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Controversy Over Appointment of Woman Vice-Chancellor in Aligarh Muslim University



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- Israel's military intelligence chief resigns
- Landslide victory for China supporters in parliamentary elections in Maldives
- Muslims in Karnataka included in OBC category

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Summary | 03 |
| <u>National</u> | |
| Controversy over appointment of woman Vice-Chancellor in Aligarh Muslim University | 04 |
| Direction to constitute Haj Committee of India within three months | 06 |
| Dispute over chief of Dawoodi Bohra settled in court | 08 |
| Shias demand reconstruction of Islam's historical Kabristan | 09 |
| Muslims in Karnataka included in OBC category | 11 |
| <u>World</u> | |
| Landslide victory for China supporters in parliamentary elections in Maldives | 12 |
| Drive against terrorists in Pakistan | 14 |
| Pakistan and Iran set a trade target of 10 billion dollars | 14 |
| Students in US universities extend support to Palestine | 16 |
| Saudi Arabia to make investments worth billions of dollars in Pakistan | 17 |
| <u>West Asia</u> | |
| Israel's military intelligence chief resigns | 18 |
| US veto on resolution seeking full membership for Palestine in United Nations | 18 |
| 15,000 arrested in Saudi Arabia on charges of violating residency law | 19 |
| Construction of world's biggest airport in Dubai | 20 |
| Liquor outlet opened in Saudi Arabia | 20 |

Summary

Muslims generally claim that in Islam all Muslims are same and there is no discrimination between them. All Muslims are brothers. However, the recent protests organised by Shia community in different parts of the country have exposed the truth about this claim. The Shia leaders wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and demanded that he intervene in the issue where the Saudi rulers had demolished the *maqbaras* of Shia imams, children of Hazrat Mohammad and his family members in the year 1926 in Medina so that they could be reconstructed. If the Saudi government is not ready for the same, then permission shall be given to Shias across the world to construct these mausoleums.

It is worth mentioning that the Kabristan named Jannat ul-Baqi located at Medina in Saudi Arabia is regarded as the oldest Kabristan of Islam. Here, the burial of bodies started on the directions of Hazrat Mohammad. Later the bodies of his daughters and sons were also buried in this Kabristan. This apart, many of his relatives, the Khalifas of Islam and Shia imams were also buried in this Kabristan. In the 18th century, when the Wahabi movement gained momentum in Saudi Arabia, all these historical tombs were destroyed. The followers of Wahabi tradition believe that concreting any Kabristan or making any kind of constructions on them is against Islam. Later, the Arab people reconstructed all these tombs. In 1926, when the current ruling family of Saudi Arabia came to power, they once again destroyed all these historical *mazars*. Since then, the Shias across the world observe that day as a day of mourning and have been demanding the reconstruction of these *mazars*.

The Congress government in Karnataka has included Muslims in OBC category and announced that they will be given reservation in government jobs and educational institutions. It is to be noted that this system of reservation for Muslims has been on since 1995. Previous BJP government had cancelled this reservation, which the Congress government has restored.

In the parliamentary elections held recently in Maldives, the party of China-supporting president Mohamed Muizzu registered a massive victory. It is to be noted that earlier Mohamed Muizzu contested the presidential elections on the basis of 'India Out' slogan. He had got a huge victory in that election also. However, though he had won the presidential elections, the parliament had India-supporters in majority. Due to this, President Muizzu was unable to implement pro-China policies. Now, due to the huge victory of his party in the parliamentary elections, a new threat has emerged for India.

The students of universities in the US have been holding massive protests across the country in support of Palestine. Their demand is to stop the war in Gaza by putting pressure on Israel and that the US government should immediately stop helping Israel. Now this protest by the students have spread outside the US to few countries in the Europe as well.



Controversy over appointment of woman Vice-Chancellor in Aligarh Muslim University



The decision taken to appoint a woman as Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University for the first time in its 150-year-old history has sparked a controversy. A senior professor of the university has approached the Allahabad High Court seeking to declare the panel formed for the appointment as illegal.

Mumbai Urdu News (April 24) states that the principal of women's college of Aligarh Muslim University, Professor Naima Khatoon, has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University. It is for the first time in the 150-year-old history of Aligarh Muslim University that a woman has been appointed as its vice-chancellor. Five months ago, a panel of names for the post of vice-chancellor has been sent to the President, who is the Visitor of the university. Now, after getting permission from the Election Commission, the education ministry has issued a notification announcing the appointment. However, now a petition questioning the recommendations of the panel is pending before the Allahabad High Court.

It is to be noted that in November last year, a panel comprising three names has been sent to the President from Aligarh

Muslim University. It included the names of Prof. Faizan Mustafa, Prof M U Rabbani and Prof. Naima Khatoon. Raising objection to these names, Professor Sayed Afzal Murtaza Rizvi of Jamia Millia Islamia filed a petition before the Allahabad High Court. On this issue, Professor Mujahid Beg of J N Medical College also filed a petition before the Allahabad High Court. The Allahabad High Court is hearing both the petitions.

The newspaper said that it was generally assumed that due to the implementation of model code of conduct, the appointment of the vice-chancellor could not be announced, but despite that the Central government sought special permission from the Election Commission and announced the appointment of Professor Naima Khatoon as the Vice-Chancellor. In the meeting of Aligarh Muslim University's executive committee and the court, candidate for V-C's post, Prof M U Rabbani, got the highest 61 votes. Whereas Prof Faizan Mustafa got 53 and Prof Naima Khatoon got 50 votes. It is to be noted that this panel was headed by incharge vice-chancellor Prof Mohammad Gulrez, who is the husband of Prof Naima Khatoon.



Roznama Sahara (April 23) reports that the education secretary has informed via a letter that President Droupadi Murmu on April 22, 2024 had appointed Professor Naima Khatoon of Mahila College of Aligarh Muslim University as the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University for a period of five years. The letter also stated that the Election Commission in a letter on April 9, 2024 had given 'no-objection' on the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor. However, the commission had made this condition that this news shall not be published in the media to ensure that no efforts are made to take political benefit out of it.

It is to be noted that Prof Naima Khatoon has been working as the principal of the Women's College of Aligarh Muslim University from 2014. She was appointed as a Lecturer in the Psychology department of Aligarh Muslim University in 1988. Naima Khatoon was later appointed as an Associate Professor in 1998 and as Professor in 2006. She also taught at the national university of Rwanda in Central Africa for one year. From October 2015, she has been appointed as a director at the Centre for Skill Development and Career Planning. She had visited foreign countries many times. Professor Naima Khatoon has written six books. She has vast experience in education and administration.

Inquilab (May 1) states that the Allahabad High Court was set to hear two petitions questioning the validity of this panel, but one of the judges in the bench constituted by the Chief Justice to hear the case, Justice J J Munir, recused himself

from hearing the case. Now the question is whether the Chief Justice will constitute a new bench to hear the case. Commenting on this decision of Justice Munir, Professor Ashraf Mateen said that since Justice Munir personally know Professor Faizan Mustafa, one of the candidates included in the panel for vice-chancellors, he recused himself from the

bench. In this way, he respected the tradition of the judiciary.

Professor Ashraf Mateen said that despite Professor Naima Khatoon being a candidate for the Vice-Chancellor, her husband and incharge Vice-Chancellor Professor Gulrez not only took part in the meeting of the panel, but had even given his vote, which is totally unethical. Secondly, despite Naima Khatoon getting the least votes, the government appointed her as the Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the panel. Secretary of Aligarh Muslim University Teachers Association, Dr Ubaid Ahmad Siddiqui said the petition filed in the court against the panel is correct. Irregularity took place in the constitution of this panel. Incharge Vice-Chancellor Professor Mohammad Gulrez had not only given his vote to his wife, but even chaired the meeting of the panel. This is totally against the rule. He said we have full faith in the decision of the court.

In an article published in **Roznama Sahara** (April 28), Professor Akhtarul Waze has welcomed the appointment of Professor Naima Khatoon as the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University. He said that when Aligarh Muslim University got the status of a Central University in 1920, the ruler of Bhopal, Sultan Jahan Begum, was made its first Chancellor. He said that in view of the changing situations, a provision should be made to teach new subjects in Aligarh University. During the period of Abdul Alim as the Vice-Chancellor, two institutes were constituted in Aligarh Muslim

University to deliberate on the issues in West Asia. Now new centres will be opened there to discuss Central Asia and South-East Asia. He suggested that an Academy of International Studies shall be opened at Aligarh Muslim University as well on the lines of Jamia Millia Islamia.

This apart, there is a need to strengthen the Department of Islamic Studies and Faculty of Theology at Aligarh Muslim University. The Aligarh Muslim University is not just an educational institute; it is also a cultural centre which can bring a revolution in the life of Hindustani Muslims.

Direction to constitute Haj Committee of India within three months



Sahafat (April 30) states that while hearing a defamation suit filed by former member of Haj Committee of India, Hafiz Noushad Ahmad Azmi, a division bench of the Supreme Court headed by the Chief Justice directed the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs that it should fully constitute the Haj Committee of India within three months and also give directives for the appointment of its officials. As per a press note, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, Justice J B Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Mishra delivered this verdict after hearing the arguments of different sides. It is to be noted that the Supreme Court had directed the government to file an affidavit in this connection on March 7. However, though an affidavit had been filed on behalf of the government, the facts were not correctly presented before the court.

In the affidavit filed by the minorities ministry, it has been stated that it

had requested the Lok Sabha Speaker to appoint an MP as member of this committee. A similar letter had been sent to the chairman of the Rajya Sabha as well. However, both of them did not send any name of any Member of Parliament to be nominated to the committee. The minorities ministry had also written a letter to the Election Commission in which permission had been sought to conduct elections to the committee. However, the reply of this letter was also not produced in the court. Lawyer of Azmi, Sanjay Hegde and Talha Abdul Rahman, have given in writing apprising the court of the entire situation and also alleged that the government deliberately did not constitute the Haj Committee of India in the past four years. The ministry did not take any serious effort to constitute the committee under Haj Committee Act, 2002. They also alleged that the government has been making efforts to appoint officials in the committee in an



illegal manner and has been dilly-dallying on the issue of constituting the committee.

The lawyers of the petitioners also alleged that earlier the Haj process was under the ministry of external affairs and its bringing under the minorities ministry is not in accordance with the law. Central government lawyer K M Natraj said this law was made when it was under the external affairs ministry and after the institution was shifted under the minorities ministry, no new law had been formed. Adopting a stringent stand on this, the Supreme Court said that whatever you want to do, do it within three months. Constitute the Haj Committee of India as per the law and also appoint its officials in accordance with the law.

Commenting on the decision of the Supreme Court, Hafiz Noushad Ahmad Azmi said we welcome this decision of the court. However, it is regrettable that no action has been taken against officials who have been consistently violating the law, nor have they been identified yet. Had this been done, they would not dare to violate the law. We have full faith in the law. The court has settled my petition, but we will continue to fight until a committee is formed under the spirit of this law.

Roznama Sahara (April 29) states that the flight departures from Delhi for the 2024 Haj season will begin on May 9 and will continue till May 25. Chairperson of Delhi State Haj Committee Kausar Jahan said that 16,500 Haj pilgrims will depart

from Delhi to Saudi Arabia in the first phase. Among them, 3,200 pilgrims will belong to Delhi. The rest of the passengers will be from other states. She said that the training for those going for Haj has been started by setting up special camps. In this connection, special training camps have been organised at Jamia Hamdard University, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Mustafabad, Janakpuri, Moujpur and in Gita Colony. An AC Haj camp has been set up at Ramlila

Maidan in Delhi for the stay of Haj pilgrims coming from neighbouring states.

In this connection, Additional Chief Secretary of Delhi government, Ashwini Kumar, had also called a meeting of administrative officials recently. This apart, a high-level meeting was held with the officials of minorities ministry, Haj Committee of India, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Airports Authority. Special arrangements had been made at Haj building, Masjid Dargah Faiz Ilahi, Ramlila Maidan and Indira Gandhi International Airport so that those going for Haj do not face any troubles. This apart, a drive has been launched to give various vaccinations to the Haj pilgrims because without these jabs, they will not be given permission to enter Saudi Arabia.

Roznama Sahara (April 16) reports that the Chief Executive Officer of Haj Committee, Dr Leyaqt Ali Afaqui, said that due to the joint efforts of minorities ministry and the Indian Embassy located in Jeddah, for the first time in the history of Haj, accommodation has been arranged for Indian Hajis just 200 metres from Masjid-e-Nabawi located in Medina. Addressing over 700 Khadim al-Hujjaj, who have come from different states, he said that this year not even one haji will have to stay in any faraway places. Indian Consul General in Jeddah, Mohammad Shahid Alam, has given guidance to the Haj yatris regarding the pilgrimage.

Dispute over chief of Dawoodi Bohra settled in court



Urdu Times (April 24) states that the verdict on the dispute over the successor of the head of the Dawoodi Bohra community, which has been going on in the court for the past 10 years, has now been delivered. It is to be noted that the hearing in the case continued in the court for eight years and the verdict was being expected for the past one year. Now, finally the judge of Bombay High Court Justice G S Patel has declared Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin as the head of the Dawoodi Bohra community. It is to be noted that the 52nd head of Dawoodi Bohra community, Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin, had passed away in 2014. Following this, his son Mufaddal Saifuddin became the 53rd Syedna as his successor. The step-brother of Syedna Burhanuddin, Khuzaima Qutbuddin, objected to the succession of Mufaddal and knocked at the doors of Bombay High Court. He claimed that Syedna Burhanuddin had appointed him as his successor. Meanwhile, Qutbuddin had passed away in 2016, when this case was being heard in the court. Son of Khuzaima Qutbuddin, Taher Fakhruddin became the petitioner in the case. He urged the court that he shall be recognised as the 54th Dai of the Dawoodi Bohra community. He also claimed that his father Qutbuddin had legally made him as his successor.

The lawyer of Mufaddal Saifuddin, Janak Dwarakadas, had contended in the

court that Burhanuddin had on June 4, 2011 had declared Saifuddin as his successor before a few witnesses. After hearing the contention of the lawyers from both the sides, the court in April 2023 had reserved its judgment. Now the court has duly announced the verdict. The court has declared valid the appointment of Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin as the head of the Dawoodi Bohra community.

On this verdict of the Bombay High Court, a press statement has been issued on behalf of the Dawoodi Bohra community and said they were fully satisfied on this verdict of the court. From this judgment, it has been established that the 52nd al-Dai al-Mutlaq of Bohra community, Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin had appointed his son Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin as the 53rd head of the Bohra community. The verdict of the court has also ended the fake claim made by Khuzaima Qutbuddin and after his death his son Tahir Fakhruddin had made. The court has made it clear that Tahir Fakhruddin could not establish his claim on being the head of the Dawoodi Bohra community and hence his fake claim has been rejected. The Dawoodi Bohra community has also thanked their lawyers as well and said they were grateful to those witnesses as well who stood with truth.

Sahafat (April 7) states that the Association of former students of Jamia Millia Islamia has welcomed the decision

of the court. It is to be noted that Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin is the Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia. In a statement, the association said the head of the Dawoodi Bohra always strives towards outspoken leadership, honesty and welfare of students. The Jamia Millia Islamia has made much progress under his leadership.

Comment: Dawoodi Bohra is a group among the Shia Muslims, who are mainly businessmen and industrialists. There are also many other groups in the Bohra community. Their number is said to be approximately five lakhs in India. Whereas their number across the world is said to be more than 10 lakhs. The head of this sect is known as al-Dai Al-Mutlaq. The headquarters of this sect is located in Mumbai. The selection of its head takes place on the inspiration of Allah and the law of succession, which is known as Nass. Generally, the successor is chosen from the family of the previous Dai.

In this connection, it is also worth mentioning that a movement for reformation in the Dawoodi Bohra community has been going on for more than two decades. The pioneer of this movement was Asghar Ali Engineer. Its beginning was from the Dawoodi Bohra meeting held in 1977. The reformist

leaders' allegation is that the head of Dawoodi Bohra is controlling the sect in a dictatorial manner. When Prime Minister Morarji Desai recommended the constitution of a non-governmental



commission instead of an official commission, the then president of Citizen for Democracy Jai Prakash Narayan had constituted Nathani commission for the protection of the basic rights of the Dawoodi Bohra community and against their exploitation. This commission was strongly opposed by the supporters of the Bohra chief. This commission had said that their investigation had made it clear that the religious heads of the Bohra sect have been infringing the human rights of the people belonging to this sect. Those who violate the directives of the head of the Dawoodi Bohra community and his aamilon (representatives) are expelled from the sect and they are socially boycotted. The leaders of this movement had also decided that they will hold a meeting every three years to discuss and find solution to the problems of people of Dawoodi Bohra community spread all over the world. The inauguration of such an exercise was done by Muslim thinker Tahir Mahmood. This reformist movement had been given a new direction by Bohra thinker Asghar Ali Engineer.

Shias demand reconstruction of historic Kabristan of Islam

Avadhnama (April 18) states that the people of Shia community held a march in various places in the country and demanded that the *mazars* of the family members of Hazrat Mohammad Saheb, which were destroyed by the Saudi rulers in 1926, should be reconstructed. Thousands of people took part in a massive protest march

organised by Shia leader Maulana Yasoob Abbas at the Shaheed Smarak in Lucknow against the destruction of *maqbaras* of the family members of Prophet Mohammad and that of Shia imams located at Kabristan Jannat al-Baqi by the Saudi rulers. Addressing the protesters, Maulana Yasoob Abbas said that exactly 100 years ago, the

ruler of Saudi Arabia, Al Saud, had destroyed the tombs of the family members of Hazrat Mohammad located at the historic Kabristan in Medina. It is a big shame that the Saudi ruler stays in huge palaces but the *Kabr* of the daughter of his Prophet is under the open sky. The Maulana demanded from the Saudi government that either it reconstruct the Kabristan or grant permission for them to reconstruct these mazars. The Maulana also demanded the Prime Minister of Bharat Narendra Modi that he use his influence and put pressure on Saudi government to stop the atrocities being committed on Shias.

Chairman of All India Shia Personal Board, Maulana Syed Saim Mehdi Naqvi, wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of Bharat and demanded that he intervene in this issue. Shia leader Syed Naqvi said that Jannat al-Baqi will be constructed again and no power in the world will be able to stop its construction for long time. In this connection, a public meeting was also held in Lucknow, which was addressed by Shia leader Maulana Kalbe Jawad Naqvi.

Siasat (April 19) states that the Shia community organised a seminar in Hyderabad. This seminar was addressed by Iran's Consul General in Hyderabad, Mahdi Shahrukhi, editor of daily Sada-e-Hussaini, Syed Jaffer Hussain, and many other Shia scholars.

Comment: It is being said that the first Kabristan of Islam is Jannat al-Baqi. This Kabristan is located at Medina in Saudi Arabia. Here, on the directions of Hazrat Mohammad, As'ad ibn Zurara was the first to be buried. Later, the body of the daughter of Hazrat Mohammad, Ruqayya, was also buried in this Kabristan. The son of Hazrat Mohammad, Ibrahim and two



daughters Zainab and Umm Kulthum were also buried near the *Kabr* of Uthman bin Maz'un. After this, Khalifa Uthman ibn Affan and several family members of Hazrat Mohammad were also buried in this Kabristan. This Kabristan was expanded by Khalifa Mu'awiya. From time to time the family members of Hazrat Mohammad and many of his colleagues were also buried in this historical Kabristan and tombs and mausoleums were also built on their Kabrs.

In the 18th century, the Wahabi movement gained traction in Saudi Arabia. The goal of this movement was to promote true Islamic principles. Wahabis believe that no grave should be made concrete and neither any tombs or such structures shall be built over them. The Wahabis took control of Mecca and Medina for the first time in 1806 and they razed several *kabrs* in this Kabristan and the tombs built on them were demolished along with the masjid. They believed that in future a system of worship may begin on this mazars, which is against the basic principles of Islam. Later, this Kabristan was reconstructed. In 1926, when the Al Saud dynasty became the rulers of Saudi Arabia, they once again destroyed this Kabristan. Since then the people of Shia sect are demanding the reconstruction of this Kabristan every year, but the government of Saudi Arabia has not accepted this demand. This day is observed as a day of mourning by Shias across the world.

Muslims of Karnataka included in OBC category



Urdu Times (April 25) reports that the Congress government in Karnataka, while taking an important decision regarding the Muslims in the state, included them in the OBC category. This was announced through a press release. As per the press release, the Muslims in Karnataka is being considered as OBC under the 2B category. The National Backward Classes Commission has raised objection over this decision of the Karnataka government. According to news agency ANI, all the castes and communities of Muslims in Karnataka have been included in the OBC list to make them eligible for reservation in state government jobs and educational institutions.

Urdu Times (April 26) in its editorial has expressed satisfaction that the Congress government in Karnataka has taken an important decision regarding Muslims. In Karnataka, the reservation quota for OBCs is 32 percent, which will now include Muslims as well. It is expected that after this decision of the state government, the voice of Bhagwa brigade against Muslims will become louder. It is to be noted that the previous government of BJP in the state had ended the reservation

for Muslims. The interesting thing is that in Karnataka, the reservation for Muslims was started by H D Deve Gowda. The same Deve Gowda has now become an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The newspaper said that in Karnataka, there is a long history of giving reservation to Muslims. In 1975, L G Havanur in his report had described Muslims as backward from social

and financial point of view. Since then, talks about giving reservations to Muslims began in order to remove their backwardness and to extend help to them. In 1980, the Venkat Swami commission had also supported giving reservation to Muslims as a backward community. When this issue was questioned in the court, Justice O Chinnappa Reddy in his verdict had justified the reservation to Muslims. Muslims were given reservation for the first time in the 90s. This reservation was given to them on the basis of their backwardness, and not on the basis of religion. The courts had also supported the reservation on this basis. However, despite that the BJP is adamant in opposing the reservation for Muslims. If this stand of BJP is not described as anti-Muslim, what else it can be called? Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his speech had described it as an offence on the rights of Hindus. The entire politics of BJP is based on anti-Muslim sentiments. Now it is the responsibility of Congress that it sticks to its decision. This decision of the state government shall not prove to be just an election weapon to woo Muslims.

Landslide victory for China supporters in parliamentary elections in Maldives



Inquilab (April 23) states that a new threat has arisen for Bharat following the huge victory of China supporters in the parliamentary elections held in Maldives. According to the election commission in Maldives, President Mohamed Muizzu's party, People's National Congress (PNC), has registered victory in 71 seats out of a total 93 seats in People's Majlis (Parliament) of Maldives. Earlier, India-supporting Maldives Democratic Party (MDP) had a huge majority in the Parliament. The MDP had to face a shameful defeat in this elections and their seats came down to 12 from 65. The current president of MDP is former president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. In the elections held this time, there were a total of 368 candidates in the fray for the 93 seats in Parliament, out of which 42 were women. A total of 602 polling centres were set up in Maldives for voting. Whereas, one polling centre each was set up in Colombo in Sri Lanka, Thiruvananthapuram in Bharat and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

It is to be noted that in the presidential elections held in Maldives in September 2023, China supporter

Mohamed Muizzu registered a huge victory. He contested the elections by raising the slogan 'India Out.' However, in the mayoral elections held in Maldives capital Male, his party had to taste defeat. Till now, Mohamed Muizzu has been unable to dance openly to the tune of China because India-supporting members had the majority in Maldives Parliament. The results of parliamentary elections are a huge setback to the US also, which has been actively trying to curb the growing influence of China in Indo-Pacific region for the past two years. This is the reason why the US opened its embassy in Male in 2023.

It is being said that out of the total 2,84,887 voters in Maldives, 84.25 percent voters took part in the elections this time. The PNC had fielded 90 candidates in the elections. Whereas the Opposition party MDP had contested on 89 seats. Similarly, 10 candidates of Jumhoore party and 39 of Democrats were also in the fray. Both the son and daughter of former president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom had to face a shameful defeat in this elections.

It is to be noted that Gayoom had ruled Maldives for 30 years (from 1978 to

2008). Gayoom is considered as an India-supporter. In 1988, when some foreign powers tried to overthrow the Gayoom government through a military coup, the then prime minister of Bharat Rajiv Gandhi sent Indian military to Maldives and foiled the attempt. In 1965, after Maldives became independent, the US established diplomatic relationship with Maldives in 1966. Its aim was to stop the growing influence of China in Indian Ocean. In 2020, the US had also signed an agreement for security cooperation with Maldives. This apart, the Maldives also established diplomatic relationship with Israel in 1965. That time Israel was the third country in the world which granted recognition to Maldives. In 2009, the then president of Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed, had signed several agreements with Israel. In October 2023, the Hamas carried out an attack on Israel. As a retaliatory action, when Israel attacked Gaza, the Sunni Muslims in Maldives organised protests like 'Israel Out' in the country. Along with this, a ban has been imposed on the entry of Israeli passport holders in Maldives.

China is happy with the results of parliamentary elections in Maldives. Spokesperson of Chinese foreign affairs ministry Wang Wenbin told correspondents that, "we congratulate Maldives for the successful and fair elections in the country and fully respect the interests of the people of Maldives. We are ready to extend full cooperation to Maldives in every sector." The director of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences said though Maldives is a small country from the point of view of area and population, we would like to see the system of foreign interference being stopped there and economic development gets promoted. He said the presence of Indian military contingent in Maldives is a threat to its independence and sovereignty. The current election results give the indication that the people of Maldives is against the interference of Bharat.

It is to be noted that a number of agreements were signed between Bharat



and Maldives in 1976 on military and economic cooperation. India has opened its new military base called INS Jatayu in Lakshadweep. Its aim is to keep an eye on the expansionist policy of China. It is to be noted that due to pressure from President Mohamed Muizzu, India had to withdraw its military experts from Maldives and had to cancel several agreements over ocean resources. It is also worth mentioning here that in the past two years, the influence of Pakistan has also increased in Maldives. Nearly 99 percent population of Maldives is Sunni Muslim. The Pakistani Ulema have established several new Islamic madrasas there. This apart, it has also started granting scholarships to more than 100 students from Maldives to go for higher studies in Pakistani universities.

Sahafat (April 24), while mentioning about the massive victory of President Mohamed Muizzu's party in the parliamentary elections, said that China has set its eyes on Maldives for a long time now. Last year, when Mohamed Muizzu won the presidential election, it became clear that his government had started taking a new path. In the recently held parliamentary elections, it is clear from the manner in which his party got a huge victory that now the policy of Maldives will be determined on the basis of indications given by China. What China wants, that will happen there. Maldives has quickly launched an effort to reduce its dependence on Bharat and on things like trade, it has signed agreements with Turkey and other Muslim nations. After Muizzu became the President, 15 secret

agreements were signed with China. This also include military cooperation and supply of military equipment. China has

also announced that it would make huge investments in Maldives for its economic development.

Drive against terrorists in Pakistan

Avadhnama (April 23) states that the Pakistan Army has launched an intense drive against terrorists in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the Public Relations Department of Pakistani military, the Army has launched two major military operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the basis of information received from intelligence sources. One terrorist was killed in northern Waziristan during this operation. Whereas 10 terrorists were killed in an operation in Dera Ismail Khan. The army claimed that foreign weapons and ammunition were seized in huge quantity from the bases of the terrorists. It is to be noted that earlier also six Pakistani soldiers and 18 terrorists were killed during a military campaign in Dera Ismail Khan. Whereas in another military operation that took place in Waziristan, four terrorists and three Army officers were killed.



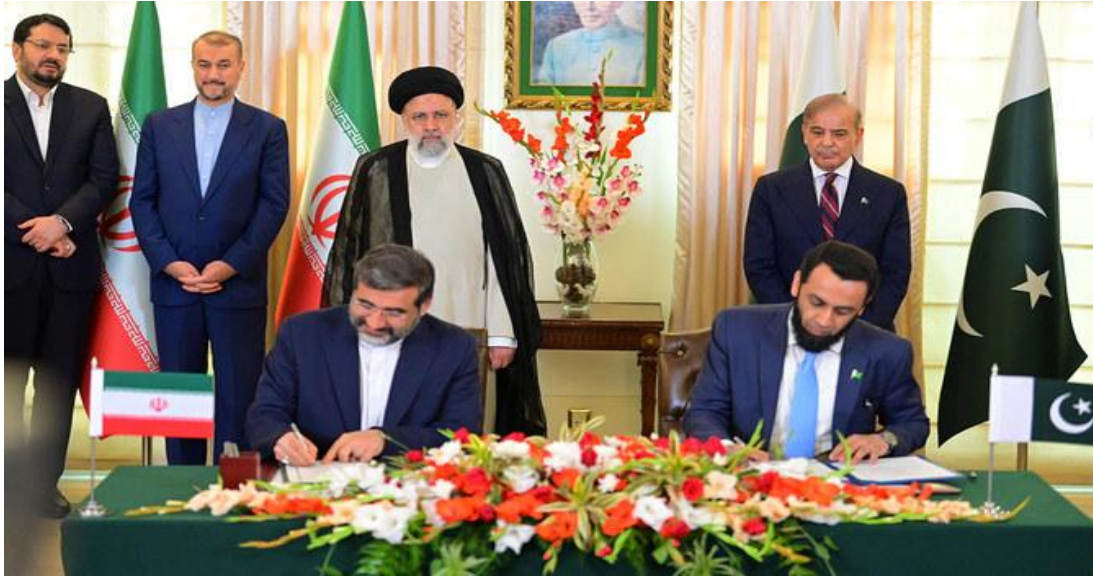
also claimed that the Afghanistan government had provided rocket launcher, hand grenade and weapons for this purpose. He admitted that the officials of Afghanistan government had helped their gang reach the Afghan border. He also said that all the terrorists who were perpetrators of the attack were Afghan citizens.

It is to be noted that the Pakistan government had raised this charge several times that Afghanistan's land was being used to carry out terrorist attacks in the country and the terrorists creating troubles in Pakistan are given shelter in Afghanistan. However, spokesperson of Afghan government Zabiullah Mujahid had rejected this allegation by Pakistan several times. His claim is that since Pakistan government has failed to eliminate the terrorists, it is targeting the Afghanistan government to avoid its responsibility.

Ten billion dollars' trade target between Pakistan and Iran

Siasat (April 23) states that during the visit of Iran President Ebrahim Raisi to Pakistan, more than a dozen agreements were signed for mutual cooperation between the two countries on different sectors. On behalf of Pakistan, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif signed on these agreements. On this occasion, the Iran

president said the religious, cultural and commercial relationship between the two countries is centuries old. We want this to improve further. In this meeting, it was also agreed that the two countries shall cooperate to end terrorism and to stop smuggling of drugs. The Iran president said it is necessary to stop Israeli aggression in



Palestine. He expressed satisfaction that Pakistan has extended strong support to the people of Gaza. He alleged that the United Nations Security Council has failed to stop the Israeli offensive action due to pressure from United States.

Earlier, the Iran president offered *fateha* at the *khabr* of Pakistan's national poet Muhammad Iqbal in Lahore and said that the writings of Iqbal are quite popular in Iran. He said the Persian writings of Iqbal is proof of centuries-old cultural relationship between the two countries. Raisi said the Palestinians will win in the war with Israel. He said the writings of Iqbal are very popular among Iranians. In his writings, Iqbal had stressed that the Muslims across the world are one and they have to unite to protect Islam and Quran. He said after reaching Pakistan, he realised that he is among his own people. I am hopeful that the hearts of the people of Pakistan and Iran will always remain connected to each other.

Hindustan Express (April 24) states that Pakistan and Iran have decided to strictly ban terrorist organisations in their own countries. A spokesperson of Pakistan's interior ministry said this decision was taken during a meeting of

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Iran's Interior Minister Dr Ahmad Vahidi and Law Minister Amin Hussain Rahimi. During this meeting, it was also decided that the two countries will share the information received from intelligence agencies on the activities of the terrorists.

It is to be noted that the relationship between Pakistan and Iran remained tense for some time. In January this year, the Iranian Army had attacked Pakistani regions using rockets and missiles in which nearly a dozen people were killed. Whereas the Pakistani government had claimed that those who were killed in this attack were innocent citizens. As a retaliatory action, Pakistan carried out aerial attacks on Iranian regions. Pakistan said it had attacked terrorist bases which are active in Iran on the basis of information received from intelligence agencies in which more than a dozen terrorists were killed. The Iran government has also announced that it would think about giving free visa to Shia yatis from Pakistan to visit various dargahs located in Iran. A consensus has also been reached between Iran and Pakistan where the prisoners serving jail term in both countries shall be handed over to the respective countries.

Students of US universities support Palestine



Inquilab (April 24) states that the protest rallies by students against the Israeli attack in Gaza are spreading fast in many universities in the United States. In New York University, the police had to intervene to control the march by students. Many students were arrested in this connection. In Columbia University, the classes of students have been suspended. Similarly, students in the colleges affiliated to many universities including Berkeley and MIT came out on the streets in support of Palestine. New York City Police entered the Columbia University premises and arrested more than 100 protesters. US President Joe Biden expressed concern over the growing sentiments against Jews.

Etemaad (April 26) states that in view of the growing dissatisfaction among students, pressure has been exerted on US administration to deploy National Guards to deal with the protesters. In Texas University and also in South California University, more than 200 protesters have been arrested. The students of Harvard University and Brown University, while criticising the US policy towards Israel, demanded that the US stop giving financial and military aid to Israel. The students have announced the boycott of the products of those companies which support Israel. The university administration has been appealing to students to maintain peace. The Governor of Texas said the place for protesters is in jail. Those who are spreading hatred against Jews and are trying to create an atmosphere of hatred in

the country will be expelled from the university. Hamas has alleged that the US government is trying to crush the freedom of expression of the students and have described them as anti-Jews in order to give them a bad name. Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that anti-Jewish crowds are provoking students against Israel. He said that riotous elements are targeting Jewish students. We will not accept this under any circumstance. In South California University, slogans were raised against Israel and in support of Palestine.

Mumbai Urdu News (April 26) has claimed that the series of protests which had started in the US against Israel have now spread to many countries in Europe. The newspaper claimed that the series of anti-Israel protests in the universities in France, Austria and Italy have intensified. The newspaper said the US Senate Speaker Mike Johnson had been on a visit to Columbia University where he had a massive clash with protesting students. The protesters alleged that due to the wrong policies of the US, Israel is spilling the blood of innocent Palestinians in Gaza. The protesters demanded that the US government seize all the properties of Israel in the country and force Israel to stop the genocide of Palestinians.

Etemaad (April 26) in its editorial, while welcoming the protests of students in the US, said the US government should stop supplying US weapons to Israel and the decision taken by the US Congress to

extend financial aid to Israel should immediately be cancelled. The students are stressing that the US use its influence in order to implement permanent ceasefire in Gaza. The newspaper wrote that due to this opposition, many teachers and administrators of the University have been expelled from their jobs.

Mumbai Urdu News (April 26) in its editorial expressed satisfaction that

students in US and Europe have come out on the streets in huge numbers for the protests and they are demanding that the genocide in Gaza should be stopped and also declare Palestine as an independent country. The newspaper expressed surprise that a country like the US, which is a pioneer in freedom of expression, themselves are forcefully trying to stop the voice of students in own country.

Saudi Arabia to make investments worth billions of dollars in Pakistan

Hindustan Express (April 18) states that Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif said that Saudi Arabia's foreign minister Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud recently visited Pakistan along with a high-level delegation in order to discuss about the possibilities of making investments in Pakistan. He said that when he visited Saudi Arabia in the past few days, he met the country's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and had urged him to cooperate in the development of the economy of Pakistan. Recently, Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb visited the US. Following this, he claimed that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is ready to provide loan to Pakistan to overcome the financial crisis. As its first instalment, one billion dollars will be released to Pakistan this month.

Hindustan (April 18) states that Saudi finance minister Faisal bin Farhan held a meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar. Following this, the two leaders told a joint press conference that Saudi Arabia is ready to make investments worth five billion dollars in Pakistan. Faisal bin Farhan said that we are ready to give financial aid to Pakistan in many sectors, which include agriculture, basic infrastructure, Information Technology, mining, energy etc. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said it was for the first time in the past four decades that such a huge Saudi delegation has arrived in our country to look into the possibilities of

making investments. Our talks were fruitful and we are ready to extend all kinds of help to Saudi Arabia.

Siasat (April 17) states that Saudi Arabia's foreign minister held lengthy talks with Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and made him aware about the different aspects of Saudi investments in Pakistan. Shahbaz Sharif said that Saudi Arabia had stood with Pakistan in all difficult times. Because of Islam, both our countries are brothers and we have a cultural, commercial and religious relationship. He expressed hope that due to this visit, there will be a new chapter in the relationship between the two countries.

Avadhnama (April 16) states that the Saudi government has announced a financial aid of Rs 4.4 billion for the development of the premises of King Abdullah University located in the capital of Pak Occupied Kashmir, Muzaffarabad. This money will be utilised to equip the university with modern equipment. Vice-Chancellor of King Abdullah University Dr Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi said the entire premises of the university were destroyed in the earthquake of 2005, which has been reconstructed with the cooperation of Saud Arabia with an amount of seven billion. He said that more than 10,000 students will be able to receive education in King Abdullah University. More than 300 experts are being recruited to provide them higher education.

Resignation of Israel's military intelligence chief

Hindustan Express (April 23) states that the chief of Israel's military intelligence, Major General Aharon Haliva, has resigned from his post over the alleged failure in providing prior information regarding the deadly Hamas attack on Israel that took place on October 7 last year. Following the Hamas attack on Israel, the people of Israel have been continuously targeting the intelligence chief over his alleged failures. The intelligence chief in his resignation letter has accepted that he had failed to provide prior information over the attack by Hamas. Israel's military headquarters has accepted the resignation of Haliva. Israel's claim is that the Rafah region is the last bastion of Hamas in Gaza and it is very important to clear it.

It is to be noted that on October 7 last year, Hamas unexpectedly launched a massive attack on Israel in which 1,160 Israelis were killed. In this attack, the Hamas had also taken hundreds of Israeli citizens as hostages. Following this, Israel launched a military operation to destroy and wipe out Hamas and release the hostages, which continues till today. According to Palestinian sources, till now 34,000 Palestinians have been killed and



76,000 injured in this war. In this connection, the United Nations Security Council had passed a ceasefire resolution on March 25, 2024. This resolution was passed in absentia of the United States. Israel had expressed displeasure over the non-participation of the United States in the voting and had alleged that the 14 other members of the Security Council had supported the resolution at the behest of the US. During the Eid, several members of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh's family were killed in Israeli bombing. Israel had targeted the vehicle on the basis of the information received from intelligence sources, in which a dozen members of Ismail Haniyeh's family were on their way to the refugee camp to meet their relatives.

US veto on full membership for Palestine in United Nations

Urdu Times (April 20) states that the US has vetoed the resolution seeking permanent membership for Palestine in the United Nations. However, majority of the member nations of United Nations Security Council was in support of this resolution. According to news agencies, this resolution was moved by Algeria. The 12 member nations of United Nations Security Council supported this resolution. Whereas, Britain

and Switzerland did not take part in the voting. In the meeting of the Security Council, president of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, said the people of Palestine want to live with freedom and peace in an independent country. Vetoing the resolution, the US said that the right time has not come to give permanent membership of United Nations to Palestine. The chairman of Palestine Authority,



after the meeting, it had been stated that more than 17 lakh people had taken refuge in Rafah. If Israel attacks Rafah, then many people will die there. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has criticised the veto exercised by the US on the resolution seeking permanent membership for Palestine in the United Nations and said that the US has been making consistent efforts to thwart establishment of peace in the region. The Saudi foreign ministry has appealed to the nations in the world to stop the Israeli attack on the citizens in Gaza. The

Mahmoud Abbas, and Hamas strongly criticised the veto of US on this resolution and alleged that the US has been violating the rights of Palestinian people.

It is to be noted that the US had put lot of pressure on the member nations of United Nations Security Council to avoid voting on this resolution so that it could avoid the stain of a veto. However, when the voting took place, majority of votes were polled in its favour and the US had to use its veto power. Earlier, the foreign ministers of G-7 had exerted pressure on Israel to desist from launching an attack on Rafah. They had also sought a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. These seven countries are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan Britain and the US. In a statement issued

people of Palestine should be given the right for self-determination and an independent Palestine state shall be established on the basis of the 1967 boundaries so that permanent peace shall be established in the region.

Mumbai Urdu News (April 21) states that many countries in Middle-East have condemned the invoking of veto by the US. These countries alleged that the US is putting hurdles on the path of a permanent peace in Palestine. In a statement, the countries urged nations across the world that they put pressure on the United Nations Security Council to grant recognition to Palestine and foil the efforts of Israel to deprive Palestinians of their basic rights.

15,000 people arrested for violating residency law in Saudi Arabia

Inquilab (April 22) states that more than 15,000 people have been arrested in Saudi Arabia on charges of violating the residency laws. According to Saudi Press Agency (SPA), these arrests were made after the Eid. Those arrested have been accused of violating residency law, labour law and border security law. As per government report, 9,479 people have been arrested on charges of violating residency law. Whereas 3,763 people have been caught on charges of crossing the border in

an illegal manner. Similarly, 1,430 people have been caught on charges of violating labour law. As per Saudi press report, nearly 1,000 people have been arrested on charges of intruding into Saudi Arabia illegally from abroad. Among them, 64 percent are from Ethiopia, 33 percent are from Yemen and three percent are citizens from other countries. This apart, 73 other people have been caught on charges of entering neighbouring countries from Saudi Arabia.

Construction of world's biggest airport in Dubai

Urdu Times (April 30) reports that the construction of the world's biggest airport has started in Dubai. Its name will be Al Maktoum International Airport and approximately 35 billion dollars will be spent on its construction. According to French news agency AFP, the Vice-President of United Arab Emirates and the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum said that on the orders of the government, the construction work of the world's biggest international airport has started. It is estimated that a cost of 34.85 billion dollars will be incurred on its construction. Every year, 26 crore passengers will be able to utilise the flight

services in this airport. This airport will be five times bigger than the current Dubai International airport.

The chairman of Dubai's Civil Aviation Authority, Sheikh Ahmad bin Syed Al-Maktoum said that the first phase of the project will be completed in the next 10 years. It is worth mentioning that the Dubai International Airport is one among the busiest airports in the world. This airport is located close to the city and hence it is not possible to expand it due to lack of space. Currently, 12 crore passengers use this airport every year. In order to reduce the rush of passengers, a new airport is being built away from the city.

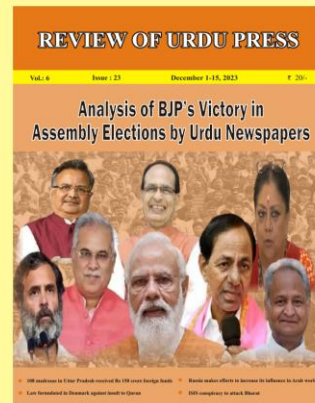
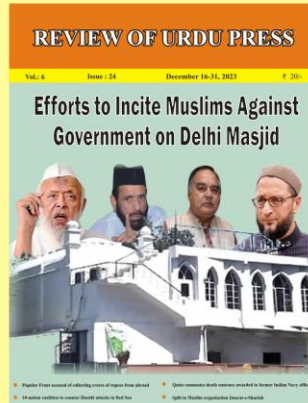
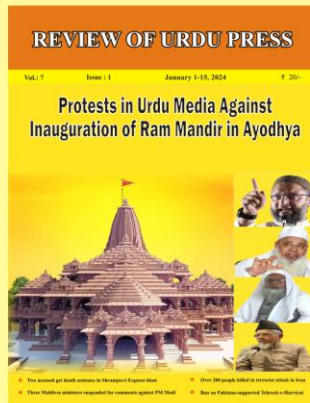
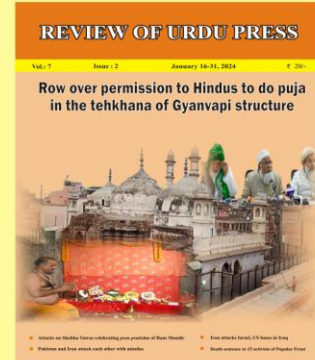
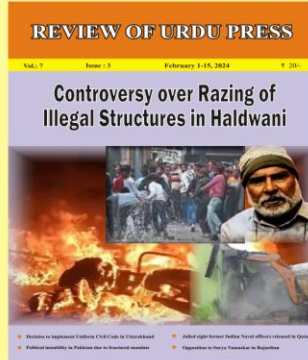
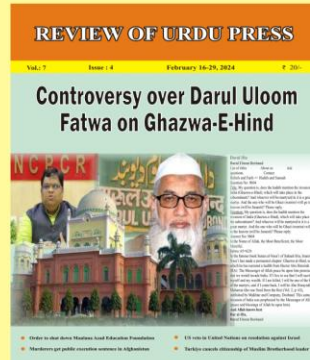
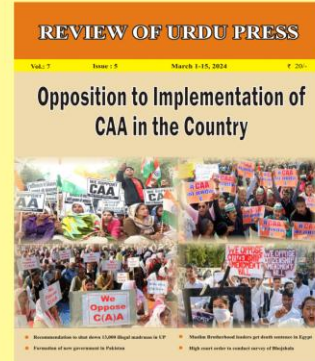
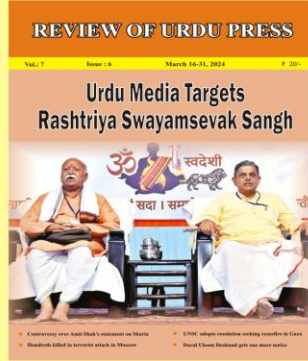
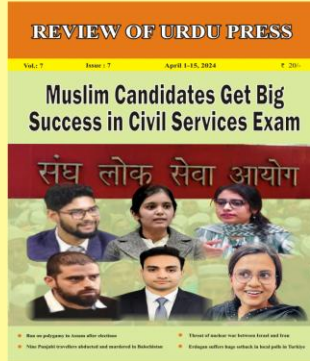
Liquor shop opens in Saudi Arabia

Sahafat (April 26) states that for the first time a liquor outlet has been opened in the diplomatic enclave located in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh. In order to purchase the liquor, the employees of the embassy have to register themselves with an app named 'diplo' and after getting permission from the ministry of external affairs, a monthly quota will be fixed for the liquor consumers. No individual below the age of 21 years will have the permission to purchase liquor from this shop. This apart, there will be a ban on photography and use of mobile in this region. It is to be noted that in the beginning of this year, the Saudi government had announced opening of liquor shops at the official level for the employees of the embassies. As per a report of the Reuters, this liquor outlet has been opened for the employees of embassies of non-Muslim nations.

It is being said that this was the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia that a liquor outlet is being opened in the country at official level. Earlier, there was a stringent ban on the use of liquor in Saudi Arabia and no person had permission to



drink liquor. If any individual was caught violating this ban, he was given 100 lashes in public and the accused had to stay in jail for five years. It is to be noted that in Islamic Shariah, it is a heinous crime to drink liquor, storing it or selling it and there is a provision for stringent punishment for its violation. Two years ago, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman had announced the adoption of a liberal policy. Under this policy, women were given permission to drive vehicles and go for shopping without wearing burqa. This apart, for the first time in Saudi Arabia, nearly three dozen cinema halls were opened. Earlier, there was also a ban on watching films in the country.



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