. He played an important role in the communal riots that took place in Mysore in 2009. He organised anti-government protests on the strength of the foreign funds. He used to sign for the accounts of the front at the Corporation Bank in Bengaluru. Similarly, A M Ismail was one among the founders of the front. He used to be president of the northern zone of the front from 2018 to 2020. This apart, he used to be a member of the national executive council of the front. He used to operate the bank account of the front in Chennai as well. Mohammad Shakif also belonged to the front. He used to be a member of the national executive council of the front.

received from abroad through hawala transactions for anti-national activities and to spread violence in the country. Those who have been arrested have been identified as E M Abdul Rahman, Afsar Pasha, A M Ismail, Mohammad Shakif and Anees Ahmad. The accused were questioned in Tihar jail by the ED recently in connection with an FIR filed on May 2, 2018. This interrogation was conducted on the basis of documents seized during the raid conducted in different offices of PFI on December 3, 2020. It is to be noted that the accused were already in Tihar jail in connection with a terror incident being investigated by NIA. The accused were operating the bank accounts of PFI in different parts of the country. They were questioned in connection with crores of rupees received in these accounts from suspicious sources but they did not give any satisfactory reply. The ED arrested them with the aim of seriously questioning them on charges of suppressing the facts.

E M Abdul Rahman belonged to Popular Front of India right from the beginning and he had a lead role in formulating all policies and decisions of this banned organisation. In the past, this man was part of banned terrorist organisation Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) during 1979-84. When SIMI was banned, he took charge as the general secretary of newly formed Islamic organisation Popular Front of India. From 2009 to 2012, he was the president of Popular Front and was the vice-president of National Executive Council of the front.

## Construction work for Dhannipur masjid to begin in May



brought in the model of the construction. The area of this masjid is nearly 40,000 square feet.

In 2019, following the decision of the Supreme Court, five acres of land had been allotted to Muslims for the construction of a masjid at Dhannipur village in Ayodhya. Recently, the organisation of imams of masjids, All India Rabt-e-Masjid (AIRM), had decided to name the proposed masjid at Dhannipur village in Ayodhya district in the name of the Prophet of Islam as Mohammad bin Abdullah Masjid. The new design of the masjid is likely to be ready by next month.

**Siasat** (December 19) states that the state government had allotted a piece of land in Dhannipur village for the construction of an alternative masjid on the directions of the Supreme Court. The construction work for Masjid Mohammad bin Abdullah being built there is likely to begin in May 2024. Secretary of the masjid trust Athar Hussain said that may be there is no preparation for the construction of the masjid and neither there is any plan. It will take at least six months before the construction begins. The construction work is likely to begin in May 2024 at the behest of Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation. Efforts are being made to collect funds for the construction of this masjid. In order to collect the funds, the trust has appointed prabharis in different states. Athar Hussain said that the delay in the construction is due to the changes

Later the design will be sent for approval. The secretary of the trust said that now the masjid will be built on 40,000 square feet instead of 15,000 square feet. Apart from the masjid, there will be a community hospital, community kitchen, and a library. There is this possibility that the imam of Ka'aba being invited to lay the foundation stone of the masjid.

**Siasat** (December 16) reports that a BJP leader in Mumbai, Haji Arfat Shaikh, told correspondents that the world's biggest Quran will be kept in this masjid and it will be of 21 feet height and 36 feet width. For the construction of the masjid, the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation was constituted in July 2020. In October last month, the chairman of the foundation, Zufar Ahmad Farooqi had formally announced the naming of the masjid. ■

## Ten-nation alliance to stop Houthi attacks in Red Sea



**Etemaad** (December 20) reports that US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin had announced that a 10-nation alliance had been formed under the leadership of US to deal with the attacks on ships by the Houthi rebels in Red Sea. The alliance includes countries like Bahrain, Canada, France, Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain etc. He said that all the nations in the world should cooperate with this alliance in order to make sea journeys peaceful. It is to be noted that recently Iran-supported Houthi rebels had stepped up their attacks on the ships of different nations in Red Sea. Houthis had declared that they would target the ships of Israel and its supporting countries until Israel grants permission to supply food, water and other essential items to the people of Gaza. The US Defence Secretary said this declaration of Houthis is a challenge for the whole world and we all have to deal with it together. Some countries will take part in patrolling in order to streamline the traffic system while some other countries will cooperate by providing intelligence information. The US has urged the United Nations Security Council to take action against Houthis.

**Inqilab** (December 29) states that the US has alleged that the attacks on ships

by Houthis in Red Sea have been planned by Iran and it has a direct hand in these attacks. Iran has provided Houthis with drones, missiles and technical facilities. On the other hand, Iran has rejected the allegation and described it as baseless. The US has also announced that the cooperation of naval forces of 20 nations have been sought for the security of ships in Red Sea. The commander of Iran's Pasdaran-e-Inqilab has warned that if the US and its allied nations continue to commit genocide in Gaza, Iran will block the Red Sea. However, it has not said how it could be blocked. This is because Iran has no access to Red Sea.

**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 24) states that the Houthi rebels in Yemen have started the work to recruit thousands of Yemeni citizens to fight the Israeli Army in Gaza. According to 'Al Arabia,' Saudi Arabia's Brigadier General Mohammed Al-Kumaim, while talking to media representatives, said this would be a major mistake by Houthis. They want to forcefully drag the Yemeni people into this war. Recently, the Houthis organised a military parade in Yemeni capital Sana'a in which 20,000 newly recruited Yemeni youths took part. These people were



wearing Yemeni dress and they had Yemeni and Palestinian flags in their hands. Earlier, another military parade was organised in Sana'a last week in which 16,000 soldiers took part. They were given military training recently.

**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 23) states that the Houthi rebels in Yemen have been targeting the ships of Israel and

its supporting nations in the sea. These included the ships of the US, England and France. Seeing this attacks of the Houthis, many shipping companies have refused to send their ships to Red Sea. It is not clear which all Arab nations will be part of the 10-nation alliance announced by the United States in order to take on the attacks, but Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Jordan have expressed the possibility of joining the alliance. The newspaper has warned that if Iran takes part in this war, then Russia and China will not keep themselves away from it and this may turn into a world war.

## Maldives cancels agreements signed with Bharat



**Urdu Times** (December 17) reports that Maldives has decided to cancel the agreement for a hydrographic survey signed between Indian Navy and Maldives National Defence Force in 2019. This agreement was signed during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Maldives in June 2019. Under the agreement signed

with India on the initiative of then President Ibrahim Mohammad Solih, the Indian Navy has done 30 surveys so far. Before this, the current President Mohammad Muizzu had urged Bharat to withdraw Indian military from Maldives. Now, he has informed the Indian government also about his decision to cancel this agreement.

As per this agreement, Indian Navy had been given permission to conduct hydrographic survey in Maldives in order to improve navigation security, financial development, security, defence, environmental protection and the management of coastal zone. A senior spokesperson in the office of Maldives President said that in future, all the work for hydrography will be done by Maldives and only people belonging to Maldives will be allowed in this department. The spokesperson said that if the previous governments had signed any secret

agreement with foreigners, then that will also be re-examined. The spokesperson alleged that the previous government had put the sovereignty of the country in danger.

It is to be noted that a new government has taken over recently, which is widely considered to be pro-China. After taking over power, President Muizzu said he would re-examine the agreements signed with the previous government which included projects like Greater Male Connectivity Project, costing 500 million dollars. The present ruler of Maldives is keen to expel the military advisors from the country who operate and maintain two helicopters and a dornier aircraft given to Maldives as a gift. It is said that Maldives did not take part in the Colombo Security Conclave over national security in which it is a member like Bharat along with Sri Lanka and Mauritius.

**Roznama Sahara** (December 29) reports that the current President Muhammad Muizzu had raised the slogan

of 'India Out' during his election campaign and he had said that after coming to power he would reconsider the policy of his opponent and predecessor Ibrahim Mohammad Solih's 'India First' policy. After taking over the keys of power, he said he would also reconsider the relationship between the two countries. Soon after taking over the post of the President, Muizzu visited Turkiye and after that he has been demanding the withdrawal of Indian military advisors from Maldives. The recent cancellation of the agreement signed with India for hydrographic survey was the first anti-India decision taken by the new government. However, India is among the five biggest importers of Maldives. The economy of Maldives is of 5 billion and 65 crore dollars and it has a loan of 7 billion and 67 crores which will increase and become approximately 11 billion dollars by 2028. The truth is that after Mohammad Muizzu was elected President, there is a new turn in the relationship between India and Maldives.

## Ban on Imran Khan from contesting elections

**Aurangabad Times** (December 24) states that the Islamabad High Court has rejected a petition seeking to suspend the punishment awarded to the accused in the Toshakhana case, former prime minister Imran Khan. Now, cold water has been thrown on the intentions of the founder of Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) and former prime minister Imran Khan about taking part in the elections. From this, the doors to become the prime minister have been closed behind him. As per the report of the BBC, Imran Khan's party PTI was hopeful that despite being lodged in jail, he could fight the elections. However, this direction from the court is a serious setback to him.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had approved bail for Imran Khan and Shah



Mahmood Qureshi in Cipher case, but since various other cases were pending against Imran Khan in different courts, he was not released from jail. The lawyers supporting Imran Khan claimed that he will question the verdict of the Islamabad High

Court in the Supreme Court. Political analysts in Pakistan say that Imran Khan is unlikely to get any relief from the Supreme Court for standing in the elections. As per Pakistani law, a leader lodged in jail could contest the elections only if he is not awarded punishment after being made accused in a case.

A lower court has found Imran Khan guilty in the Toshakhana case on August 5 and he was sentenced to three years in jail. Due to this, his membership of the Parliament also got cancelled and he was banned from contesting the elections as

well. Following this, he questioned this decision of the lower court in the Islamabad High Court, which the latter has rejected now. Now Imran Khan's punishment will remain in place. Earlier, Pakistan's Election Commission had refused to grant PTI's election symbol cricket bat to be used in the elections. Following this order, now PTI will not be able to contest the elections as a single party. Either it has to field its candidates as independents in the elections or it has to tie up with regional parties to use its election symbol.

## Army deployed ahead of elections in Bangladesh

**Hindustan Express** (December 19) states that the Army has been deployed across the country in order to improve the security for the general elections to be held in Bangladesh on January 7. This information was provided by an official of Bangladesh Election Commission. Secretary of Bangladesh Election Commission Mohammad Jahangir Alam told journalists that Bangladesh President Mohammad Shahabuddin has duly granted permission to deploy Army in the forthcoming elections. This decision was taken at a meeting of President and Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal. Earlier, the Election Commission had announced its plan to deploy the Army across the country for 13 days starting from December 29 in view of the general elections to be held on January 7.

It is to be noted that the two opposition parties of Bangladesh namely Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Nationalist Party had announced a boycott of this elections in the beginning itself. They had alleged that as long as Sheikh Hasina remains in power, there is no possibility of elections being held in a free and fair atmosphere in the country, because even in the past also Sheikh Hasina was

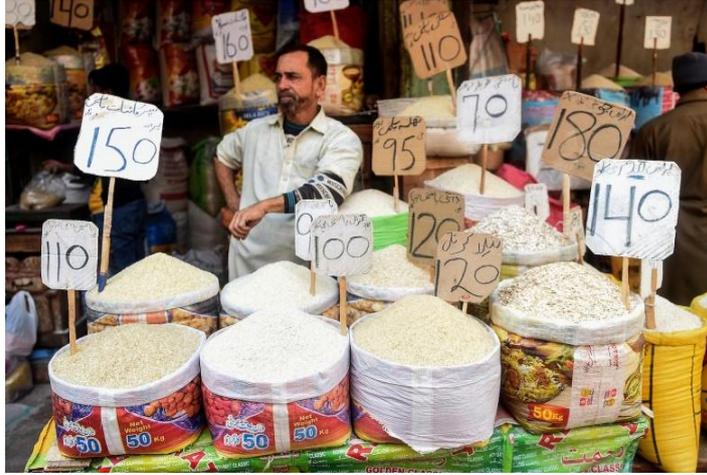


accused of committing fraud in the elections in order to seize power. For the past several months, the Opposition parties have been running an agitation against the present government. In this connection, violent incidents also took place in many places. The opposition leaders allege that the government has jailed hundreds of opposition activists in order to crush the opposition voice and the police and military shot dead more than 200 opposition activists during the protests in the country. The government spokesperson, while describing this allegation as fabricated and false, said that the government is committed to organising the elections in a fair manner. He said that whoever spreads violence during the elections will be strongly dealt with.

## Inflation breaks all records in Pakistan

**Roznama Sahara** (December 31) reports that the inflation in Pakistan has broken all the records of the past 47 years. According to Pakistan's statistics bureau, the inflation rate in the past two months was 31 percent, which was 27 percent in August. Whereas the annual rate of inflation has become 38.4 per cent. According to Pakistan's statistics bureau, an annual increase of 50% to 70% in the prices of food has been happening in the country. Experts expressed the apprehension that in the coming months, there would be further increase in inflation. The government departments have given the indication of a huge increase in the prices of petrol, electricity and gas. This apart, due to the pressure exerted by International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government had to further increase the burden of taxes. Due to the continuously increasing price rise and unemployment in Pakistan, there has been a huge increase in mass suicides as well. According to the World Bank, due to the increase in the prices of food items, poverty has increased in the country and it has become difficult for common people to fill their stomach. Financial crisis, government's inefficiency, corruption and due to the debauchery of leaders, a sentiment of dissatisfaction is going up among people.

Renowned British newspaper 'Financial Times' said in its editorial that now nobody can save Pakistan from becoming bankrupt. Unless the Pakistan government takes some charismatic step soon, the situation in Pakistan will be worse than what happened in Sri Lanka. As per government statistics, Pakistan



currently has a loan of 600 billion dollars. Due to the conditions included during the renegotiations of these loans, the inflation is increasing on a daily basis. As per a report of United Nations organisation UNDP, during 2018-19, the 1% population of Pakistan had tapped the 9% of the economy and had utilised 314 billion dollars from it. In contrast to this, the 1% poor were able to utilise only 0.15% of the national economy. Pakistan's 1% elite class has the control over 50% of the economy.

As per government statistics, in 2018, nearly 31.3 percent population is forced to stay below the poverty line. In 2020, this figure increased and reached approximately 40%. In 2021, due to Corona pandemic and in 2022 due to floods, unemployment and inflation, this figure is likely to reach 50%. The World Bank claims that due to the increasing inflation in Pakistan, there is an increase of 20 lakh people living below poverty line within just one year and nearly 40% of population do not have achieved food security. Last year, on the pretext of floods, the government had made the rate of financial development at 2.3%. This year, there is a possibility of it coming down further.

## UN Security Council adopts resolution seeking special envoy for Afghanistan



**Inqilab** (December 31) reports that the United Nations Security Council has adopted a resolution seeking the appointment of a special envoy on Afghanistan matters. According to foreign news agency ‘AFP,’ the United Nations Security Council has accepted a resolution on December 29, in which a decision had been taken to appoint a special envoy for Afghanistan so that the talks with the Taliban rulers there could be taken forward. This decision was taken last month after the release of an independent report, in which stress had been laid on increasing contacts with Afghanistan.

In a resolution adopted recently, it has been sought from the Secretary General of United Nations that he should announce the appointment of a special envoy to discuss the issues in Afghanistan. The 13-member nations of UN Security Council have accepted this resolution. Whereas, Russia and China did not take part in the voting. The representative of China, while commenting about this resolution, said that the Secretary General of the United Nations needs to be cautious on the issue of appointing the special envoy to

Afghanistan. We understand that in order to study the issues of Afghanistan in an independent manner, it is necessary that the United Nations maintains a close and serious contact with the Afghan rulers so that there is improvement in finding solutions to their problems.

It is to be noted that no country in the world has so far granted recognition to the Taliban government in Afghanistan. In 2021, after Taliban came to power, the women there have not been allowed to take part in political, social and economic activities in the country. This apart, they have also been deprived of educational and sports facilities. The Western nations and United Nations had strongly criticised these restrictions imposed on women by the Taliban government, but those have had no effect on the Taliban rulers. Spokesperson of Afghan government, Zabiullah Mujahid said that Afghanistan is an Islamic country, which keeps faith on Shariah laws and we are implementing Shariah laws in our country. Being a true Muslim, it is our duty to implement it. We are not worried what the people of the world think about us on this issue.

## Talks on bringing terrorist Hafiz Saeed to India



**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 29) reports that talks are on to bring the mastermind of the terrorist attack that took place in Mumbai on November 26, 2008 and the chief of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hafiz Saeed to India. The Pakistani media has claimed that Bharat has asked the Pakistani government that it hand over terrorist Hafiz Saeed to India, but there is no confirmation from the Indian government in this connection. ETV has said in its Urdu broadcast that Bharat had duly demanded the handing over of Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Saeed to Indian government, but the Pakistan's foreign ministry has been silent on this request.

It is to be noted that Hafiz Saeed is among the list of most-wanted terrorists in India. He is considered as the mastermind of the Mumbai attacks that took place in 2008 and the Pulwama attacks. It is being said that the hands of Hafiz Saeed are also behind a number of

terrorist attacks that took place in India. The US had also announced a reward of one crore dollar on Hafiz Saeed after declaring him a terrorist. Hafiz Saeed has been moving around freely in Pakistan till a few years ago and had been collecting funds for his organisation. Due to international pressure, Pakistan arrested Hafiz in 2019 and a court awarded him a 15-year jail term on charges of cooperating with terrorism. Last year, another court awarded him 31 years in jail on charges of collecting money for terrorist activities. Though Hafiz Saeed is practically in jail, his party, Pakistan Markazi Muslim League, is fielding its candidates in the forthcoming elections in Pakistan. Hafiz Saeed's son Talha Saeed had also announced to contest the elections for National Assembly from Lahore. In such circumstances, there is no possibility of Pakistan handing over Hafiz Saeed to Bharat.

## Qatar stays death sentence awarded to eight former Indian Navy officers



**Inqilab** (December 29) states that a court in Qatar had awarded death sentence to eight former Indian Naval officers on charges of spying. Now, their death sentence has been stayed and their punishment has been converted to life-term in jail. This decision was taken after an appeal filed by the Indian government and the families of the accused in the higher court against the verdict of the lower court.

**Mumbai Urdu News** (December 29) states that the spokesperson of India's external affairs ministry, while confirming the news, said we have been standing with the Indian citizens right from the beginning and we will continue to raise this issue before the authorities in Qatar. When the court delivered the verdict, the Indian Ambassador to Qatar and other officials of Embassy were present.

It is to be noted that the accused were awarded death sentence by a court in Qatar in October. All these former officers of Indian Navy were employees of Doha-based Dehra Global Company. They were taken into custody in August 2022. Since

the matter was of sensitive nature, the Qatar government did not make any public announcement about the charges against them. A spokesperson of foreign ministry said we are waiting for a detailed judgment of the verdict given by the court. He said that in this connection, the Indian government is in touch with the senior lawyers and family members of the accused on the next course of action. The spokesperson said that since the matter is a secret and a sensitive one, it would not be appropriate to make further comments.

It is to be noted that the officials who were awarded death sentence were working with a private company in Qatar. This company provides training to the armed forces of Qatar and they also provide them with other facilities. They were accused of spying for Israel. All the officers who were working with this company were retired officers of Indian Navy. The former officers whose sentence were commuted include Captain Saurabh Vasisht, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Commander Purnendhu Tiwari,

Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Amit Nagpal, Commander Sanjeev Gupta and Navik Ragesh.

**Sahafat** (December 30) in its editorial said this decision by the court has been described as a success of India government's diplomacy. All these employees were working in a private company and were providing training to the armed forces of Qatar. Bharat had approached the appellate court against the death sentence awarded to the former Indian Naval officers. The good thing is that the foreign ministry had taken all efforts to take into confidence the family members of all the accused. However, though their sentences have been commuted and it is a matter of relief, they have not been released as yet. The effort should be to get them released. Bharat's foreign ministry is active in this connection. This is not just a question for the former Indian Naval officials and their families, instead it is also a question of the

country's prestige. Had the Indian government been active right from the beginning in this case, they may not have been sentenced to death at all.

The newspaper suggests that we can learn many lessons from this incident. The first thing is that Indians should not work with any suspicious companies. This Qatar company is a consultative private company and its owner was also taken into custody, but he was released within a week. In future, Indians should work with only those companies which are trustworthy. Companies like Al-Dehra should be blacklisted and Hindustanis should also think about the country's prestige along with their own reputation and service level, because such incidents raise a question mark on the future of lakhs of Indians who work in Arab countries. One also cannot ignore the fact that in countries world over, the justice system is not transparent like in India. Hence it is not necessary that Indians will get justice everywhere.

## Abdel Fattah El-Sisi elected Egypt president for third time

**Inquilab** (December 19) reports that Egypt President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has taken over the reins in Egypt for the third time after registering a huge victory in the elections. The election commission in Egypt, while announcing his victory, said he had secured 89 percent votes in this elections and he has become the country's president for next six years for the third time. As per media reports, during the election campaign of El-Sisi, the voters got hugely influenced by a project presented by him for a new Egyptian capital. This capital will be built on the eastern part of Cairo at a cost of 58 billion dollars. The presidential election was held in Egypt between December 10 and 12. There were three other candidates against El-Sisi, who had to face humiliating defeat. The chief of Egypt's national election authority Hazem Hussein Badawi told correspondents that 66.8 voters took part in the elections.

Whereas, in the 2018 elections, only 41 percent voters took part. Describing the participation of voters in this election as unprecedented, he said that earlier such a huge polling never took place in the history of Egypt in any elections. Among the opponent candidates of El-Sisi, leader of Republican People's Party, Hazem Omar got 4.5 percent votes. Whereas the candidate of a Leftist party, Social Democratic Party, Farid Zahran, finished third in the elections. Similarly, candidate of Liberal Party, Abdel-Sanad Yamama, got the fourth position.

It is to be noted that these days Egypt is facing a financial crisis. Due to the war between Hamas and Israel in Gaza, there is huge tension on the borders and there will be huge pressure on the economy of Egypt if there is a huge influx of refugees into Egypt. There has been devaluation in the currency of the country



and the annual inflation rate has shot up to 36 per cent.

**Background:** Egypt President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has close relationship with Bharat. On the occasion of the Republic Day in 2023, the Modi government had invited him as the chief guest. Seeing the food crisis in Egypt, despite the ban on export of wheat, India had sent a large quantity of wheat to Egypt. Before becoming the President, El-Sisi was the Army chief of Egypt and he had removed elected President Mohamed Morsi from power in July 2013. Nearly a year later, El-Sisi himself became the President. El-Sisi was born in an ordinary family in Cairo in 1954. In 1977, he completed the graduation course from the military academy in Egypt and was recruited to the infantry in the army. Later he also commanded a mechanised division. Later he was made the chief of the military intelligence wing.

El-Sisi rose to the political platform in Egypt in 2011. That time, when he was a general in the military, he was made a member of the supreme council of the armed forces. That year, the Arab Spring protest began in Egypt also and people came out on the streets against the then President Hosni Mubarak. Seeing the public anger, Mubarak had to resign and the supreme council of the military took the reins of the country. During this period, the

influence of fundamentalist Islamic organisation named Muslim Brotherhood had increased a lot in Egypt. General Al-Sisi is considered as a devout Muslim and hence the military made him the mediator with Muslim Brotherhood. Muslim Brotherhood had propagated fundamentalism in Egypt. In June 2012, a prominent leader of Muslim Brotherhood, Mohamed Morsi became the President of Egypt. Morsi made El-Sisi as the Army chief and the defence minister of the country.

In between, the Egyptian military opposed the fundamentalism of Muslim Brotherhood and massive protests began in the country against Muslim Brotherhood. People started seeking the resignation of Morsi. Later, General El-Sisi removed Morsi from power and took the reins in his hand and suspended the Constitution. He established an interim government in Egypt. Whereas, Morsi has described it as a military coup. Later the Army banned Muslim Brotherhood and hundreds of activists of Muslim Brotherhood were put in jail. In January 2014, El-Sisi was made Field Marshal which is the highest post in Egyptian Army. Two months later, elections took place in the country and El-Sisi took over the reins of the power with the help of Army. In the elections that took place in 2014, El-Sisi secured 97 percent votes.

El-Sisi came to power after selling dreams about education, employment etc to the people of Egypt, but after some time, the dreams of the people got evaporated. El-Sisi was a total failure in economic front, due to which the Egypt's economy received a huge jolt and he had to take loan from International Monetary Fund in 2016. Till now, Egypt had taken loans three times from this body on very strict terms. Due to this, the country's economy is in very bad shape. The Army and government companies dominate the economy of Egypt. There is lot of anger among the

people of the country against the administration due to growing inflation and unemployment, but they cannot hold public demonstrations over it as the government had created a law banning protests in 2016.

In 2016, when El-Sisi had given the sovereignty of two islands to Saudi government, there were massive protests

against him in Egypt, which El-Sisi strongly crushed with the help of the Army. The opponents of El-Sisi accuse him of being a dictator and that he has totally finished off opposition parties. The interesting thing is that despite this, El-Sisi got 89 percent votes in the elections held recently. ■

## Top Iranian commander killed in Israeli air strike in Syria

**Inqilab** (December 22) states that Iran's official news agency 'IRNA' has claimed that Iranian militia Pasdaran-e-Inqilab (IRGC)'s principal adviser Syed Raza Mousavi was killed in an Israeli air strike in Syrian capital Damascus. He was the head of an Iran-supported prominent military network named 'Axis of Resistance.' The official television of Iran suspended its broadcast and announced the news of his death and said he was one of the biggest commanders of IRGC in Syria. Iran President Ebrahim Raisi, while commenting about his death, said Israel will definitely have to pay the price for this crime.

**Hamara Samaj** (December 27) reports that Iranian Ambassador posted in Damascus Hossein Akbari said that when Mousavi was on his way to his residence, three missiles of Israel targeted him. It is to be noted that the Iranian Army is present in Syria ever since the beginning of civil war there. The cooperation of the Iranian Army had helped Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad to come to power. It is to be noted that earlier in 2020, the US had killed the IRGC commander in Iraq, General Qasim Soleimani, in Iraq itself. Iran-supported militia Hezbollah, which is active in Lebanon, has also condemned the killing of



Mousavi and said it would be avenged at any cost.

**Etemaad** (December 29) reports that IRGC's commander-in-chief Major General Hossein Salami said that now we will take revenge by finishing off Israel. Iran's Supreme Leader Syed Ali Khamenei has offered the namaz-e-janaza of Mousavi in Tehran. Later, Mousavi was buried at the Shia Kabristan in Najaf.

**Inqilab** (December 31) states that Arab media has claimed that at least 11 senior officials of IRGC were killed in an Israeli attack on the Damascus airport. They had come to the airport to receive an Irani delegation. Meanwhile, Iran media has refuted this claim and described it as baseless. ■

## Registration of foreign Haj pilgrims begins in Saudi Arabia



**Urdu Times** (December 27) reports that the Saudi government has started the registration process for foreign Haj pilgrims for 2024. The Saudi government announced that individuals interested in going for Haj can submit their application through 'Nusuk Haj' App. People belonging to Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South America and Oceania can submit their applications through this app. More information regarding registration of Haj could be obtained from the website hajj.nusuk.sa. It is to be noted that this app is a one-stop-shop platform, which is taken care of by the Ministry of Haj and Umrah. It provides information regarding different haj packages for Hajjis. In the Haj that took place last year, the foreigners were given permission for the first time to undertake Haj after the Corona pandemic and 18.5 lakh Hajjis from world over took part in the Haj among which 16,60,900 had arrived in Saudi Arabia from abroad. The government has decided to organise the third Haj and Umrah meeting next month. Experts who manage the Haj from across the world will take part in it, which will

also include the representatives of the companies which make arrangements for Haj and Umrah. The purpose of this meeting is to improve the facilities being given to Hajjis.

**Urdu Times** (December 16) reports that after eight years, Iranian Haj travellers would be able to travel to Saudi to undergo Umrah. According to Iranian media, this decision of Saudi government is a new indication of improvement of relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran. According to semi-government news agency 'Fars', Iranian travellers have been given the opportunity to land in Mecca and Medina from 10 different airports in Iran. The first contingent of Iranian Umrah travellers has left for Saudi Arabia. According to media reports, due to the efforts of China, diplomatic relationships have been established between Iran and Saudi Arabia once again after 2016.

It is to be noted that following the hanging of a Shia scholar by the Saudi Arab government and the subsequent retaliatory attack on the Saudi Embassy in Tehran, the diplomatic relationship

between the two countries got snapped. After 2016, the Iranian citizens had permission only to do Haj pilgrimage. It is being said that in the next two months, there is a possibility of 70,000 Iranian travellers visiting Saudi Arabia for Umrah. On the other hand, Iran has announced that there is no need for any Saudi Arab citizen visiting Iran to obtain a visa. Tourism minister of Iran Ezzatollah Zarghami said Iran is thinking about removing visa restrictions on the citizens of 33 other countries as well. These nations include Bharat.

**Hindustan Express** (December 22) reports that for the Haj yatris this year, the accommodation facilities in Mecca have been expanded. Till now, 166 buildings have been granted licence to provide accommodation for Haj yatris. Now, the number of buildings allocated to provide accommodation for Haj yatris has gone up to more than 5,000. The new buildings where permission has been given to accommodate Haj pilgrims have more than 26,000 rooms. In these buildings, more than 11 lakh Haj yatris can stay.

## Four get death sentence in Iran on charges of spying for Israel



**Urdu Times** (December 30) reports that four persons were awarded death sentence in Iran on charges of spying for Israel and for colluding with Israeli intelligence agency Mossad to spread violence in the country, which also included one woman. Those who have been hanged to death in Azarbaijan province included *Wafa Hanareh*, *Aram Omri*, *Rahman Parhazo*, and *Nasim Namazi*. These people were arrested when they entered Iran from the neighbouring country. They were under the lens of Iranian intelligence wing for the past several years. These

four accused had kidnapped a few military officers of Iran and obtained vital clues from them and passed them over to Israel.

As per the chargesheet presented in the court, they have been accused of colluding with Israel's intelligence agency Mossad and promoting terrorist activities. It is to be noted that on December 16, another person was also hanged to death on charges of spying for Israel in another province of Iran named Sistan. Whereas, in November also four others were also hanged to death on same charges.

