

GBLA-6 electioneering

PML-N launches by-poll campaign in G-B

Move has raised questions as many call it pre-poll rigging

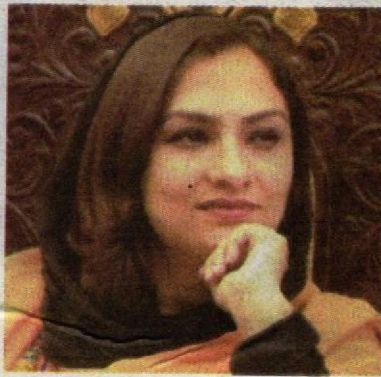
SHABBIR MIR
GILGIT

The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has launched a full-scale election campaign for its candidate, Saleem Khan, who is son of Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Mir Ghazanfar Ali.

The winner of the by-election for GBLA-6, scheduled to be held on May 28, will take the seat vacated by Mir Ghazanfar after he was appointed G-B governor.

Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairperson Marvi Memon reached Hunza on May 22 to expedite the campaign. Besides Chief Minister Hafeezur Rehman, a campaign for the PML-N candidate Saleem Khan is also being carried out by the G-B governor and his spouse Rani Atika, a lawmaker in the G-B assembly.

The PML-N team addressed rallies in Hunza and asked people to vote for the party if they wanted to see a developed Hunza. Rehman also inaugu-



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BISP chief Marvi Memon

rated campaign offices at Aliabad and Murtazabad.

While addressing one of the rallies, Memon said, “I am here with a message from the prime minister. The PM wants Hunza and other areas to develop

and for that you have to vote the PML-N candidate into power.” Memon said a survey for BISP was being undertaken again to ensure that financial assistance reaches the poor.

The electioneering by PML-N key leaders raised several questions as many called it pre-poll rigging.

While criticising the G-B chief minister, former information minister Sadia Danish said the election campaign by the CM was a slap in the face of the election commission. “The governor is already influencing the people by using his office, while the election commission is unaware of the matter.” Sadia also criticised Memon and said she wanted to buy the people through BISP cards.

The Awami Workers Party also flayed the government and the election commission for launching the campaign. In a letter written to the chief election commissioner, AWP President Abid Hassan Minto drew attention towards pre-poll rigging by PML-N and asked the CEC to take strict action against this act. He wanted a fair chance for AWP candidate Baba Jan in the upcoming by-polls.