

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk

Hub

Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XIX No. 01, Jamadi-us-Sani 28, 1445 AH Thursday January 11, 2024, Pages 04, Price Rs.15



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

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



The Minister Information particularly referred the statement of Baloch Yakjehri 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.



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 Jogeza.

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.



PESHAWAR: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Lawyers are celebrating after the Peshawar High Court verdict in favor of the party intra-party elections and electoral symbol of bat, at High Court in Peshawar.

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.

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 recommendation 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 sum-

mary 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.

The meeting offered Fateha for the security officials protecting the polio eradication team who were martyred in a terrorist incident in Bajaur.

The prime minister paid tribute to the martyred personnel and said the State would not forget their invaluable sacrifice for the homeland.

He said the officials sacrificed their lives for the safety of future generations.

He said the terrorists could not deter the resolve of the nation to fight polio.

The cabinet approved the decisions of the Economic Coordination Committee taken during the meetings held on 13th, 15th and 20th December, 2023.

The cabinet gave approval to the decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on State Owned Enterprises on 28th December, 2023.

It approved the decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases in a meeting held on 22nd December, 2023.

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.

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 the sport 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 our reporting to the press.

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



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to PM on Aviation Air Marshal (ret) 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

Division Bench of High Court issues notice to parties on petition of Mir Jamal Raisani

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.

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).

pellate 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).



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

Dr Amir Jogeza says

Emergency training center Balochistan to enhance physical, mental abilities

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogaizai 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 centers 1122 fully functional in Balochistan.

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

Arrangements would also be made to impart regular training to Balochistan personnel in emergency centres of Sindh and Punjab, where training would be provided relating to medical aid, rescue, trauma and first aid service to deal any emergency situation on road.

Speaking on this occasion, Balochistan Caretaker

Health Minister, Amir Muhammad Khan Jogaizai 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.

Solangi says Current situation in country better than 2008, 2013 elections period

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday reiterated the commitment that general elections would eventually be held on February 8 in the country.

Talking to the media, he said that in the past elections were conducted even in the worst conditions. Murtaza Solangi pointed out that the current situation in the country was much better than the years 2008 and 2013.

He said that the government had been in constant contact with the Election Commission of Pakistan since the first meeting of the Caretaker Cabinet.

The minister said the communication with ECP was underway on the daily basis and his visit was part of the routine communication process. He said he had not met the Chief Election Commissioner Raja Sikandar Sultan.

He expressed the optimism that security situation in the country would further improve in the coming days.

He said that Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ECP would provide information regarding the foreign media teams' arrival in Pakistan for election coverage.

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.

Earlier, the lawyers of PTI and Election Commission had completed their arguments last day. During the hearing, Qazi Javed Advocate said in his arguments that my client was the former district general secretary of PTI, who was found out from the media that intra-party Elections are taking place. He wanted to participate in the election but was not given the opportunity.

Justice Ijaz Anwar said that he did not say that the intra-party elections should be conducted again. If the Election Commission annulled the intra-party elections, then you should have called for re-elections.

If you were from the party, then you should have objected to withdrawing the party symbol, but you did not, to which Qazi Javed said that we were not given a chance in the elections and went to the Election Commission against it.



HUB: View of site after traffic accident due to over speeding and break failed, at Uthal.

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 Taliban to rein in the banned TTP and prevent the terrorist group from using Afghan soil as a launchpad for anti-Pakistan activities...



Mahir Ali

Across almost six decades of investigative journalism, John Pilger unsparringly torchlit many of what George W. Bush described as “the darkest corners of the world”...

Neoliberal approach



Nazir A. Jogeza

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...

One of a kind

in Sydney in 1939 and joined the Australian city’s press corps as a teenager before travelling to Europe...

of Robert F. Kennedy from metres away), Nicaragua, Venezuela, the Czechoslovak Republic and Ukraine...

Pilger’s days at the Mirror were numbered once Robert Maxwell acquired the tabloid, but he found a potentially wider-reaching outlet at ITV...

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...

There are some conflicts to which Pilger did not turn his attention, including Balochistan and Kashmir...

He leaves behind a visual and written legacy that will serve humankind for decades...

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...



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.

for better outcomes, adding that EU application for 2024 scholarships is open for Pakistani students...

She said that highest-ever number of Pakistani students have been receiving scholarships to study in European universities...

arrangements to carry out the needful. Extending ‘full cooperation’ to the EC body, he asked to expedite measures for marking places of polling stations...

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...



Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, is presenting the commemorative shield to Dr. Jeannette Forbes, Scottish Chambers Ambassador for Pakistan...

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...

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...

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...

Rupee gains 10 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday witnessed an appreciation of 10 paise against the US Dollar...

Business community representatives meet SM Tanveer

LAHORE: Representatives of business community of Lahore and Faisalabad met Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer...

Problems being faced by the industry were discussed during the meeting. The delegation congratulated the minister on success of United Business Group...



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...

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 Magessi.



PESHAWAR: A representative delegation of Lecturers appointed under a Project in Government Colleges meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa 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 Pakhtoonkhwa 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.

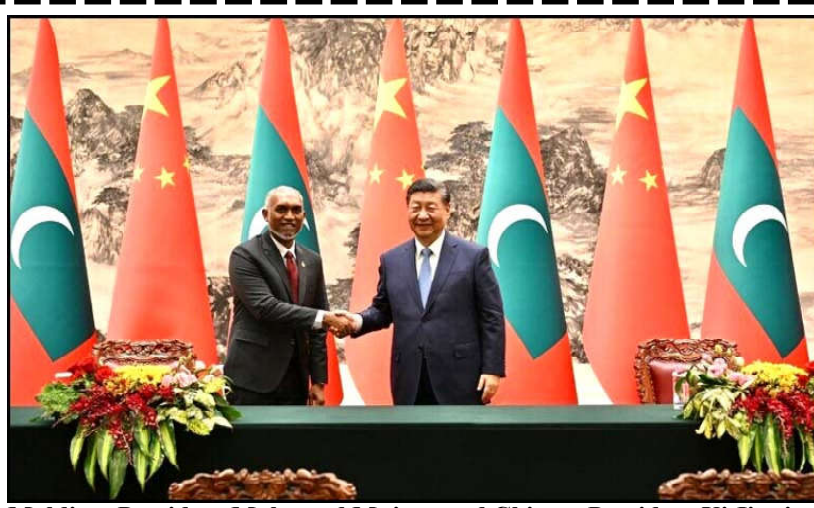
Muizzu took office in November, after winning on his "India Out" campaign platform under which he called New Delhi's huge influence a threat to sovereignty.

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 said Monday they would look into why President Joe Biden and other top officials weren't informed for days that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had been hospitalized. A Pentagon spokesman pointed to one reason: A key staffer was out sick with the flu.

Even as the Biden administration pledged to look into what rules or procedures weren't followed, it maintained its silence

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.

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.

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.

