

Independent

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Cabinet approves reconstitution of committee on missing persons

Approves regularisation of 227 daily-wage teachers; PM vows to continue anti-polio mission till its complete eradication

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet on Wednesday approved the reconstitution of its committee on missing persons headed by the law minister.

The reconstitution is being done on the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior. The position became vacant after the resignation of the previous head of the committee, Sarfraz Bugti.

The cabinet meeting,

chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, also approved regularisation of 227 daily-wage teachers as proposed by the Federal Directorate of Education and recommended by the Federal Public Service Commission in line with the Islamabad High Court's decision of 2018.

For the construction of the Supreme Court Karachi Registry building, the cabinet on the recom-

mendation of Ministry of Law and Justice as endorsed by the Supreme Court Building Committee, approved the transfer of federal courts and tribunals across the city.

It approved the summary regarding the operationalization of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board so as to fulfill the legal requirements for the appointment of chief executive, in line with the decisions of the

Islamabad and Balochistan high courts.

The cabinet gave in principle approval to the Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority Ordinance 2024 and forwarded it to the Cabinet Committee for Legislative Cases.

PM Kakar vowed to continue the anti-polio mission of the government till the complete eradication of the crippling disease.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Caretaker Federal Cabinet.



ISLAMABAD: Incharge Health Emergency 1122 Sindh Brig. Tariq and Health Emergency 1122 Punjab Dr. Rizwan Naseer meeting with Caretaker Health Minister Balochistan Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogejai.

Dr Amir Jogejai says Emergency training center Balochistan to enhance physical, mental abilities

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogejai said that training of emergency centres 1122 personnel in Balochistan would enhance the physical and mental abilities.

In any emergency, these trained personnel could handle any type of situation specially on road accident, he expressed these views while talking to Health Emergency 1122 Sindh In-charge Brigadier Tariq and Health Emergency 1122 Pioneer Punjab Dr. Rizwan Naseer who called on him at a local hotel in the capital.

In the meeting, the functioning of Emergency Centers 1122 in Balochistan was also discussed in detail including mutual cooperation, provision of modern

equipment, equipment and training of personnel with modern style and handling of other issues. On this occasion, it was decided that both the provinces would provide all possible support to make Emergency centres 1122 fully functional in Balochistan.

In this regard, all possible measures would be taken for the training of personnel and provision of equipment.

Speaking on this occasion, Balochistan Caretaker

Health Minister, Amir Muhammad Khan Jogejai said that training of emergency centres 1122 personnel in Balochistan would increase their physical and mental abilities and in any emergency situation, these personnel would bring improvement while dealing public by using advanced method for assistance.

Apart from this, he said steps would be taken to make the Emergency Centers in Balochistan fully functional. He said that hundreds of people were victims of road accidents in the province every year, and for their timely medical assistance and rescue, the functioning of emergency centers and training of personnel has become indispensable.



QUETTA: Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Information Jan Achakzai talking to media persons.

Comprehensive strategy being followed to address financial issues of varsities: Governor

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that we are pursuing a comprehensive strategy to resolve the financial issues being faced by all public sector universities in the province. But, it is a fact that the long-standing dream of bringing Balochistan at par in the education sector with the wholehearted assistance of government. We also have to generate new resources for reducing the expenditures and increase income at the university level.

The Governor said that the assistance and guidance of the concerned experts is being sought for shifting the electricity system of all public sector universities on solar system and bringing additional land available in the premises of universities under cultivation.

The Governor was speaking to different delegations who called on him

at the Governor House on Wednesday.

He said that at present, it is difficult task to rid the public sector universities of the financial hardships and make them economically self sufficient. However, the issues being faced by the universities would be overcome soon after creation of new resources of income generation with assistance of the government and at the university level.

The Governor stressed that we have to ensure wise use of financial arrangements and human resource to reach our destination.

He was confident that we would succeed in transferring the conventional power system on the solar in all public sector universities of the province.

While on the other hand, assistance and guidance of the concerned authorities is also being taken for bringing the additional land of the universities under cultivation, he added.

Supreme Court Justice Mazahir Naqvi resigns amid pending reference

ISLAMABAD (INP): Supreme Court Justice Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi has tendered his resignation to the President, citing the decision as a result of the challenging circumstances surrounding his position. Justice Naqvi expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve in both the Lahore High Court and the Supreme Court but stated that continuing under the current conditions is untenable.

The resignation, once approved by the President, will leave two vacancies in the Supreme Court.

It is noteworthy that a reference against Justice Mazahir Naqvi is awaiting consideration by the Supreme Judicial Council.

Recently, a 3-member Supreme Court bench dismissed a request for an injunction on the council's proceedings.

Justice Naqvi had previously submitted a detailed response to the show cause issued by the Supreme Judicial Council, denying the allegations against him. He emphasized that while the council can receive information, it lacks the authority to act on any complaint against a judge.

In his comprehensive reply, Justice Naqvi argued that the council's orders are in violation of established rules, contending that individuals providing information to the council should not play a role in the proceedings as per the rules.

Ethnic parties using issue of missing persons for elections: SC report on missing persons silences many voices including liberals, pro-Indian journalists & foreign trolls: Jan Achakzai

Caretaker Minister for Information says "report of Commission has closed the propaganda shops of many, and let's see what new logic they bring"

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that the ethnic parties are exploiting the issue of missing persons for the upcoming elections.

These ethnic parties have not only used the issue of missing persons in the past, rather they are doing the same at present, and would do so in future too.

The Minister Information denounced the propaganda being made regarding the missing persons of the province.

The Minister Informa-

tion was addressing a hurriedly called press conference at Quetta Press club on Wednesday.

The Minister Information particularly referred the statement of Baloch Yakjehtri Committee activist, Dr. Mah Rang Baloch in which she had alleged that more people have been picked up and kidnapped by authorities in Tonsa Sharif and other parts of Balochistan over the last two days.

The Minister rejected these allegations and asked her to produce any report with facts and share with the institutions as they are working and would be investigated.

Jan Achakzai said that Dr. Mah Rang must read the report of missing persons commission that was presented in the Supreme Court the other day.

He said that on orders of the Supreme Court, commission of Inquiry on enforced disappearances was instructed to submit a comprehensive report detailing all orders issued to the law enforcement agencies for the production of missing persons.

He said that the report has silenced many voices including liberals, pro-Indian journalists and foreign trolls of a political party who are always repeating the same old rhetoric.



QUETTA: A delegation led by former Federal Minister Agha Hassan Baloch meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Directs to ensure foolproof security for election candidates: Caretaker CM strongly condemns bid on life of Aslam Buledi; seeks report

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has strongly condemned the bid on life of the political leader Mir Aslam Buledi in Turbat.

In an official condemnation statement issued here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister sought report of the incident from the Home Department Balochistan.

The Chief Minister directed the concerned high

ups to ensure foolproof security for the election campaign and candidates contesting the elections.

He also directed to the concerned authorities to make the secretary measures more effective in the area. Mir Ali Mardan Domki directed to mobilize all available resources for arrest of the culprits involved in the incident.

The Chief Minister also directed to provide best treat facilities to the injured Aslam Buledi.

PTI gets back bat symbol as PHC annuls ECP decision

PESHAWAR (Online): Peshawar High Court (PHC) after hearing arguments in PTI intra-party election and election symbol case annulled the decision of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and restored the bat election symbol of PTI.

The court said that as a political party, PTI is entitled to the election symbol of the bat, and the election symbol should be given.

ECP's decision of December 22 is unconstitutional. PTI intra-party election certificate should be released on the website.

The case was heard by a two-member bench comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali of the PHC, in which the lawyers of the parties objecting to intra-party election of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) gave arguments.

PTI founder Imran Khan out of election race

LAHORE (INP): Justice Tariq Nadeem of the appellate tribunal of the Lahore High Court (LHC) Wednesday upheld the returning officer's verdict rejecting PTI founding chairman Imran Khan's nomination papers for constituency NA-122.

Imran's nomination papers were rejected from NA-122 (Lahore) and NA-89 (Mianwali) on December 30.

The verdict issued by the RO for NA-122 stated that the papers were rejected on "moral" and other grounds.

In the detailed decision, the election officer quoted the judgment of the additional session judge (Islamabad) that established the conviction of the respondent related to the offense of moral turpitude.

11 family members found dead in Lakki Marwat

LAKKI MARWAT (INP): A total of 11 bodies, including children and women have been found in a house located in the town of Takhti Khel, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Wednesday.

According to police statements, the discovery was made by the brother of the deceased household's head upon his return.

The initial investigations by the local police suggested that the unfortunate incident is believed to have happened two days ago from the consumption of a toxic substance mixed in the food.

PML-N candidate for NA-258 Aslam Buledi injured in bid on life

Independent Report QUETTA: The former Provincial Minister and candidate of PML-N for NA-258, Aslam Buledi was seriously injured by unknown armed men in main city area of Turbat on Wednesday evening.

According to the reports reaching here, Aslam Buledi was on routine walk on the main road in Turbat city when some unknown armed assailants approached and restored fire targeting him.

As a result, Buledi sustained at least two bullets on his body, he fell down on the road.

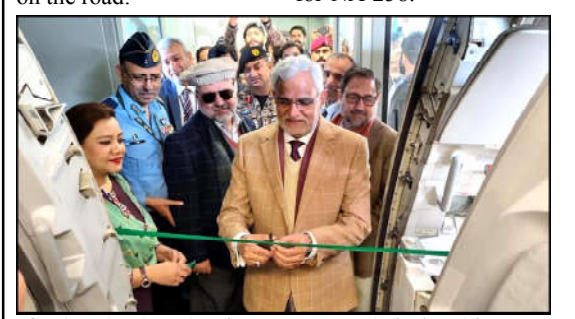
The area police and administration rushed to the spot and shifted him to the teaching hospital Turbat.

In the meantime, the armed assailants fled from the scene leaving him in the pool of blood.

He was provided immediate medical assistance and later shifted to Karachi for further treatment.

Meanwhile, search was started for arrest of the assailants. However, no arrest could be made till ours' going to the press.

Aslam Buledi had fielded his nomination papers on ticket of PML-N for NA-258.



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to PM on Aviation Air Marshal (ret'd) Farhat Hussain Khan cuts ribbon to induct A320 aircraft into PIA fleet at Islamabad International Airport.

Two candidates allowed to contest elections: BHC reserves judgment on CPs of Rubina Irfan, Shoab Nausherwani, Faiq Jamali

Independent Report

QUETTA: The division bench of Balochistan High Court (BHC) reserved the judgments on the constitutional petitions about contesting elections filed by Ms. Rubina Irfan, Shoab Nausherwani and Mir Faiq Jamali, here on Wednesday.

The division bench of the High Court comprising Mr. Justice Rozi Khan Baraich and Mr. Justice Ejaz Swati heard the election petitions against the decisions of Appellate Tribunals.

Ms. Rubina Irfan, Mir Shoab Nausherwani and Mir Faiq Jamali had challenged the decisions of Appellate Tribunals against rejection and acceptance of their nomination papers.

Meanwhile, the two-member bench of High Court allowed two candidates Salahuddin and Noorullah to contest elections against the decisions of Appellate Tribunals.

The candidates had challenged the decisions of Appellate Tribunals.

Moreover, the High Court also heard the petition of PPP's leader and candidate Mir Jamal Raisani the same day.

The division bench issued notices to both the parties and postponed hearing for Thursday (today).

It may be mentioned here that Jamal Raisani had challenged the decision of Tribunal against rejection of his nomination papers.



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Aurangzeb Badini presiding over a review meeting regarding polio campaign

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Maulana's mission

If one of the main purposes of JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's visit to Afghanistan was to convince the Afghan Taliban to rein in the banned TTP and prevent the terrorist group from using Afghan soil as a launchpad for anti-Pakistan activities, either the message did not get through, or the TTP are in no mood to listen.

The Maulana received official protocol upon his arrival in Kabul and on Monday met the 'Islamic Emirate's' Prime Minister Mullah Hassan Akhund. Incidentally, on the day the Maulana was meeting the Taliban leadership, the TTP launched a murderous assault on policemen escorting polio vaccinators in Bajaur. At least six police personnel were martyred in the attack.

Mullah Akhund also brought up the issue of Afghan migrants' expulsion from Pakistan with the Maulana, decrying the allegedly 'cruel' treatment meted out to his compatriots by this country.

Maulana Fazl, who was accompanied by a delegation, also had Pakistan's top diplomat in Kabul with him during his engagements, indicating that the JUI-F chief's visit has state sanction. According to media reports, Mullah Akhund assured the JUI-F chief that his government bore no malice towards Pakistan, while adding that they would not let Afghan soil be used against any country.

The Afghan Taliban have long denied that their country is being used by terrorist groups to target regional states, while Pakistan has firmly argued that the TTP have havens on the other side of the Durand Line.

While Maulana sahib's efforts are welcome, questions arise about how effective these will prove to be in actually bringing down militancy. It should be remembered that in 2022, a delegation of Pakistani Deobandi ulema, led by Mufti Taqi Usmani, made a similar trip to Afghanistan and met both the Afghan Taliban as well as the TTP leadership.

While the Pakistani divines were received with great reverence in Afghanistan, their visit failed to dampen the TTP's appetite for violence against this country. Even if Maulana Fazl is able to convince the Afghan Taliban that controlling militancy is in Afghanistan's interest, will Kabul's rulers be able to rein in their ideological comrades in the TTP?

At the end of the day, both the Afghan Taliban and the TTP — though bound by ideology and worldview — are two different organisations, with separate leadership structures.

For the Taliban, the marching orders are received from the Kandahar-based Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada, while the TTP has its own hierarchy. The Taliban can and should apply pressure on the TTP to stop attacking Pakistan.

But while some militants may be reverential to the clergy, ultimately they are free agents, and not bound by the usual rules of engagement. Therefore, the days ahead will tell if Maulana Fazl's mission has been a success.



Mahir Ali

Across almost six decades of investigative journalism, John Pilger unsurprisingly torchlit many of what George W. Bush described as "the darkest corners of the world", relentlessly exposing the realities edited out of the mainstream Western media's distorted narrative.

The concept of speaking truth to power may have been sullied by overuse, but Pilger stands out among those who seriously made the effort — and, in the process, made a discernible difference.

It's hard to know where to begin in evaluating his multifarious — and multimedia — contributions to reportage. I first encountered him, indirectly, in the 1980s when ITV in Britain re-broadcast some of his groundbreaking 1970s documentaries. It's hard to be sure, but most probably the first one I viewed was The Quiet Mutiny, an account of small but consequential revolts among American troops in Vietnam that invariably went unreported in the US.

This was followed by further reports on Vietnam and Cambodia, in the latter case notably a soul-shattering report on the aftermath of the depredations decreed by the Khmer Rouge, Year Zero: The Silent Death of Cambodia. As an eyewitness to the consequences of genocide, he was inevitably appalled when the US and China conspired in a cover-up only because they resented the fact that it was Vietnamese forces that had liberated Phnom Penh. Pilger, who died on the eve of 2024, was born

in Sydney in 1939 and joined the Australian city's press corps as a teenager before travelling to Europe, beginning with Italy. The Reuters news agency was his first way station in London, from where he moved on to a 20-plus year residency at the Daily Mirror, where he was elevated to the post of chief foreign correspondent.

Pilger's days at the Mirror were numbered once Robert Maxwell acquired the tabloid, but he found a potentially wider-reaching outlet at ITV, which hosted his film reports, interviews and some of his longer documentaries. Beleguared as it was in the Thatcher and Blair years, British media — or at least sections of it — stood up to the challenges from the British establishment, the US State Department and CIA, and even the Israel lobby.

Pilger latched on to the dilemma of the Israeli-occupied territories in the early 1970s, and his pair of documentaries titled Palestine is Still the Issue are separated by almost 30 years, illuminating how little has changed. Recently re-watching the second of these documentaries, I was reminded of Pilger's interview technique with subjects he probably found repulsive, notably the Israeli regime's official spokesperson: his tone never got belligerent, but his questions gave them just enough rope to expose the absurdity of their contentions.

There are some conflicts to which Pilger did not turn his attention, including Balochistan and Kashmir, which is a pity. And his area of operations as a forensic investigator across the decades stretched from South Africa, Palestine and Iraq to the cre-ation of Bangladesh and the absurdity of 'India shining', as well as Myanmar, East Timor, the US (he witnessed the assassination

of Robert F. Kennedy from metres away), Nicaragua, Venezuela, the Czechoslovak Republic and Ukraine, among other regions. His laser-focus on his native Australia related chiefly, but not exclusively, to the horrendous treatment of the colonised continent's indigenous population, and he devoted several documentaries (and thousands of words) to the subject. Not surprisingly, he also delved extensively into the woes of his adopted country, and his last documentary reflected on a subject that had bothered him for at least half a century: the creeping privatisation and spiralling neg-lect of Britain's vau-nted National Health Service.

As he would have proudly acknowledged, Pilger belonged to a long line of Western journalists who have defied the odds — often their own governments and their allies — to sift the truth from propaganda or PR, and to report what they see, notably Martha Gellhorn, Wilfred Burchett, Paul Foot, Robert Fisk and Seymour Hersh.

Pilger wasn't perfect and very occasionally succumbed to the leftist disease of glossing over the inadequacies or repressive tendencies of regimes justifiably opposed to the long arm of American imperialism. In my humble opinion, it's possible to point out the flaws of the Ortega regime 2.0 or the cruelty of the mullahocracy in Tehran without lapsing into the "Washington consensus", without losing sight of the hypocrisy that unfailingly guides the US worldview. But Pilger was at most a peripheral culprit in this sense.

He leaves behind a visual and written legacy that will serve humankind for decades, and although he wasn't alone in his endeavours, in many ways he was one of a kind. -- Courtesy Dawn

The advent of neoliberalism has been marked by the transition from an administrative state, which was previously accountable for both the economy and human welfare, to one that empowers multinational corporations. This transition implements systems and ideologies that reshape individuals into economic entrepreneurs and transfer accountability for domains such as education, healthcare, and security.

This represents more than a mere revival of liberal principles that regard self-sufficiency and independence as prerequisites for self-respect, self-esteem etc. Rather, it signifies a disregard for collective responsibility for the vulnerable and marginalised and an emphasis on enterprise and the capitalisation of existence via calculated investments and actions.

The public service institutions that initially implemented the novel modes of governmentality were educational institutions and universities. But the implementation of neoliberal policies has significantly transformed the discourse, structure, and role of education within society.

Academic institutions, including schools and universities, are undergoing significant changes to cultivate subjects who bear the responsibilities of entrepreneurs and operate in every aspect of their lives. As a result, policy currently frames and justifies education as a venue for constructing



Nazir A. Jogezei

human capital and fostering economic productivity beginning from early schooling and continuing through higher education. The underperformance of young individuals on international standardised tests, or their failure to complete secondary education, constitutes a policy issue as it imposes an economic burden on the nation. Put simply, the lack of success exhibited by young individuals in their pursuit of education is perceived as an economic issue, given that education is primarily regarded as economically significant.

A similar argument posits that public education is unproductive, excessively uni-sonic, indifferent to the needs of its students, devoid of accountability, and inadequate in fostering the development of human capital. Neoliberal strategies have included market practices such as the chartered status of failing schools in the United States and their quasi-marketisation in other countries. Public-private partnership (PPP) initiatives, such as voucher programmes, serve as a means to reduce the burden of the state in terms of public education. Lack of investment in education and indifference to the deteriorating quality of education contribute to the desire for PPP. As a consequence, an alternative approach is to propose the privatisation of public education. Within the framework of neoliberal education, institutions strive to create the illusion that they are fulfilling the expectations of their "clients". This is accomplished through various means, such as strategically prioritising exam-oriented instruction, allocating additional support to students deemed likely to perform

well on assessments, attracting academically superior students who will elevate the school's standing, and reallocating resources away from students with special needs. Critics frequently consult the works of theorists such as Foucault, who delineates the instruments of disciplinary authority as hierarchical observation, normalising judgement, and their amalgamation within a procedure known as the examination. Normalising judgement creates a consistent benchmark for every learner, whereas hierarchical observation oversees and controls conduct. Curriculum and standardised examinations employ these instruments to quantify and regulate individuals by delineating their worth in relation to a predetermined standard. This standardised approach exacerbates inequities and has adverse effects on teaching, learning, and institutional culture. It compromises inclusion in terms of identities, ideologies, ethnicity and history from the outset. Furthermore, it undermines holistic human development, erodes the capacity for critical thinking, and most significantly, transforms education into an afterthought rather than something that originates from individual and societal requirements. This mode of education also strengthens social dichotomies and empowers those in authority and the privileged. For continuous attempts to improve education, the emphasis should not be solely on its economic methods and ramifications, but rather on the broader social welfare through public ownership and the promotion of diversity and inclusion. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

EU keen to enhance cooperation with Pakistan in various fields, including trade: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the European Union H.E. Dr. Riina Kionka, Wednesday said that the EU is keen on enhancing cooperation with Pakistan and focusing on exploring more avenues of trade, and investments in multiple sectors like information technology, surgical instruments, sports business, women entrepreneurs, education and textile industry.

In an exclusive interview with a private

news channel said that the EU was continuing support to Pakistan's economic development, adding, that the bonds between the two nations are much older which is cementing with each passing day.

Answering a question about educational cooperation, she said our institutional partnerships between universities of EU and Pakistan in the field of science and technology and higher education are seeking more potential

for better outcomes, adding, that EU application for 2024 scholarships is open for Pakistani students, they can apply for different study fields through EU program and enjoy their higher full funded studies in European countries.

She said that highest number of Pakistani students have been receiving scholarships to study in European universities under the EU's flagship program this year.



MULTAN: Deputy DS Railway Saima Bashir cutting the ribbon during the opening ceremony of the inauguration of the dining sleeper of Bahauddin Zakria Express.

Commissioner directs to ensure smooth fertilizer's supply among farmers

MULTAN (APP): Local Commissioner Aamir Khattak ordered to ensure a smooth supply of fertilizers to cope with its increasing demand among farmers.

Chairing a meeting here Wednesday, he maintained not exceeding urea's prices beyond the purchasing limit of farmers. Regarding the preparation for the upcoming general election, Amir Khattak directed to requisite authority to complete all-out

arrangements to carry out the needful.

Extending 'full cooperation' to the EC body, he asked to expedite measures for marking places of polling stations by choosing the dedicated staff to conduct the poll smoothly.

He ruled out compromising on the code of conduct of the Election Commission to hold free and fair elections in the divisions across the country.

Gold rates decline by Rs.300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.300 and was sold at Rs. 216,100 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs.216,400 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 257 to Rs. 185,271 from Rs.185,528 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.169,832 from Rs.170,067 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.



Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, is presenting the commemorative shield to Dr. Jeannette Forbes, Scottish Chambers Ambassador for Pakistan. Mr. Asif Inam & Abdul Mohamin Khan, VPs FPCCI; Mr. Khurram Ijaz & Mr. Shakil Ahmed Dhingra, former VPs FPCCI and other prominent business personalities were also present on the occasion.

Minister says: EV charging stations to come up at 50 locations of Punjab province soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Transport Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad Wednesday said that Punjab was making a big push for electric vehicles in controlling environmental pollution where over 50 charging stations will soon be set up at various points of the province. Talking to a private news channel, he said that CM had issued the first E-Rickshaw license while providing over 10,000 electric bikes

will be distributed among graduate university students, adding, 2,000 electric three-wheeler bikes will also be granted to special individuals free of interest.

He said that the government's historic initiative aims to become a manufacturing hub for electric vehicles, EV batteries, and components, adding, that the electric three-wheeler market is the most ripe market right now for electrification.

SNGPL replaces 254 km outdated gas pipeline at cost of Rs 709m last year

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has replaced 254 kilometres outdated gas pipeline in last fiscal year 2022-23 at a cost of Rs 709 million to address the gas leakage complaints. Deputy Chief Engineer Operations SNGPL Multan region, Hussain Zafar, while talking to APP here on Wednesday said that the department had conducted scanning of areas

Workers' remittances record \$2.4 bn inflow in Dec

ISLAMABAD (APP): The overseas workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.4 billion during December 2023, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Wednesday said.

In terms of growth, during the month under review, remittances increased by 5.4 per cent on month on month basis and 13.4 per cent on year on year basis.

Rupee gains 10 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday witnessed an appreciation of 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs281.12 against the previous day's closing of Rs281.22. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.5 and Rs283 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 94 paise to close at Rs307.16 against the last day's closing of Rs308.10, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Business community representatives meet SM Tanveer

LAHORE: The representatives of business community of Lahore and Faisalabad met Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer, here on Wednesday.

Problems being faced by the industry were discussed during the meeting. The delegation congratulated the minister on success of United Business Group in the election of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). The minister said, "We have to solve business community problems together. By promoting the industry, the direction of the economy will be corrected. The economy will move forward only

when the wheel of the industry will move." SM Tanveer said due to efforts of the government and the hard work of farmers, production of cotton had doubled this year. The government would also achieve record production of wheat.

One-window facility had been given to investors for setting up new factories.

After Lahore, he said, Business Facilitation Centers (BFCs) were in the final stages of completion in five major cities including Faisalabad. He said the success in election of the Federal Chambers was a manifestation of confidence of the business community in the leadership of UBG.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers cutting wood into pieces for selling purpose at his workplace in the Federal Capital.

DC Khyber assures Businessmen dealing in Pak, Afghan trade of facilitation for smooth sailing of trade

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Khyber, Sanaullah Khan has said the government believes in the facilitation of businessmen and keeping in view the prevailing harsh economic situation it is need of the hour to take all possible measures for the smooth sailing of trade and commerce in the country. He expressed these views while talking with a

delegation of businessmen dealing in Pak-Afghan trade, according to a press statement issued here on Wednesday.

The delegation was led by the Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi. Other participants of the delegation included Former VP of SCCI, Engr. Manzoor Ellahi, Vice Chairman All Pakistan.

Naqvi lays foundation stone of GOR-9 project at DHA phase 9

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi laid the foundation stone of GOR-9 project at DHA Phase 9, here on Wednesday.

A total of 29 houses would be established for the officers of the Punjab government at GOR-9 and for this purpose 56 kanals of land has been allocated.

Addressing the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of GOR-9, the CM stated, "Earlier, we laid the foundation stone for the construction of residences of low ranked government employees,

and today laid the foundation stone for the construction of official residences."

The government employees have to wait for a long time in order to acquire their residences, he said. "We are striving that the officers should not have to wait for their residences" he added. Mohsin Naqvi apprised that 29 houses are going to be constructed in GOR-9. Hopefully, the residences would be built before the stipulated 15 months timeline. "We are making a consultation jointly with the Chief Secretary for

establishing one main GOR near the Mall Road so that the shortage of official residences can be fulfilled" he said. He said the problems increase manifold due to non-allocation of houses for the staff members and government officers, apprising that concrete measures would be taken with regard to shortage of residences in coming 10 to 15 days. High-Tech design smart houses are being built in GOR-9, he apprised. The problem of residences would be resolved with the establishment of GOR-9, he added.



ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad, Khalid Iqbal presiding over the polio review meeting for anti-polio campaign, in Abbottabad.

Rawalpindi police launch Pak's first regular school classes for transgenders

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a major development, the Rawalpindi police have launched regular school classes catering specifically to the transgender population of the city.

The classes, conducted at Islamia Higher Secondary School in Liaquat Bagh, have garnered support from the district administration and the Education Department.

A spokesperson for the Rawalpindi police told media on Wednesday that 52

transgender individuals had been enrolled in these special classes, emphasizing the significance of providing education as a fundamental right. This initiative is aligned with the broader efforts of the Rawalpindi police, which recently established Pakistan's inaugural Transgender Protection Center, he added. The spokesperson highlighted the multifaceted approach of the Transgender Protection Center, which extends beyond education.

1500 liter adulterated milk wasted

MULTAN (APP): A team of food watchdogs disposed of about 1500 liters of substandard milk after holding picket at one of the main external routes of the city. Team of food watchdogs disposed of about 1500 liters of substandard milk after holding picket at one of the main external routes of the city. The checking was conducted at different external and internal routes of the city early in the morning under the supervision of Director Operation South of Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Shahid Maggesi.



PESHAWAR: A representative delegation of Lecturers appointed under a Project in Government Colleges meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

Governor urged to rehabilitate lecturers appointed under projects in merged districts

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of lecturers of colleges situated in newly merged districts called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday and urged him to rehabilitate lecturers appointed under various projects.

The delegation was comprised of districts, including Kurram, Waziristan, FR Bannu, Khyber, Kohat, Mirali Dara Adam Kail, and Alizai. The governor was

informed that about 42 lecturers have been suspended by the Managing Unit Higher Education Department.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor assured cooperation to the delegation and directed the secretary of higher education and Chief Secretary to resolve the issue.

He urged lecturers to work with dedication and said that lecturers would not be removed.

Two-day book fair inaugurated at Lower Dir

PESHAWAR (APP): The District Administration, National Book Foundation, Youth Department and Town Municipal Administration jointly arranged a two-day book fair for youngsters in Lower Dir on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner, Wasil Khan and Assistant Commissioner, Dr. Nida Iqbal inaugurated the book festival that was the first event of its kind in Lower Dir.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that the event was arranged to invite attention of the youth towards benefits of book reading.

Passing out ceremony held for 96 prison staff's success

HARIPUR (APP): The Passing out ceremony was held at the Prison Staff Training Academy in Haripur on Wednesday marking the successful completion of training for 96 prison staff members.

The event encompassed foundational training for jail warders, along with advanced courses for the promotion of head warders and chief paid warders.

Inspector General (DIG) of Prisons Hazara Division, Muhammad Naem Khan, graced the occasion as the special guest. Aamir Khan, the Superintendent of Central Jail Haripur, also attended the event. Addressing the

participants of the ceremony, Academy Commandant Amin Shoaib extended heartfelt congratulations to the graduating prison staff. He provided a comprehensive overview of the academy's performance and achievements during the training period.

DIG Naem Khan while addressing the ceremony emphasized the pivotal role of training in enhancing the capabilities of prison staff and the academy's crucial contribution to this process. He assured that funds and necessary facilities would be promptly provided to further bolster the academy's training programs.

3 killed, ASI injured in encounter

FAISALABAD (APP): Three under-custody accused were killed while an Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) received multiple injuries during a police encounter in the area of Sadar police station.

Police spokesman said here on Wednesday that Sadar police had caught three accused including Akhlaq alias Akhlaq Don, Waqar alias Qari residents of Chak No. 189-RB Gidari and Shehbaz alias Moota resident of Chak No. 113-RB Badhumali few time ago over their involvement in a murder cum attempt to murder case. The police was carrying these accused for investigation and recovery of case property.

AJK PM orders for early arrest of accused of UK based local expatriate

MIRPUR (AJK): (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has taken strong notice of the recent cold-blooded murder of a young Kashmiri expatriate by unknown assailants near Islamabad international airport on his return from abroad.

The AJK premier expressed his profound grief and sorrow over this tragic incident and extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. The Prime Minister has also directed the Chief Secretary of Azad Kashmir to contact the IG Punjab Police to ensure early arrest of the absconding accused, according to an official handout issued here late Tuesday.

It may be mentioned here that the slain youth,

hailing from AJK's Dadyal town of expatriates in Mirpur district, was gunned down by unknown attackers near Islamabad international airport on his return from abroad.

The AJK premier expressed his profound grief and sorrow over this tragic incident and extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. The Prime Minister has also directed the Chief Secretary of Azad Kashmir to contact the IG Punjab Police to ensure the immediate arrest of the accused and the safety of passengers on their return from foreign countries.



LAHORE: Visitors and staff are taking interest in the pictures during exhibition at Lahore College for Women University regarding the oppression on Palestinian people.

ANF seizes 65 kg drugs in seven operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover 65 kg drugs and arrested 12 accused including four women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that 28.8 kg hashish and 1.2 kg opium were recovered from the possession of an accused netted near Chungi No. 26.

10.5 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of six accused including four women arrested near Burhan

Interchange Attock. 8 kg heroin and 2.2 kg Ice drug were recovered from two suspects near Sangjani Toll Plaza Islamabad. 8.4 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects near Bahria Town Phase 4 Islamabad.

In fifth operation, 5 kg hashish was recovered from Khar border area in Khyber. In sixth operation, 1.1 kg hashish was recovered from an area in Gilgit while in 7th operation, 175 ecstasy tablets were recovered from the possession of an accused near Labor Colony Peshawar.

International News

Maldives upgrades ties with China amid pivot from India

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China and the Maldives upgraded their relationship on Wednesday after newly elected President Mohamed Muizzu's first state visit to Beijing, following a campaign in which he cast China's regional rival India as a threat to sovereignty.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, speaking at the Great Hall of the People, called Muizzu "an old friend" as the Asian giant set the stage for further investment in the Indian Ocean archipelago by agreeing to a "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership."

"China and the Maldives' relations are facing a historic opportunity to carry forward the past

and forge ahead into the future," Xi told Muizzu, Chinese state media reported.

Muizzu took office in November, after winning on his "India Out" campaign platform under which he called New Delhi's huge influence a threat to sovereignty.

His government has since asked dozens of locally based Indian military personnel to leave while talking up opportunities for Chinese investors despite being heavily indebted to Beijing.

Relations between India and China nosedived after soldiers from both sides clashed in the western Himalayas in June 2020, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese troops.

By upgrading ties with the Maldives, China is setting the stage for further investment in a region where India has already seen another neighbour, Sri Lanka, gravitate towards China. "During the talks, President Dr Muizzu expressed gratitude for China's significant role in the Maldives' economic success... and infrastructure development," a statement from his presidential office read following the meeting, adding that "20 key agreements between the two countries" were signed.

The Maldives owes China \$1.37 billion, or around 20 per cent of its public debt, according to World Bank data, making Beijing its biggest bilateral creditor ahead of Saudi Arabia and India.



Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu and Chinese President Xi Jinping sign key agreements in Beijing, China.

Hezbollah targets Israeli base to avenge Lebanon killings

BEIRUT (INP): Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group said it targeted a command base in northern Israel on Tuesday in retaliation for the killings of one of its commanders and a Hamas leader.

Hezbollah said the attack was part of its response to the killings of top field commander Wissam Tawil on Monday and Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Aruri on January 2.

The Shiite Muslim movement, a Hamas ally, said in a statement that it had targeted the "enemy's northern command centre" in the Israeli city of Safed

with "several suicide drones".

The Israeli military confirmed that a "hostile aircraft" had crashed at one of its bases in the north, and said that "no injuries or damage were reported".

Hezbollah and its arch-foe Israel have been exchanging near-daily fire across the border since the Israel-Hamas war broke out on October 7.

Tawil—the highest-ranking Hezbollah member was killed since October 7 — was buried in his south Lebanon home village of Khirbit Silm on Tuesday.

Holy Quran desecrated in Jharkhand

RANCHI (INP): The Hinduva members desecrated and burned the pages of Holy Quran in the Indian state of Jharkhand.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the incident occurred when the Hinduva members who mostly belonged to RSS, BJP, VHP and Banjrag Dal burned the pages of the Holy Quran in a field near Fatehpur Bazar mosque in Jamtara district. The atrocious action aimed at inciting the religious tensions has been reported before the upcoming state elections.

As news of the incident quickly spread, Muslims strongly condemned the heinous act.

Pentagon reviews Secretary Austin's not disclosing his hospital stay

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Both the White House and Pentagon issued an update saying Austin "is recovering well."

Some Republicans have demanded Austin's resignation, but the Pentagon said he has no plans to step down.

Austin, 70, went to the hospital on Dec. 22 for what the Pentagon press secretary called an "elective procedure" but so serious enough that Austin temporarily transferred some of his authorities to his deputy.

about why Austin had been hospitalized for a week. Late Monday, the Pentagon issued an update saying Austin "is recovering well."

Some Republicans have demanded Austin's resignation, but the Pentagon said he has no plans to step down.

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Judges question Trump's immunity claim in poll subversion case

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A Washington appeals court questioned Donald Trump's claims that he is immune from criminal charges for trying to overturn the 2020 election, as the former US president on Tuesday warned he could prosecute Joe Biden if he returns to the White House. Trump looked on as his legal team sought to convince a panel of three judges that former presidents should not be prosecuted for actions they took in office.

Gunmen in Ecuador storm TV studio in wave of gang violence

Monitoring Desk
ECUADOR: Gunmen with explosives stormed a TV station on-air in Ecuador on Tuesday during a wave of violence around the nation that prompted President Daniel Noboa to name 22 gangs as terrorist organisations to be hunted by the military.

Police eventually rescued the TV staff and arrested the 13 men who burst into TC's studio during a live broadcast with long-range guns, grenades and dynamites, according to witnesses in the coastal city of Guayaquil.

Elsewhere in Ecuador, at least seven police officers were kidnapped and there were several explosions.

"Thank God, we are alive, because it was an extremely violent attack," said Jorge Rendon, deputy director of the news program that was interrupted.

Noboa, who took office in November promising

to stem drug-related violence, declared a 60-day state of emergency on Monday in response to prison violence — including hostage-takings of guards by inmates — and the apparent escape of Los Choneros gang leader Adolfo Macias over the weekend.

In a revised decree on Tuesday, Noboa declared nearly two dozen gangs terrorist groups, including Los Choneros.

The government has said the violence is a reaction to Noboa's plan to build a new high security prison for gang leaders.

"They have created a wave of violence to frighten the populace," said Admiral Jaime Vela, head of the joint command of the armed forces, adding that the decree made the gangs military targets. Prison transfers of gang leaders have historically led to violence, with hundreds of inmates killed in recent years.

SFJ besieges Indian consulate in San Francisco with Indira Gandhi float

Monitoring Desk
SAN FRANCISCO: Pro-Khalistan Sikh for Justice (SFJ) blocked and besieged the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, challenging India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) team visiting America with a float depicting the assassination of Indira Gandhi by Satwant Singh and Beant Singh.

Hundreds of SFJ activists took part in the blockade and the rally. The Khalistan freedom car rally marked the 35th anniversary of the martyrdom of Shaheed Satwant Singh and Shaheed Kehar Singh as it journeyed from Berkeley Marina to the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, said the SFJ.

With over 1,000 vehicles, the rally commenced at Marina Berkeley, proceeding towards the San

Francisco Indian Consulate. The participants exuded enthusiasm as they passionately chanted slogans in support of Khalistan. The Khalistan Freedom Car Rally, organized by the secessionist group SFJ ahead of the Khalistan Referendum voting on 28th January in San Francisco, serves as a stark reminder to Modi that "Violence begets violence." Simultaneously, as reported by Indian media, an NIA team is currently in the United States.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, General Counsel of SFJ, pointed out that Modi, who instigated the cycle of violence through the orchestrated assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, should be mindful of the historical response of Sikhs to the violence unleashed by the Indian state on Oct 31, 1984.



People accused of invading and taking over television station TC with weapons and forcing staff to lie and sit down, lie handcuffed on the floor in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

US, British forces shoot down 21 drones and missiles fired from Yemen

WASHINGTON (INP): American and British forces shot down 18 drones and three missiles Tuesday that were launched by Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels toward international shipping lanes in the Red Sea, the US military said.

The attack came a week after 12 nations led by the United States warned the Huthis of consequences unless they immediately halted firing on commercial vessels—

strikes the rebels say are in support of Palestinians in Gaza, where Israel is battling militant group Hamas.

"Iranian-backed Huthis launched a complex attack of Iranian designed one-way attack UAVs... anti-ship cruise missiles, and an anti-ship ballistic missile from Huthi-controlled areas of Yemen into the Southern Red Sea," the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement.

Israel in the dock as International Court of Justice takes up genocide case

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: Israel and South Africa face off at the UN's top court from Thursday, after Pretoria accused Israel of "genocidal acts" in Gaza, charges the Israelis have dismissed as "blood libel". In an 84-page submission to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), South Africa urged judges to order Israel to "immediately suspend its military operations" in Gaza. South Africa alleges that Israel "has engaged in, is engaging in, and risks further engaging in genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in Gaza". Israel has angrily hit back at the accusations, with government spokesman Eylon Levy vowing to fight the South African case he described as "absurd blood libel".

Top officials from the two countries will face off in the ICJ's Great Hall of Justice housed in the extravagant Peace Palace in The Hague.

SC maintains deaths sentence to Musharraf in high treason case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday maintained the death sentence of former president Pervez Musharraf while upholding the verdict of the special court in the high treason case.

The apex court said heirs of former president didn't pursue the case despite the repeated notices, hence the appeal was dismissed. The apex court also turned down the verdict of Lahore High Court (LHC) in which it had terminated the special court.

It noted that the special court announced the sentence to Pervez Musharraf on December 17, 2019 and he filed appeal in SC on January 16, 2020.

Petitioner's lawyer Salman Salfar informed the court that former president

passed away on February 5, 2023 and his appeal was fixed for hearing on November 10, 2023. The lawyer told the court that he had conveyed several messages to the family of ex-president to pursue the case but he received no response.

The court further said that it had served notices to the legal heirs of Pervez Musharraf at their available addresses in Pakistan and abroad. The notices were also published in the newspaper, it added.

A four-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Amin ud Din Khan and Justice Athar Minallah, heard the case. It may be mentioned that the LHC had terminated the special court after declaring it against the law.



QUETTA: Women residents of Marriabad staging a sit-in against non-provision of gas in front of SSGC office.

Privatization Commission approves structure for 51pc stake sale in PIA

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Privatization Commission Board, chaired by Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad, has greenlit the transaction structure for the sale of a 51pc stake in Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

Ernst & Young-led consortium presented the proposal, suggesting the sale of the majority stake along with the division of PIA's assets and liabilities.

Despite the government's eagerness for foreign buyers, legal hurdles have surfaced, preventing the sale of a substantial number of shares to overseas investors. Government sources reveal that at least 51pc of shares have received approval, with plans to involve a local partner once legal complications are resolved, emphasizing a sale with management control. The caretaker government's endeavors to privatize PIA face a hurdle

due to pending dues of 281 billion rupees. The matter, now approved by the board, will be presented to the Privatization Committee of the Cabinet before reaching the caretaker federal cabinet.

The advisory report, currently incomplete, lacks the valuation of PIA's assets, with a deadline set for the third week of January.

Financial advisers recommend granting the new buyer the option to terminate employees after one year, with proposals to extend this period to three years. Additionally, it is suggested to consolidate non-core assets and liabilities in a holding company, making the federal government responsible for debt and interest payments.

Financial advisers propose transferring 640 billion rupees to the new holding company.

Over Rs. 2.56b recovered from 1,50,450 defaulters as QESCO drive continues

QUETTA: The Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) has managed to recover over Rs. 2.56 billion from the defaulters of electricity bills and arrears during the campaign launched by the Company all over the province.

According to spokesman of QESCO, the amount has been collected from as many as 1,50,450 defaulters in all circles of the QESCO.

Meanwhile, the power disconnection campaign is also in full swing against the defaulters and power pilfer-

ers. The spokesman of QESCO informed that 288 more connections of electricity were disconnected during last 24 hours in different circles of the company including Quetta, Pishin, Loralai, Sibi, Khuzdar and Makran.

At the outset, over 500 FIRs have also been registered against the power pilferers in different police stations on complaint of the QESCO.

Further legal action is also being taken against those involved in the power pilferage, the spokesman informed.



HUB: Activists of Awami National Party (ANP) are holding protest demonstration against prolong sui gas and electricity load shedding and over billing.

Gilani predicts PPP's victory with heavy margin

MULTAN (APP): Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani expressed confidence that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would secure a substantial victory in the upcoming elections, attributing this anticipated success to the party's people-friendly policies. Speaking to the public and local influencers gathered at Gilani House on Wednesday, he highlighted the PPP's commitment to safeguarding the rights of the masses and providing them with maximum facilities for a more comfortable life. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani maintained, that PPP val-

ues the contributions of its dedicated workers and assured that this recognition would persist in the future.

As a democratic political party, the PPP has consistently prioritized addressing public concerns and resolving issues faced by the people. Gilani expressed optimism that, once triumphant in the upcoming elections, the PPP would live up to the expectations of the people. Additionally, the former Vice Chairman, Qasim Bela Sheikh Suhail Akbar, along with numerous associates, declared their decision to join the PPP.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick addressing a seminar on "US policies on the issues of Kashmir and Palestine" Organized by Area Study Center for Africa, North and South America, Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad.

Mushaal highlights double standards in global discourse on Kashmir & Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Wednesday highlighted the prevailing double standards in the global discourse on Kashmir and Palestine.

She was addressing a seminar on "US policies on the issues of Kashmir and Palestine", organized by Area Study Center for Africa, North and South America of the Quaid-e-Azam University.

The event, which saw participation from distinguished speakers including

Ambassador of Iran in Pakistan Reza Amiri Mughaddam, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, and Ambassador Naila Chohan, drew a significant audience comprising students, media professionals, and members of civil society.

Mushaal said the world appeared to be divided between those who supported the oppressive regimes and those who advocated for the rights of the oppressed.

In the contemporary global landscape, she added, moral values and principles took a back seat to eco-

nomic opportunities, power dynamics, and materialistic gains.

She pointed out the shifts in the United States policies towards Kashmir and Palestine, which, she said, were dictated by their own strategic interests rather than a steadfast commitment to democratic principles, human rights, and the right to self-determination.

Mentioning the escalating deterioration of the global human rights situation over time, she lamented that genocide had seemingly become an unfortunate new norm in international affairs.

German Political Counselor meets Senate's Opp Leader

ISLAMABAD (Online): Ms. Janine Rohwer, Political Counselor at the German Embassy, called on Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem, in Islamabad today.

Matters of mutual interest took center stage as the two sides deliberated on enhancing the bilateral relationship between Germany and Pakistan. Dr. Shahzad Waseem emphasized Pakistan's deep appreciation for its ties with Germany in diverse sectors.

Tribunal dismisses appeals against nomination papers of Nawaz, Maryam

LAHORE (APP): An appellate tribunal on Wednesday dismissed an appeal against acceptance of nomination papers of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif for National Assembly constituency NA-130 (Lahore). The tribunal comprising Justice Ahmad Nadeem Arshad announced the reserved verdict and upheld the decision of the returning officer. The tribunal had reserved its verdict on an appeal after hearing arguments of the parties on January 8.

Mahaz chief Advocate Ishfaq Chaudhry had filed the appeal, challenging the acceptance of Nawaz Sharif's nomination papers. He argued that the returning officer erroneously approved Nawaz Sharif's papers, contrary to factual evidence. He requested the tribunal to reject the nomination papers of Nawaz Sharif. Meanwhile, the tribunal also dismissed an appeal against acceptance of nomination papers of PML-N Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz for National Assembly constituency NA-119 (Lahore).



QUETTA: A delegation led by former Federal Minister Agha Hassan Baloch meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Four dead bodies recovered from ECP office in Kandhkot

KHANDKOT (INP): Bodies of four persons were recovered from the room of the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) office in Kandhkot, reported on Wednesday.

According to the district health officer (DHO), all four of them, who worked at the office, died due to gas leakage while they were asleep at night. Police shifted the bodies to hospital for the post-mortem.

PTI founder, Bushra Bibi not indicted in marriage case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder chairman and his wife Bushra Bibi were not charged in the alleged illegal marriage case on Wednesday due to the latter's absence.

Senior Civil Judge Qudratullah heard the case. Bushra Bibi's lawyers pleaded for a one-day immunity for not attending the hearing on medical grounds, which was accepted by the court. The case was subsequently adjourned till January 15.

Two soldiers martyred, two terrorists killed in Lakki Marwat clash

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two terrorists were killed in an exchange of firing with security forces in Lakki Marwat.

According to the ISPR, the troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which two terrorists namely Aftab Malang and Masood Shah were killed.

These terrorists remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as target killings of civilians. Weapons, ammunition and explosives

were also recovered from them. However, during intense exchange of fire, two soldiers, Sepoy Muhammad Afzal and Sepoy Ibrar Hussain having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat.

Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area as the Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Qureshi moves LHC against rejection of nomination papers

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Wednesday challenged the decision of rejection of nomination papers by the appellate tribunals in the Lahore High Court (LHC) while the party founder's legal team is preparing to move the court.

The PTI founder's team announced that it would appeal against the decision of returning officer who rejected his papers

from National Assembly constituency NA-122 which was dismissed by the appellate tribunal.

Justice Tariq Nadeem announced his decision reserved on Tuesday and upheld the verdict of the returning officer.

Meanwhile, PTI vice chairman and former foreign minister Qureshi on Wednesday challenged rejection of his nomination papers from three constituencies by a tribu-

PM for establishing global fund to ensure worldwide health security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday stressed the need to explore mechanisms for global funding that could support nations in need, ensuring that no one was left behind, in the global pursuit of health security.

"The call for a sufficiently funded, widely supported country medium-term road-map, as highlighted in the International Health Regulations Core Capacities evaluation, resonates globally. We must invest in open, transparent, and multi-sectoral processes to strengthen buy-in and commitment at all levels," the prime minister said while addressing the inaugural session of the first-ever two-day Global Health Security Summit 2024.

Highlighting the importance of enhancing coordination in the health sector beyond borders, Prime Minister Kakar said "One Health" approach, recognizing the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. "Our commitment should extend to establishing global frameworks that facilitate information sharing, joint re-

search, and collaborative strategies for an effective response during emergencies."

He stressed the need for a strong, visible, active surveillance and tiered public health laboratory system that was integral to early detection, response, and mitigation.

He also called for collaboratively working towards establishing international standards for food safety, harmonizing regulations to ensure the highest level of protection for populations worldwide.

"A cross-sectoral approach to managing antimicrobial resistance requires international collaboration," he said adding "We need a unified front against antimicrobial resistance, with coordinated efforts to develop and enforce global standards for the responsible use of antibiotics and infection prevention," he remarked.

Highlighting the need of collective response to address external and internal health challenge, he said no state in the world could meet the health challenges all alone. Likewise, he said the internal challenges posed by population growth, rapid urbanization

and climate change could not be dealt with by a country alone.

"New diseases, like COVID-19 and climate-induced incidents such as the historic floods of 2022 in Pakistan, are disrupting our citizens' health and causing social and economic impacts. While the developed world has systems in place to timely respond to such health emergencies, a similar ideal system is lacking in the developing world as health systems are relatively weak," he added.

The prime minister said the COVID-19 pandemic had taught us invaluable lessons about the importance of collaboration, preparedness, and a unified response. "It is in this spirit that we convene today, not merely as representatives of our respective countries, but as overseers of global health security."

He called for establishing a shared vision of the world where health security was not a privilege but a universal right and where the strength of a nation's health systems was measured not only by its capacity to respond to crises but also by its ability to prevent, detect, and mitigate health threats.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the Global Health Security Summit.

ECP directs authorities to provide voter info via SMS

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has instructed the relevant authorities to provide detailed information on voter registration status and constituency details for national and provincial assemblies on 8300. According to ECP spokesperson, the eligible voters can verify their registration status on the voter lists by sending their Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) number to 8300. Upon sending an SMS to 8300, an automated response will provide details, including the electoral area's name, block code, serial number, National and Provincial Assembly constituency numbers, district name, electoral region name.

Strong protest against low gas pressure, increased utility bills in Quetta

QUETTA: Strong protest was observed against the low gas pressure and increased utility bills of the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) in the metropolis on Wednesday.

The dwellers of Marriabad and adjacent areas staged protest against the issue of gas and its utility bills outside the Regional office of SSGC at Samungli road.

The protesters including women lodged protest against the issue forcefully condemning the SSGC for the issue.

They also staged sit-in in front of the SSGC office. They not only condemned the SSGC admin-

istration but also denounced the provincial government for not taking any action against the issue. The protestors were very critical of the SSGC on its failure to resolve the issue of low gas pressure in the freezing cold weather of Quetta.

They also criticized the company for sending hefty amount bills to the consumers. They condemned the slab system in the utility bills which caused additional financial burden to them.

Meanwhile, the protestors also marched from Samungli road to the High Court against the issue.

They appealed to the Chief Justice High Court to take notice of the issue.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi talking with journalists during a meeting.

Zubair Jamali takes notice of Turbat firing incident

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali has taken notice of the attack on the political leader, Aslam Buledi in Turbat. According to an official handout issued here on Wednesday, the Minister Home sought report of the firing incident from Deputy Commissioner Dehu. He also ordered to form special teams for arrest of the culprits involved in the incident.

He directed the concerned authorities to give exemplary punishment to the culprits.

KU, SBK Women's varsity Balochistan ink MoU for academic collaboration

KARACHI (APP): The University of Karachi (KU) and Sardar Bahadur Khan (SBK) Women University of Balochistan signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for academic collaboration between the two varsities of both provinces.

Vice Chancellor KU Professor Dr. Khalid Mahmood Iraqi and the VC SBK Women University Professor Dr. Sajida Naureen inked the MoU at the VC Secretariat on Wednesday. According to the MoU, the KU's departments of Education and Food Science and Technology, and Dr. A. Q. Khan Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering would facilitate the students and faculty of SBK Women University in the first phase and later other departments and centers of the University of Karachi will be included to share their knowledge and experiences with the students and faculty of SBK Women University.

The KU KIBGE and DFS&T would arrange lab training for the students of SBK Women University, and they would also be guided about the bio-safety, risk management, and on-hand training of various lab equipment. The KU and SBK Women University have also agreed to arrange webinars, seminars, and joint research, besides student and faculty exchange. On this occasion, KU Professor Dr. Khalid Mahmood Iraqi said that without increasing the literacy rate, we cannot achieve our goals. The only way for Pakistan to move forward is by investing in the education sector and without investing in it, we cannot join the ranks of developed countries. He shared that all kinds of facilities should be provided to the students studying in the backward areas of the country, especially in Balochistan. Chairpersons of the Department of Education, Professor Dr. Rizwana Munir, Professor Dr. Shahina Naz of the Department of Food Science and Technology, Professor Dr. Samina Saeed of the Department of Political Science.



LASBELLA: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Dr. Amjad Saqib, DG Abdul Jabbar, Zonal Director South Zone Balochistan Munir Jan Sasoli visiting regional office of BISP