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PM orders completion of Karachi-Chaman Highway for improved Balochistan connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq on Monday directed completion of work at the Karachi-Chaman Highway as part of improving the road network across the country. He stressed improved road infrastructure in Balochistan to ensure its connectivity with rest of the country. The prime minister emphasized an in-depth planning and utilisation of resources in formulation of a policy on the road network. Caretaker Minister for Communication Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Finance Minister Dr Shamsad Akhtar, Planning Minister Sami Saeed, NHA chairman and the officials concerned attended the meeting.

Pakistan Saudi Arabia sign annual Hajj agreement



ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed, along with Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, signed the annual Hajj agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. According to the spokesman of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed had unveiled the Hajj policy for 2024 in November 2023.

Services of Pak Army & FC to be taken for security in sensitive areas, says CM

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the preparations are continued for conducting free, fair and transparent elections in Balochistan. He said that the special measures are being taken adopted for restoring peace in the most sensitive and sensitive polling stations. The services of Pak army and Frontier Corps (FC) would be taken for security in the sensitive areas of the province. He said that the CCT cameras would be installed in the very sensitive polling stations of the province. The Election Commission of Pakistan and Balochistan government would set up control rooms to review the overall situation during the polls. The Chief Minister as-



ISLAMABAD: Chairman PPP Bilwal Bhutto Zardari talking with media persons outside Supreme Court

Come what may, general election to take place on February 8: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (inp): Ruling out the possibility of delay in the February 8 general election, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said the polls will be held on time, come what may. Talking to journalists outside the Supreme Court on Monday, the former foreign minister said: "The election will be held on February 8 [as per schedule] even if [they] get a resolution passed from the United Nations (UN). He asked the nation to prepare for the upcoming elections in the country. His remarks came days after the Senate approved a non-binding reso-

lution seeking a delay in the general elections, set to be staged next month, drawing strong criticism from mainstream political parties.

Responding to a question, Bilawal asked if the words of a few senators have more weightage than those of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa.

In November last year, the top judge had remarked: "God willing, the elections will be held on February 8."

He made the remarks during the hearing of multiple pleas seeking timely elections within 90 days of the dissolution of the assemblies.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on the matters related to National Highway Authority (NHA), in Islamabad.

SC nullifies lifetime disqualification of parliamentarians under Article 62

In boost to Nawaz and Tareen: SC issues ruling with 6-1 majority; disqualification under Article 62 capped at 5 years; Justice Afridi differs with fellow judges

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Monday nullified the lifetime disqualification of parliamentarians under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution with a 6-1 majority judgment.

The seven-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin ud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hlali had reserved the verdict on January 5, which was announced today.

The seven-page written order read: "Article 62(1)(f) is not a self-executory provision as it does not by itself specify the court of law that is to make the declaration mentioned therein nor does it provide for any procedure for making, and any period for disqualification

incurred by, such declaration.

"There is no law that provides for the procedure, process and the identification of the court of law for making the declaration mentioned in Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution and the duration of such a declaration, for the purpose of disqualification thereunder, to meet the requirements of the fundamental right to a fair trial and due process guaranteed by Article 10A of the Constitution.

"The interpretation of Article 62(1)(f) in imposing a lifetime disqualification upon a person through an implied declaration of a court of civil jurisdiction while adjudicating upon some civil rights and obligations of the parties is beyond the scope of the said Article and amounts to reading into the Constitution.

"Such reading into the Constitution is also against the principle of harmonious interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution as it abridges the fundamental right of citizens to contest elections and vote for a candidate of their choice enshrined in Article 17 of the Constitution, in the absence of reasonable restrictions imposed by law.

"Until a law is enacted to make its provisions executive, Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution stands on a similar footing as Article 62(1)(d), (e) and (g), and serves as a guideline for the voters in exercising their right to vote.

"The view taken in Sami Ullah Baloch case treating the declaration made by a court of civil jurisdiction regarding breach of certain civil rights and obligations as a declaration

mentioned in Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution and making such declaration to have a lifelong disqualifying effect amounts to reading into the Constitution and is therefore overruled.

"Section 232(2) added in the Elections Act, 2017, prescribes a period of five years for the disqualification in terms of Article 62(1)(f) and has also made such declaration subject to the due process of law. This provision is already in field, and there remains no need to examine its validity and scope in the present case.

"Syed Ali Imran, the Secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association ('SCBA'), stated that the SCBA sought to withdraw appeal filed in 2022, therefore, the said appeal and petition are dismissed as withdrawn.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki chairing a review meeting on the law and order and preparations for the general elections in the province

Balochistan cabinet approves to continue policy of upper age limit of 43 years for Govt employments

Independent Report

QUETTA: The interim cabinet of Balochistan has approved to continue upper age limit of 43 years for the government employments in the province.

The cabinet gave approval to this effect during its fifth meeting held with the caretaker Chief Minister

the meeting.

The interim cabinet discussed different important matters and made certain decisions about the same. The cabinet also gave approval to different matters. The interim cabinet was agreed on continuing the upper age limit of 43 years for getting jobs in the government departments.

Support price of wheat fixed as Rs. 4300 per 40 KG for FY 23-24:

Kabul has no intention of causing harm to Pakistan: Afghan PM

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Afghan Prime Minister Mullah Hasan Akhund on Monday reassured Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the emir of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam

statement came during a meeting with Fazl, who is leading an 11-member delegation, which touched down in Kabul on Sunday. "Islamic Emirate will not permit any threat to be posed to any country,"

lighted the crucial role of religious scholars in resolving issues and dispelling misunderstandings between Islamabad and Kabul.

Fazl was extended an invitation by the interim



Akhund was cited in a statement released by Afghan government spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid. He also high-

lighted the crucial role of religious scholars in resolving issues and dispelling misunderstandings between Islamabad and Kabul.

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Bahrain lauds Pakistan Army's counter-terrorism achievements

COAS Munir discusses military, security cooperation with Bahrain leadership

RAWALPINDI (Online): General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) is on a two days official visit to Kingdom of Bahrain.

He called upon the King, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, Crown Prince, H.R.H Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Field Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander of Bahrain Defence Forces and H.H General Shaikh Mohammad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Commander of Bahrain National Guard.

During the meetings, matters of mutual interest including bilateral military and security cooperation were discussed. The dignitaries lauded Pakistan Army's achievements in fight against terrorism and continued efforts for regional peace and stability.

COAS was also Chief Guest at the 27th Raising Day of Bahrain National Guard where he was warmly welcomed and witnessed a demonstration related to counter-terrorism training exercise.

Commander Bahrain National Guard extended his gratitude and appreciation to the Pakistan Army for providing highly professional training to the Bahrain National Guard in military and counter terrorism domains.

King of Bahrain also conferred Military Medal Order of Bahrain First Class on COAS in recognition of his significant efforts and contributions to the enhancement of bilateral ties between the two brotherly countries.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir exchanging views with Hamad Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain during meeting held in Bahrain.

Six cops martyred, 27 injured in bomb blast targeting police vehicle

BAJAUR (APP): At least six police officials were martyred and 27 wounded in a bomb explosion targeting a police vehicle in Belot Farsh area of Mamund tehsil in Bajaur district here Monday.

DPO Bajaur and Rescue 1122 spokesman told reporters that the cops were going to provide security to the polio vaccination teams when a roadside bomb exploded, killing six policemen and injuring 27 others.

The martyred cops were identified as Habib ur Rahim, resident of Inayat Killay, Munasib Khan of Tarkho, Muhammad Rauf Khan of Trakho Sera, Khan Muhammad, resident of

Mamond and Ali Rehman. The deceased and injured have been shifted to Khar hospital, where an emergency was declared.

Police said blood donation was sought by the hospital authorities for treatment of the victims. All the casualties were police personnel.

Ten of the critical injured have been shifted to Peshawar while 12 were under treatment at Bajaur Headquarters Hospital Khar.

Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Monday strongly condemned a bomb explosion near a police van in district Bajaur.



LAHORE: British High Commissioner Jane Marriot meeting with PML (N) quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

Seven-day anti-Polio campaign kicks off despite harsh weather conditions in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The seven-day anti-polio campaign was kicked off all over Balochistan province including Quetta, even despite the harsh weather conditions, on Monday.

The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan formally inaugurated the immunization campaign by administering anti-polio vaccine to the children below five years of age.

Also present on the occasion were the Coordinator Emergency Operation Center (EOC), Syed Zahid Shah, other concerned senior officials besides the representatives of World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF.

Speaking on the occasion, the Secretary Health said that the anti-polio campaign is being initiated in the province from Monday. During the campaign, over

2.59 million children would be administered the anti-polio drops for around 11000 teams have been constituted.

He said that the necessary security has been provided to the anti-polio teams during the campaign.

Meanwhile, the anti-polio teams started the polio eradication mission in the harsh weather conditions even.

According to the EOC spokesman, the anti-polio teams including females workers are reaching in the snow-hit areas of Pishin, Ziarat and Killa Saifullah to administer the anti-polio vaccine to the children.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Provincial Task Force for Eradication of Polio was held with the Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan in the chair here.

The Secretary Health, EOC Coordinator, Zahid Shah and other concerned officials were present.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

One crucial year of extraordinary achievements

Undoubtedly it was an extraordinary year of extraordinary achievements made by an extraordinary person. He is no other but the Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir who completed one year as the COAS recently. General Syed Asim Munir had taken command as COAS on November 29, 2022 at the times when Pakistan was really facing numbers of challenges, economic crisis, poor law and order condition and also the political un-stability. When we talk about the achievements during a period of just one year as Army Chief there are some of the most important goals and success which Pakistan achieve due to the efforts of General Asim Munir. During this year, under his leadership, the Pakistani armed forces and affiliated institutions tirelessly worked to make the country successful on every front. When General Asim Munir assumed command, the country was politically and economically vulnerable. There were fears that it might default in few days, leading to upheaval in the military. Things got to a point where rumors began to circulate about Pakistan's nuclear assets falling into the wrong hands. All in all, the entire country was gripped by a strong grip of panic and uncertainty. It was during those days that General Asim Munir stepped to the front with a determined resolve. The tenacity with which he steered the military towards pulling the country out of these challenges should be appreciated. He initiated steps to improve the economic and military aspects of Pakistan all the while focusing on a vision that aimed at the betterment of the nation.

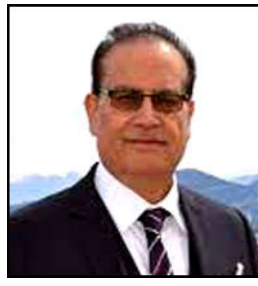
Taking command during a crucial time, he recognized the necessity of the IMF program for the country. General Asim Munir engaged with strategic allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, ensuring them of credible progress during their diplomatic visits and managed to secure a \$3 billion deposit. This Saudi and Emirati injection of confidence, in turn, paved the way for Pakistan to enter the IMF program. Following this, a special Investment Council was established, based on General Asim Munir's vision, aiming to provide protection for investments within the country. As per the vision, this could only be achieved if all obstacles hindering economic stability were removed and steps taken to control inflation. General Asim Munir's personal efforts within the business community instilled confidence in the nation's progress. The Investment Council's long-term program for foreign investment includes the significant involvement of the COAS. Saudi Arabia acknowledged the success of General Asim Munir's efforts, pledging a \$25 billion fund solely for Pakistan. The UAE is also working on a \$20 to \$22 billion investment program. Meanwhile, chatter on the street celebrated that China's investment in Pakistan is evident. After General Asim Munir took charge, he revived projects under the CPEC. Some questioned the inclusion of the Army Chief in the Investment Council, but it should be remembered that going beyond its traditional role, the Pakistani military has played a crucial hand in bringing foreign investment, especially in projects requiring security clearance.

The military's support is vital for investment, and General Asim Munir's inclusion in this forum has provided credibility. Pakistan's deep-rooted relations with these countries and past experiences demonstrate that the military has played a significant role in enhancing ties when civilian leadership fell short.

5-Strategic Communications to derail elections...

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



The interim government has orchestrated a coordinated effort to obstruct or delay the impending elections through a multifaceted strategic communication strategy. This intricate approach, executed subtly, revolves around five pivotal narratives: prioritizing financial and economic stability over electoral processes, justifying the interim government's continuity citing security concerns, leveraging adverse weather conditions to advocate for postponement, associating the pursuit of justice for the 9th May incident with election timing, and crucially, emphasizing that aggrieved parties won't accept election outcomes, potentially plunging the country into chaos. This narrative underscores the rationale for postponing elections until all parties consent to accept the election results, portraying it as a crucial step towards averting potential unrest and chaos.

From a Public Relations perspective, each narrative serves as a strategic tool to shift focus away from the electoral process, weaving a complex web of reasoning to legitimize the government's intent to circumvent or postpone the elections in favor of its continuation.

Communication Strategy 1 begins by addressing the severity of the financial and economic situation in Pakistan. Emphasize the challenges, such as debt burden, inflation, and economic instability, impacting the daily lives of citizens. Stress the crucial need for stability to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the nation.

Present a bleak picture of what might happen without immediate corrective measures. Illustrate the interim government's proactive steps and policies taken to stabilize the economy. Highlight achievements and ongoing efforts to mitigate the crisis, emphasizing that they are promising but need time to yield positive results. Frame it as a sacrifice for a stable and prosperous future. Emphasizing the need for unity and cooperation, suggesting that delaying elections is a collective decision for the greater benefit of Pakistan.

Leveraging Communication Channels by utilizing television, radio, newspapers, and social media to disseminate the message widely and consistently. Arrange speeches by influential figures to reinforce the narrative of financial emergency and the necessity of stability. Using Slogan: "Ensuring Stability, Securing Tomorrow: Let Our Economy Flourish First!" Visual Imagery: Infographics, charts showing economic indicators improving, visuals depicting stability leading to prosperity.

The SC campaign-2 begins by prioritizing citizens' safety above electoral processes, emphasizing the broader regional implications of Pakistan's security situation. The postponement of elections is positioned as a measure to safeguard citizens' lives, reinforcing that public safety remains paramount. Continuous engagement through regular updates and open dialogues with stakeholders, including security forces and international partners to ensure transparency, address concerns, and gather support for this crucial strategy.

Various media platforms are used extensively—television, radio, newspapers, and social media—to disseminate a consistent message about the critical need for stability.

Key influential figures are engaged to deliver speeches reinforcing the narrative. Visual aids, including infographics showcasing pressing security challenges. It vividly depicts Pakistan's volatile security landscape, emphasizing the gravity of significant domestic, regional, and international security threats with the slogan "Terrorism and Instability." The campaign advocates for a "Security First Approach," stressing that conducting elections amid such turmoil risks citizen safety and democratic integrity. It aims to showcase the interim government's unwavering commitment to national security, highlighting ongoing efforts to combat terrorism and restore stability.

Strategic Communication-3. The Campaign Title: "Prioritizing Public Safety: Postponement Due to Severe Weather Conditions". The Key Message: "Postponing Elections for Public Safety Amid Harsh Winter Weather". Illustrating the severity of the ongoing winter weather across the country, emphasizing its adverse impact on public safety and accessibility to polling stations. Emphasize that the extreme weather conditions will deprive a significant portion of the population from exercising their fundamental right to vote. Frame the decision to postpone elections as a necessary step to prioritize the safety and well-being of citizens. Highlight the dangers posed by severe weather, such as transportation hazards, potential accidents, and health risks, making it unsafe for citizens to travel to polling stations. Emphasize the government's duty to ensure citizens' safety and well-being above all else. Position the postponement as a temporary delay, ensuring that citizens will have the opportunity to exercise their

voting rights when weather conditions improve. To achieve the results, utilize television, radio, newspapers, and social media to ensure a consistent and clear message about the weather-related challenges and the decision's necessity for public safety. Keep the public informed about weather improvements and any developments regarding rescheduling elections. Sample Slogan: "Safety First: Weathering the Storm for a Fair Election Tomorrow!". Visual Imagery: Visuals portraying harsh winter weather conditions, safety precautions, and images illustrating citizens' difficulties in reaching polling stations.

Strategic Communication-4 begins with the campaign to delay elections until the culprits of the 9th May incident are brought to justice. Campaign Title: "Justice Before Democracy: Holding Accountable the Culprits of 9th May". Key Message: "Postponing Elections for Justice: Prioritizing Accountability and National Reconciliation". Communication Strategy: Shedding light on the significance of addressing the unresolved 9th May incident, emphasizing its impact on national reconciliation and stability. Appeal to the public sentiment for accountability, stressing that bringing culprits to justice is crucial for healing and moving forward as a nation. Frame the resolution of the 9th May incident as a pre-condition for holding fair and transparent elections. Highlight that accountability fosters national unity and reconciliation, laying the groundwork for a stronger democratic future. Utilize various media platforms, arrange speeches by influential figures, keep the public informed about progress made in addressing the 9th May incident, showcasing steps taken towards accountability. Sample Slogan: "Justice Prevails: Ensuring Ac-

countability for a Stronger Democracy. Visual Imagery: Visuals depicting the pursuit of justice, accountability processes, and images illustrating national unity and reconciliation.

Communication Strategy-5 Title: "Ensuring Fairness: Postponing Elections for Inclusive Resolution". Key Message: "Postponing Elections to Address Fairness Concerns: Prioritizing National Unity and Trust in the Democratic Process". It begins with acknowledging concerns raised by political parties, particularly PTI, regarding fairness and transparency in the election process. Emphasize the necessity of creating an environment where all parties accept the election results to prevent post-election chaos. Position postponement as a means to ensure a more stable and consensus-driven electoral outcome. Leveraging Communication Channels Television, radio, newspapers, and social media—to communicate the rationale behind postponement and the commitment to fairness. Arrange discussions and forums for direct engagement with political parties to address concerns and seek collaborative solutions. Ensuring that decisions regarding the electoral process are made in the best interest of the nation. Sample Slogan: "Fairness Unites: Postponing for an Inclusive Electoral Process". Visual Imagery: Graphics symbolizing fairness, inclusivity, and unity among political parties, aiming for a harmonious electoral process.

These five strategies, while aimed at achieving certain objectives, raise concerns about their alignment with constitutional principles. It's evident that our nation, already fragile, cannot endure another constitutional disruption, as any illegal actions to achieve these goals could result in dire consequences. Despite our history marked by martial laws and setbacks, there's

a recurring pattern where powerful forces often achieve their objectives by disregarding, manipulating, or violating the constitution without facing consequences.

The constitution provides for holding provincial assembly elections within 90 days of dissolution, yet despite court orders in September 2023, elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces were delayed with total impunity. The absence of fresh elections since the National Assembly's dissolution in April 2023 raises questions about adherence to reasonable timeframes implied by constitutional provisions. Legal experts have raised concerns about the interim government's decisions, suggesting they might overstep constitutional limitations. Issues surrounding the independence of the judiciary and media under the interim setup add complexity to the situation. The Supreme Court and the interim government are going to face off once again on the question of holding elections on 8th February.

The nation is keeping its fingers crossed. It's critical to emphasize the importance of upholding the rule of law and respecting the decisions made by the Supreme Court. In any democratic society, institutions must function independently within their prescribed roles. If there's a disagreement or concern about a decision, the appropriate and lawful approach is to address it through legal channels, such as filing appeals or presenting arguments in court that adhere to the legal framework and the constitution. Attempting to circumvent or undermine the decisions of the Supreme Court through illegal or unconstitutional means can have severe consequences, not just for the democratic process but also for the stability and credibility of the country's institutions.

Commerce News

Govt to ensure uninterrupted power supply to Karachi: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that the government, in collaboration with the K-Electric, would ensure an uninterrupted power supply to Karachi to meet its needs.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a K-Electric delegation headed by Chief Executive Officer Moonis Abdullah Alvi,

instructed the Ministry of Energy to address the issues confronting the company through mutual consultation. He said policies should be formulated considering the purchasing power of the electricity consumers as well as their welfare.

The delegation members thanked the prime minister for resolving the longstanding issues faced by the K-Electric and for the approval of

Rs 390 billion investment plan for the company, tariff for renewable energy projects of 640 megawatts, and the provision of an additional 1000 MW of electricity. They viewed that such initiatives by the government had given a positive message to the investors.

In the meeting, the prime minister was briefed about different matters of the K-Electric. The

delegation also included K-Electric Chief Finance Officer Muhammad Aamir Ghaziani and Regulatory Officer Imran Qureshi. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Energy Minister Muhammad Ali, Chairman of National Electric Power Regulatory Authority Wasim Mukhtar, Chief Executive Officer of Central Power Purchasing Agency Rehan Akhtar, and other senior officers.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meeting with a delegation of K-Electric.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hassan Fawad chaired a consultative session with Financial Advisors for divestment of PIACL.

FPCCI invites Chinese investors for investment, JVs in local businesses

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has invited Chinese investors from different sectors of the economy for investment and Joint Ventures in local businesses. It is the right time for Chinese investors to earn lucrative returns on their investments in Pakistan and FPCCI assures to connect the Chinese investors with the right partners in Pakistan for joint ventures, this was stated by Mr. Karim Aziz Malik Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office while meeting Chinese investors delegation, said a press

release issued here. The Chinese investors visited FPCCI Capital Office under the leadership of Mr. Zhang Yang, Director Chongjiang Federation of Investment and Commerce and Chairman of Chang Jiang Management Company. On this occasion, Ashfaq Ahmed, Vice President and Chairman of the Coordination Capital Office Malik Sohail Hussain, Tariq Sadiq, and others were also present. Addressing the delegation, Mr. Karim Aziz Malik further said that Pakistan provides attractive incentives and liberal policies for investment in all sectors of the economy for

foreign and local investors. These incentives are available in special schemes and in traditional as well as non-traditional sectors of the economy which offer great opportunities to the business community to invest in the country and to have maximum profit on their investments, he said. Mr. Karim Aziz Malik briefed the delegation that Pakistan's top exportable items include textile made-up, cotton, knitted and non-knitted apparel, Rice, Pink Salt, Plastic Articles, Leather Articles, Automobiles, Mining, Gems Stones, Among many others.

Pakistan's cotton export to China crosses \$617 million in 2023

ISLAMABAD (Online): Experts in Pakistani cotton expressed optimism about the growth of the country's cotton sector and yarn exports to China and other countries, which are rising annually despite floods and other challenges.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, sources said that as per the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC), China imported more than \$617.62 million worth of cotton yarn from Pakistan in the first eleven months of 2023.

Uncombed single cotton yarn containing 85% or above, (commodity code 52051200) crossed \$ 414.70 million from

January – November of 2023.

Data further showed that cotton yarn (commodity code 52051100) crossed \$195.097 million in the first eleven months of 2023, while last year in the same period it was \$106.76 million. Uncombed cabled cotton yarn (commodity code 52053200) crossed \$5.27 million from January to November 2023.

In the first eleven months of 2023, more than 237964.907 tons of cotton yarn in the top three items were imported from Pakistan. Sajjad Mazahir, General Manager of China Operations Keywin Trading Ltd.



ISLAMABAD: A florist is sparing water on the flowers for preserving their freshness, F-6 Flower Market in Federal.

First standardized quality test for 75,000 IT graduates to be conducted on Jan, 15: Minister

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Information Technology, Dr Umar Saif, has said that the first standardized quality test for the 75,000 information technology graduates will be conducted on January 15.

In an interview with a private TV channel, Dr Saif highlighted significant decisions made to revamp IT education in collaboration with various entities, including HEC, the National Computing Accreditation Council, the

Examination Testing Council, the Pakistan Software Export Board, and the Pakistan Software Houses Association.

Dr. Saif said students who successfully pass the test will be offered job opportunities through the Industry Placement Program.

He added that funds will be allocated to support special industry courses in universities, aiming to prepare students for current industry trends and needs.

He explained that the National Computing Accreditation Council will consider the pass rate of students to determine a university's rating and the permissible enrollment of IT students.

Emphasizing the importance of aligning educational institutions with industry requirements, he stressed the need for facilitating industry-specific training to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical industry needs.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Ananya Naree, Seapower-I and Oriental Jasmine scheduled to load/offload Rice, Wheat and Chemicals, berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Grain Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile four more ships, MSC Jemima, MSC Antigua, Yihai and Flex Volunteer also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours to load/offload Containers, Palm Kernel and LNG respectively.

SNGPL imposes fines of Rs 3.47m for illegal gas use

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has undertaken a robust campaign against gas theft, resulting in the imposition of fines totalling Rs 3.47 million and the disconnection of 347 unauthorized connections. The spokesperson for SNGPL said that the regional team's actions included disconnecting 13 connections due to the illegal use of gas and 23

connections for the use of compressors.

In Rawalpindi and Islamabad, 98 connections were severed due to the illegal use of gas, leading to fines amounting to Rs 0.30 million in gas theft cases. The city of Multan witnessed 25 connections being disconnected for the illegal use of gas, with an additional 25 connections cut off for the use of compressors, resulting in fines totalling Rs 0.050 million.

GB to host 'winter sports festival' from January 15: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Gilgit Baltistan's Minister of Planning and Development Raja Nasir Ali Khan Monday said that the snow-covered GB region to host a seven-day long 'Winter sports festival' from January 15 to 25 to draw millions of local and foreign tourists where more than fifty-two teams including 12 female athletes will participate in the event.

Talking to the PTV news channel, the minister of GB said that the event aims to showcase the region's beauty and highlight the soft image of Pakistan around the world, adding, that Gilgit-Baltistan has also

inaugurated 'the Ice Hockey Championship' in the winter sports festival this year.

He said the potential of Gilgit-Baltistan will host major international events, including the Asian Games and the 2026 Olympics, showcasing Pakistan positively on the global stage.

He said these winter sports have historically remained popular across GB, like ice skating, Skiing etc. Replying to a question, he said hundreds of athletes from different ten districts would take part in the seven-day event, adding, they would be competing in skating, ice hockey, and ice curling.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Caretaker CM KPK for Housing Muhammad Ashfaq Khan bring briefed regarding Housing Department.

PFA DG inaugurates 'Eat safe food campaign'

LAHORE: Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Director General Muhammad Asim Javid inaugurated the 'Eat Safe Food Campaign' intending to improve the food quality at dhabas and food stalls.

In the first phase, Lahore's 15 markets have been selected for this campaign and it is to be extended very soon across Punjab. Hygiene training will be given to small food points workers without charging any fee while medical screening of all food handlers and other workers will also be done.

The PFA DG expressed these views while talking to the media on the occasion of

inaugurating the campaign at Shadman Market. He said that this initiative of PFA will help improve the diet and health of the common man.

He said that initially the campaign was started from 15 different markets of the provincial metropolis including Barkat Market, Taxili Gate, G1 Market, Chauburji, Regal Chowk, Shadman Market, Food Street Old Anarkali, Food Street Shahi Qila, Kareem Block, Gawalmandi Food Street, Lakshmi Chowk, Liberty Market, Moon Market Iqbal Town, Moon Market Gulshan Ravi, Neela Gumbad Anarkali markets.



PESHAWAR: A delegation led by Malik Noshad meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

CM inspects Ring Road project, orders timely completion

Also orders to complete Manawan Cancer Hospital this month

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi conducted a site visit to the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 Project here on Monday.

Inspecting the 8 km long project on Maraka Multan Road, Naqvi provided necessary directives for the project's prompt completion. Expressing optimism, he highlighted that the Ring Road Southern Loop 3's conclusion would enhance transportation facilities for the public, with the

anticipated completion date set for January 31.

During the visit, the chief minister emphasized the adherence to high standards in executing the project. Addressing concerns, he instructed the Commissioner Lahore to expedite matters with LESCO (Lahore Electric Supply Company). Frontier Works Organization (FWO) officials briefed the CM on the project's progress. Speaking to the media after the inspection, the chief minister acknowledged

weather-related challenges affecting the project's timeline. He cited dehumidification as a time-consuming process, causing work delays. Despite these hurdles, he assured continuous efforts for timely project completion, emphasizing round-the-clock monitoring by provincial ministers and designated teams. Naqvi expressed confidence in the future government's ability to surpass current accomplishments. Touching on challenges in

the CBD project, he mentioned an ongoing meeting to address concerns. Naqvi concluded by stressing the government's commitment to maintaining quality work, irrespective of criticism.

He emphasized the Election Commission's role in making security decisions. Regarding security, both the chief minister and the Governor provide feedback to the Election Commission, particularly in light of recent security issues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

CM removes CEO CBD for slow work on project

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday removed the CEO Central Business District (CBD) for showing slowness in the CBD project.

The Chief Minister Punjab visited CBD and expressed his deep displeasure over the delay in the CBD project and removed the CEO CBD Imran Amin from the position.

According to sources, Secretary Housing Sajid Zafar Dal has been given additional charge of CBD.

AJK Court suspends press club elections

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Additional District and session Judge Muzaffarabad on Monday suspended elections of Central Press Club (CPC) conducted on Sunday in violation of the court's earlier order under petition filed by Farooq Khan Mughal, member CPC versus Raja Ifikhar Ahmad and others and summoned the respondents in person on Wednesday in contempt of court. The District and session Judge on Saturday had issued a stay order against the election on the plea of petitioner till

Monday, but the respondent conducted fake elections on Sunday and arranged a swear in ceremony of the so called elected office bearers at midnight.

The petitioner contended in his main application that he was a candidate for the presidential election and outgoing president who was also in the run for the next tenure deleted his and his nominator and second's name from the voter list at the last moment in a bid to keep them away from the electoral process.

Cop martyred, three injured in firing in judicial complex

PESHAWAR (APP): A cop embraced martyrdom and three persons sustained injuries in an incident of firing outside the Anti-Terrorism Court, within the judicial complex.

The attacker in the disguise of a lawyer opened fire at his opponent group Malik Lal Sher, and a policeman sustained critical bullet wounds and succumbed to injuries at the hospital, confirmed the police. The police managed the apprehend the attacker and shifted him to the Anti-Terrorism Police.

CS orders for effective axle load management system

LAHORE: Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman on Monday directed the transport department to make the axle load management system more effective in the province.

He gave this directive while presiding over a meeting at the Civil Secretariat. The meeting decided that the toll tax on all roads would be collected online to ensure transparency. The chief secretary said that axle load management was being successfully implemented

on 1700 kilometers of highways in the province and permanent weigh stations had been established at nine places in the province for checking freight vehicles. He said that as per law, an action was being taken against vehicles for overloading.

The chief secretary said that roads built at a cost of billions of rupees were damaged due to non-implementation of axle load laws, adding that accidents and damage to roads could be avoided through axle load management.



HYDERABAD: DHO Lala Jaffar Worker administering polio drops to a child during anti-polio campaign at Bhitai hospital.

South Punjab hospital upgradation in progress with rapid pace: ACS

MULTAN (APP): 1.107 billion rupees have been allocated for upgrading Bahawalpur Victoria Hospital.

Capt. Saqib Zafar emphasized the urgency of completing the work by February 28 while maintaining a high standard of construction. Earlier, he inspected various sections of hospital, including the Outpatient Department (OPD), Emergency, different blocks, wards, operation theaters, and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Present during the inspection were Secretary Specialized Health South Punjab Afzal Nasir Khan, Additional Secretary C&W Ghulam Yasin, Medical Superintendent Dr. Aamir Bukhari, SE Buildings Anwar Adil, and XEN Arshad Nadeem.

Monday a comprehensive upgradation of all major hospitals across the province was going on at a rapid pace. During an inspection at Bahawal Victoria Hospital, Bahawalpur, Capt. Saqib Zafar outlined the ambitious project, detailing the construction of new floors, doors, windows, and ceilings. He said the initiative involves a complete overhaul of electrical and plumbing systems to enhance facilities. The plan is being extended to all major hospitals in South Punjab, he added. Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar said a substantial sum of

International News

Western allies seek rapid end to Gaza war as Israel presses on

ABU DHABI: The United States and its allies in the Group of Seven are seeking a quick way out of the military phase of the Gaza conflict, Italy said on Monday, as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his EU and German counterparts toured the region.

Blinken was holding talks on Gaza in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on Monday before heading on to Israel, aiming to kick start concerted peace efforts that he says are needed to avoid a wider conflagration.

He began a five-day Middle East diplomatic ef-

fort in Jordan and Qatar on Sunday, his fourth visit to the region since deadly Oct. 7 attacks on Israel by Hamas militants in Gaza sparked a massive Israeli assault that shows no signs of ending.

Other Iranian-backed militant groups have weighed in, attacking Israeli forces on the border with Lebanon, U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria and commercial ships in the Red Sea. Israel has also cracked down on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

Germany's foreign minister Annalena Baerbock was in Israel on Monday and the European Union's

top diplomat Josep Borrell was in Lebanon in a sign of international concern.

"G7 countries are working with the Israeli government to find a rapid way out of the military phase," the Italian Foreign Ministry quoted minister Antonio Tajani as saying as Italy began its one-year presidency of the Group of Seven.

An Israeli strike on south Lebanon on Monday killed a senior commander in Hezbollah's elite Radwan force, three security sources told Reuters, the latest in daily clashes across Israel's northern border.



Protesters at the 'All Denmark on the Streets for Palestine Ceasefire Now!' demonstration march from Frederiksberg City Hall to Copenhagen City Hall.

Four killed in combined Russian air strike on Ukraine

KYIV: Russia sent dozens of missiles across Ukraine early on Monday, killing at least four civilians and hitting residential areas and commercial sites in its latest combined air attack, Ukrainian authorities said.

Two people were killed in the western Khmelnytskyi region, local officials reported, where critical infrastructure had also been struck.

ment buildings damaged after nine Russian missiles hit the south central city, said Oleksandr Vilkul, the mayor. "The mad enemy once again struck civilians," regional governor Serhiy Lysak wrote on the Telegram messaging app. "Directed missiles at people."

Russia said it hit military-industrial targets in Ukraine from sea and air on Monday. "This morning, a multiple attack was carried out with high-precision, long-range, sea and air-based weapons, including the Kinzhal hypersonic missile system.

Mass killer Breivik sues Norway in bid to end prison isolation

OSLO: Anders Behring Breivik, the far-right fanatic who killed 77 people in a bombing and shooting rampage in Norway in 2011, will ask a court on Monday to end his isolation in prison, saying it violates his human rights.

The 44-year-old, who emailed out copies of a manifesto before his attacks setting out his theories, is also suing the state in a bid to lift restrictions on his correspondence with the outside world.

Breivik killed eight people with a car bomb in Oslo then gunned down 69 others, most of them teenagers, at a Labour Party youth camp in Norway's worst peacetime atrocity.

His case has been a grim test for a country that is still shaken to its core by the horror of his acts but has also long taken pride in the rehabilitation efforts of its justice system. Breivik spends his time in a section of Ringerike high-security prison, 70km (40 miles).

Jordan presses US on Gaza ceasefire

AMMAN: Jordan's king on Sunday urged the top US diplomat to push for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and end the humanitarian crisis brought by three months of war.

King Abdullah II made the remarks to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is on a Middle East tour aiming to ensure Israel's war on Gaza does not spread.

He told Mr Blinken that Washington had a major role to play in pressuring Israel into an immediate ceasefire, and warned of the "catastrophic repercussions"

EU Council President Michel says to step down in July

BRUSSELS: Belgian politician Charles Michel has announced he will step down as European Council president after running in the European Parliament elections set for June.

The surprise move will heighten speculation about who will be the next EU leader as negotiations begin for a new round of top jobs in November.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen of Germany, who like Michel was appointed to her post in 2019, has so far kept quiet on whether she intends to seek a second term.

Fire leaves 7,000 Rohingya homeless in Bangladesh camp

DHAKA: A fire swept through a Rohingya refugee camp in southeastern Bangladesh in the early hours of Sunday, destroying about 800 shelters and rendering thousands homeless, officials said.

Fire service officials and Rohingya volunteers brought the blaze under control around three hours after it hit Camp 5 in Cox's Bazar, a border district with Myanmar, shortly before 1am.

US fighters to fly over Bosnia

SARAJEVO: Two F-16 fighter jets will fly over Bosnia on Monday to underline US support for its territorial integrity against "secessionist activity" by Serbs at odds with the country's 1990s Dayton peace accords, the US embassy in Sarajevo said.

The overflight will be part of bilateral air-to-ground training conducted along with Bosnia's national armed forces in areas of the Balkan country's north not controlled by Serbs, the US Embassy in Sarajevo said in a statement.

Macron moves to name new prime minister in govt reshuffle

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron could choose a new prime minister as soon as Monday, according to his entourage, as he seeks a new look for a widely criticised government.

The position of Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne has been tenuous ever since an immigration bill pushed by Macron was voted down in parliament last month. It was finally passed with many controversial changes imposed by the centre-right opposition.

Macron, who is also facing a growing challenge from the far-right National Rally of Marine Le Pen, met with Borne Sunday night. His office said the discussion centred on flooding in northern France and a looming freeze across the country, but observers said they likely discussed a widely-predicted cabinet reshuffle. Francois Bayrou, a centrist leader whose early

endorsement of Macron was key to his initial 2017 election success, told BFM television that "a change is necessary" in the government make-up.

Under the French system, the president sets general policies, but the prime minister is responsible for day-to-day government management, meaning they often pay the price when an administration runs into turbulence.

In 20 months as prime minister, the 62-year-old Borne—France's second female head of government—has pushed through key reforms on pensions and immigration in some 30 new laws and has overcome previous doubts about her future.

But Macron has over the past week consulted with key figures including Bayrou, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, and former prime minister Edouard Philippe about reintegrating the administration.

Al Jazeera says two Gaza journalists killed in Israeli strike

GAZA STRIP: Al Jazeera said on Sunday two of its Palestinian journalists in the Gaza Strip were killed in an Israeli strike on their car, in what the Qatar-based media network claimed was a "targeted killing".

Hamza Wael Dahdouh and Mustafa Thuria, who also worked as a video stringer for AFP and other news organisations, were killed while they were "on their way to carry out their duty" for the channel in the Gaza Strip, the network said.

A third freelance journalist travelling with them, Hazem Rajab, was seriously injured. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza also confirmed the deaths and blamed an Israeli strike. Witnesses told AFP that two rockets were fired at the car — one hit the front

of the vehicle and the other hit Hamza who was sitting next to the driver.

"We later found the body parts (of those in the car). The ambulance then came and carried those who were in the car," a witness, who declined to give his name for security reasons, told AFP.

The Israeli army told AFP that it had "struck a terrorist who operated an aircraft that posed a threat to IDF troops", adding that it was "aware of the reports that during the strike, two other suspects who were in the same vehicle as the terrorist were also hit".

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the journalists' deaths were an "unimaginable tragedy". "And that's also been the case for... far too many innocent Palestinian men, women and children."

Who is responsible for execution of Bhutto among SC, prosecution and martial law: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked who is responsible for execution of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto among Supreme Court (SC), prosecution and martial law administrator. He further remarked where there is politics in case and there is no justice then the court should hear it again.

He remarked there was martial law at that time and a former Prime Minister (PM) was executed. Work hard and tell us as to why this court cannot reopen the remaining cases. President should also send the references of the remaining cases. There is an interview of a judge in this case. Some other thing will be there in the remaining cases.

The CJP gave these remarks while presiding over 9-member larger bench of SC during the hearing of presidential reference on Bhutto judicial murder case Monday.

During the hearing of the case Ahmad Raza Kasuri came on the rostrum.

The CJP prevented Ahmad Raza Kasuri from talking saying sit down on your seat. Let the amicus curiae complete his talk first. If you have any ob-

jection on his any thing then give us in writing.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah inquired what is legal question before us. Should we review the SC decision on the basis of one interview and give opinion. Should the court hold inquiry on the basis of an interview. Interview was of one judge while other judges were also in the bench.

He further remarked should we call the people related to interview and start inquiry.

We cannot say that such had happened after seeing the video of an interview. The court can give its opinion only on legal questions under article 186.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked tell this also that what legal question has been asked in Bhutto reference.

Amicus curiae Makhdoom Ali Khan said death punishment was awarded to Bhutto with 4:3 ratio. Later one judge said he gave decision under pressure.

He read out letter of Sharif ud Din Pirzada wherein it was written sister of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had filed mercy appeal before the president. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto himself had not filed mercy appeal.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a review meeting regarding Afghan Transit Trade and Anti-Smuggling operations.

PM directs LEAs to accelerate efforts to eradicate smuggling

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday directed the relevant law enforcement agencies, including the Frontier Corps, Pakistan Customs and district administrations to expedite their efforts to completely curb smuggling.

He observed that with the establishment of special economic zones and industries in the border areas of the country, provision of alternate livelihood opportunities to the inhabitants should be ensured.

The caretaker prime minister chaired a review meeting regarding the Afghan Transit Trade and anti-smuggling operations which was attended by Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar, chief secretaries of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, inspectors general of Frontier Corps (FC), federal secretaries and other relevant senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

A report over the Afghan Transit Trade and curbing of smuggling was presented in the meeting.

The meeting was also informed about the performance of Pakistan Customs, FC, district administrations and National Logistic Corporation (NLC) in the border areas. All these

agencies had been working to curb smuggling at the border areas which led to saving of national exchequer from the huge damage caused by the millions of tonnes smuggling of illegal goods.

The caretaker prime minister directed for formulation of a comprehensive mechanism for provision of employment opportunities to the local people through social safety and imparting of skill sets.

He also directed the Ministry of Trade to ensure strict monitoring of the transit trade and apprise the relevant authorities about the trends over export of goods.

He also expressed the resolve to end smuggling which was causing huge losses to the nation, and

reiterated that the government would not allow those local elements who had been claiming in a grotesque manner of providing job opportunities to the people through smuggling.

The prime minister further said that the caretaker government would continue taking steps to end smuggling till the completion of its tenure and directed the NLC to complete its scanning and checking project at the Chaman border on priority basis.

Pakistan Customs should strengthen its capacity at the border areas so that the people arrested in the smuggling cases should be awarded exemplary punishment in accordance with law, he stressed.

The caretaker prime minister said that besides ending the illegal practice of smuggling, there was a need to control demand and supply of those goods in urban areas, adding that officers of good repute should be deputed in the border districts, particularly in the sensitive areas, along with enforcing a transparent system over postings and transfers.

Dr. Nawaz Khan Kibzai allowed to contest elections from PB-1

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Appellate Tribunal of High Court allowed the candidate of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Dr. Muhammad Nawaz Khan Kibzai to contest election from PB-1 constituency of Balochistan Assembly here on Monday.

The Tribunal declared the decision of Returning Officer as null and void and thus accepted the appeal of Dr. Kibzai against rejection of his nomination papers.

The Tribunal observed that the nomination papers can't be rejected due to the technical or clerical mistake.

Meanwhile, the supporters of Dr. Nawaz Kibzai have expressed pleasure over the judgment of Appellate Tribunal. They hoped that Dr. Kibzai would serve the masses of his constituency and province after victory in the elections.

Shehbaz allowed to contest election from NA-242

KARACHI (Online): Former Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has been allowed to contest election from NA-242 Karachi.

Election Tribunal has restored nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif from NA-242 Karachi. The objections raised by Qadir Khan Mandokhel from PPP were rejected.

Masood Khan Mandokhel PPP candidate had challenged nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif.

The appellant said returning officer had rejected his nomination papers. The returning officer has accepted nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif in haste by ignoring the legal requirements. December 29 decision of returning officer be declared nullified.

PM-LN leader Rana Mashhood has said that Shehbaz Sharif has been allowed to contest election in NA-242. We demand level playing field for all parties.

Governor sees improvement in performance educational institutions of Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the overall performance of educational institutions has been improved in province due to our whole-hearted attention and struggle. There is also improvement in quality of education in the educational institutions of the province.

The Governor said that surely there were flaws in the educational system and weaknesses in the educational institutions in the past, still certain achievements were made following the joint efforts of all responsible and concerned high ups.

In this, the active cooperation of higher educational institutions of other

provinces has also contributed and played important role.

The Governor was speaking to the Chief Executive Officer of Professional Education Foundation, Javed Farooqi who called on him here at the Governor House on Monday. He said that we fully realize that it is very necessary to bring Balochistan equal to other provinces in education sector just because there is no concept of the development without education.

The Governor said that it is our conscious endeavour and desire to increase the number of allocated seats for students of Balochistan in the educational institutions of other provinces.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir exchanging views with Field Marshal Khalifa Bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander of Bahrain Defence Forces and General Shaikh Mohammad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, Commander of Bahrain National Guard during meeting held in Bahrain

Tribunal rejects GDA leaders Zulfiqar Mirza, Fahmida Mirza's appeals

KARACHI (INP): The Appellate Election Tribunal in Karachi on Monday rejected the appeals filed by Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) leaders from Badin Zulfiqar Mirza, also a former Sindh home minister, and his wife Fahmida Mirza, also a former National Assembly (NA) speaker, against the rejection of their nomination papers by the returning of-

ficers (ROs). Both Fahmida and Zulfiqar had filed papers for the NA and the Sindh Assembly constituencies NA-223 Badin PS-70, PS71 and PS-72, respectively. The tribunal, in its verdict, said that Fahmida was a loan defaulter. He went on to say that the RO had rejected the papers of both husband and wife over the violation of the Election Act.

Cabinet Committee starts formal investigation into May 9 tragedy

ISLAMABAD (Online): The cabinet committee constituted to investigate the May 9 tragedy has decided to sought all the records and documents from the relevant sensitive and investigative institutions.

While the verified videos and photos also be obtained from defense and military installations. The confessional statements of the arrested accused will also be examined.

According to the sources, the first meeting of the cabinet committee on

the investigation of May 9 tragedy was held under the chairmanship of the Caretaker Law Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam, in which the Ministers of Information and Broadcasting and Human Rights and the Secretary of the Interior participated.

The law minister said the investigation would be completed within the stipulated timeline. The committee will also bring forth the names of the masters, facilitators and all the elements who executed the plan of May 9 tragedy.



QUETTA: Members of Joint Action Committee University Teachers Officer and Employees Association are holding protest demonstration against the non-payment of their dues salaries.

CS reviews Provincial Task Force for anti-Polio

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan on Monday reviewed the meeting on Provincial Task Force for Anti-Polio that it was our national responsibility to actively participate in the campaign and all resources to be utilized to ensure the eradication of polio.

The progress of the previous campaign and the ongoing campaign were reviewed during the meeting.

Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan said that polio is a chronic disease and to avoid it, vaccinate children saying that everyone has to work seriously to eradicate polio.

Shakeel said that there were only two countries where the virus was still

found, and also directed all Deputy Commissioners to improve the quality of the campaign and preside over the evening review meeting to achieve the target of the polio drive in the areas of Balochistan.

He urged the parents and all schools of thought that they should also play their role in eliminating polio from the country and the province.

The concerned official briefed the meeting that a special seven-day anti-polio campaign was started on January 8, Monday across Balochistan saying that more than 25, 96000 children would be administered the polio vaccine, and more than 11000 teams were participating in the polio campaign.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over meeting of Provincial Cabinet

Pak rejects designation as "Country of Particular Concern" by US

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Monday categorically rejected its designation as "a Country of Particular Concern" by the United States State Department, calling it "detached from ground realities."

"We are deeply dismayed that the designation is based on biased and arbitrary assessment, detached from ground realities," Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in a statement.

She said that Pakistan was a pluralistic country, with a rich tradition of interfaith harmony. In line with its Constitution, Pakistan had undertaken wide ranging measures to promote religious freedom and

protect minority rights, she added.

"We note with deep concern that India, the biggest and serial violator of religious freedom, has once again been excluded from the US State Department's designation list. This is despite clear recommendation by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) as well as public concerns raised by international human rights constituencies about India's maltreatment of religious minorities.

This conspicuous omission raises serious questions about the credibility, transparency and objectivity of the entire process," the spokesperson remarked.



QUETTA: Chief Executive Officer Professional Education Foundation Javed Farooqi meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Special Assistant to CM Gilgit Baltistan says: High level committee formed for resolving issues of media industry & protection of rights of media persons in GB

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Special Assistant to Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Eiman Shah has stated that a high level committee has been constituted for resolving the issues of media industry and protecting rights of those associated with it including media persons for the first time in history of Gilgit Baltistan.

The committee would present its recommendations in the cabinet meeting after consultation with all stakeholders so as to prepare a comprehensive policy for resolving the issues being faced by the media persons as well as to increase their capacity besides construction of the press clubs and provision of grants for them.

The Special Assistant to Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan was presiding over a meeting held to review steps for protection of the rights of media persons and resolving the issues of media industry in Gilgit Baltistan on Monday. It may be mentioned here that it was first meeting of the committee constituted on special directives of the Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Gulbar Khan.

Those who were present in the meeting were included the Secretary Information and Food, Kamal Khan, Deputy Secretary Information, Shamsur Rehman Qureshi, President of Gilgit Baltistan Newspaper Society, Raja Shah Sultan, Presidents of the press

ECP determined to conduct elections within specified time: Kanwar Dilshad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former secretary Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Kanwar Dilshad said on Monday that Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi as a focal person of the federal government had rightly stated that the general public should not give any attention to rumors.

As far as elections were concerned ECP was determined to conduct elections within a specified time, he said while taking part in a Radio Pakistan programme.

He said although, a Senate resolution for the delay in elections was passed the elections seem to be conducted on February 8 as per the timeline given by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

He said that maintaining the law and order situation in the country during the elections was the responsibility of caretaker governments in federal and provinces.

He said special arrangements will be made at the more sensitive polling stations.

SC fixes hearing of PTI petition on restoration of election symbol bat Jan 10

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) will hear PTI petition regarding restoration of election symbol bat on January 10.

The court summoned PTI leader Hamid Khan during the hearing of PTI petition regarding level playing field.

Upon it he came on rostrum. The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa asked Hamid Khan should his petition be not fixed tomorrow.

Hamid Khan requested to fix the petition for today.

The CJP remarked

there is 9-member bench today too and a special bench as well.

Hamid Khan said our priority is today. Otherwise it be fixed for January 10.

The CJP inquired has he come against the decision or it is petition of 3/184.

Hamid Khan said we have come in SC against Peshawar High Court (PHC) decision in 3/185.

The CJP remarked if the matter has not to go to judges committee then it is fixed for January 10.

The court fixed the case for hearing on January 10.

Illegal foreigner not permitted to stay in Pakistan: Secy Interior

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary of Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani on Monday said that illegal foreigners would not be allowed to stay in Pakistan.

The foreigners could stay in this country with valid documents, he said while chairing a meeting held here.

The meeting was attended by representatives of NADRA, Passport Of-

ice, provincial governments and other concerned institutions.

The secretary said that return of illegally staying foreigners to their country is one of the government's priorities.

He further stated that the process of repatriation of illegal aliens would continue till the objectives were achieved.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting of Provincial Task Force for Prevention of Polio.