

QUETTA VOICE

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Enforced disappearances: 'Let's solve this problem once and for all,' CJP Isa remarks

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Quaz Fazl Isa on Tuesday said that the Supreme Court wanted to solve the problem of missing persons and enforced disappearances "once and for all".

"This country belongs to all of us, even those who may have other points of view," he said. "This matter will only be resolved when we all work together and take responsibility. Let's make Pakistan strong from within. If Pakistan is strong from within, no outside forces can touch it," the CJP added.

Justice Isa passed these remarks as a three-member bench comprising the CJP, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar heard a set of petitions against missing persons. One of the pleas included an application filed by former senator and senior lawyer Afraz Ahsan.

At the outset of the hearing, which was broadcast live, Advocate Shoaib Shahen appeared on behalf of Ahsan. He requested the apex court to accept the instant petition and declare that enforced disappearances are "violative of, inter alia, Articles 14 (right of individuals to be dealt with in accordance with law, etc.) 9 (security of person), 10 (safeguards as to arrest and detention), 14 (equality of dignity of man, etc.) 19 (freedom of speech, etc.) and 25 (equality of citizens) of the Con-



stitution". He further requested the top court to declare that the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances "does not adequately comply with legal and international standards".

Here, the CJP inquired about the commission of inquiry to which the lawyer read out loud a notification issued by the PPP — notifying the constitution of the same — in 2011. Shahen argued the commission had failed to adequately function and fulfil its responsibilities. "So far, over 2,200 people are still missing and there

is no information about them," he told the bench.

Justice Isa remarked that the formation of a commission was a good thing and asked if the petitioner wanted the body to be dismissed. At one point during the hearing, Shahen raised the matter of the disappearances of several political activists, including Usman Dar, Sheikh Rasheed, Sadaqat Ali Abbasi, Azam Swati and others. However, the CJP wondered if these people were willing to come to court. "We cannot grant you the permission to

make the matter political," he said.

The lawyer mentioned how political activists were "kidnapped" and forced to change their parties. "Are you upset that they left the PTI?" Justice Isa asked. "Should we tell them to come back to the PTI? We don't have a solution to this."

"There is an English phrase 'if you can't stand the heat in the kitchen you should not be in the kitchen,'" the top judge remarked, adding that these were things that could not be used for political purposes. **News Desk**

Acquittal of Key Accused in Quetta's Infamous Video Scandal Sparks Controversy



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QUETTA: In a surprising turn of events, the session judge in Quetta has ordered the acquittal of Hidayatullah and Khalil. The siblings were arrested for allegedly producing nude videos of girls, an accusation vehemently denied by both.

Court Declared Prosecution Failed

The court, in its recent ruling, declared that the prosecution failed to substantiate the case against the accused, leading to their acquittal. The decision marks a stark departure from the previous verdict by Judicial Magistrate-7, who, on October 11 last year, sentenced the Khilji brothers to three years in prison and imposed a five-lakh fine on each. Challenging the initial judgment, the accused took their case to the Session Court Quetta, where lawyer Ayaz Zahoore successfully argued for the rejection of the trial court's decision.

The session judge concluded that the prosecution could not adequately prove the charges in the

Accused Had Allegedly Confined A Girl In Their House

The controversy surrounding the case further intensified as it was revealed that the accused had allegedly confined a girl in their house, producing an indecent video of her on December 27, 2021. Additional indecent videos of other girls were reportedly recovered from the accused during the investigation. The initial verdict triggered widespread protests in Quetta, with members of civil society and political parties demanding exemplary punishment for the accused. The unexpected acquittal has reignited public outcry, raising questions about the effectiveness of the legal proceedings and the justice system's ability to address such sensitive cases. As the community awaits further details on the court's decision, concerns about the implications for the victims and the broader issue of privacy and security of individuals in the digital age persist.

BHC Marks Success in 2023: Caseload Reduction and Timely Resolutions

QUETTA: In a year-end review, the judiciary in Balochistan reflects on the challenges and accomplishments of 2023, revealing notable changes in caseloads and case resolutions across various courts.

As of January 1, 2023, the Balochistan High Court had 4,472 pending cases. Throughout the year, an additional 6,920 cases were brought forward, showcasing the continuous flow of legal matters in the region. Impressively, by December 31, 2023, 6,640 cases were successfully decided, marking a substantial effort by the judiciary to address the backlog.

Pending Cases 4,952 in Balochistan

The total number of pending cases in Balochistan High Court, which includes the Circuit Bench Sibi and Circuit Bench Turbat, stood at 4,952 by the end of the year.

This figure reflects the ongoing commitment of the judiciary to handle cases efficiently and uphold the rule of law in the province.

On the subordinate level, the Sharia judiciary faced a significant



caseload with 16,020 pending cases at the beginning of 2023.

Over the year, 59,541 new cases were filed, underscoring the substantial demand for legal intervention. In response to this surge, the subordinate judiciary demonstrated its dedication, concluding 57,743 cases by the end

of December 31, 2023.

Judiciary Committed To Address Challenges

The judiciary's effective management of caseloads signifies a concerted effort to deliver justice promptly,

ensuring the legal needs of the community are met. As Balochistan heads into the new year, the judiciary remains committed to addressing the challenges posed by increasing caseloads and continuing its mission to dispense justice impartially and efficiently.

Tragic Loss: Doctor Fatally Attacked in Jangle Pir Alizai, Killa Abdullah District

From Our Correspondent:

Killa Abdullah: A doctor was killed in a firing incident in the Killa Abdullah district of Balochistan on Tuesday. Levies sources said unknown accused opened fire at a clinic and killed a doctor on the spot. The assailants sped away on their motorcycle after the attack. The entire Jangle Pir Alizai Bazar was closed after the attack. Shopkeepers pulled down their shutters.

Levies force and residents of the area reached the spot and shifted the dead body of the doctor to a nearby hospital. The victim was identified as Dr. Fida Muhammad. The killing of the doctor sparked protest and the angry tribesmen blocked the main Quetta-Chaman highway linking Pakistan with Afghanistan to condemn the incident.

They demanded that the district administration and the provincial government bring the perpetrators to book.

He expressed grief and sorrow over the tragic killing of the doctor.

Caretaker Home Minister



Balochistan, Captain (R) Zubair Jamali took serious notice of the incident and directed the levies force to arrest the culprits behind the attack. In a condemnation statement issued after the incident, Mr. Jamali said the accused would not be spared and that they would be given exemplary punishment.

BRA Achieves 40% Growth Amid Economic Challenges in FY 2023-24: Noor Ul Haq Baloch

News Desk:

Chairperson of the Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA), Mr. Noor Ul Haq Baloch stated that, "BRA has achieved an outstanding 40% growth in revenue collection during the first six months of the financial year 2023-24, overcoming significant economic challenges". The total collection stands at an impressive Rs.122 billion, comprising Rs.9.8 billion from the Balochistan Sales Tax on Services (BSTS) and Rs.2.4 billion from Cess, Mr. Baloch added.

In a press release about the revenue collection by BRA, it was stated that a remarkable highlight is the substantial growth in Cess collection, reaching Rs. 2.4 billion from July to December this year, a staggering 90% increase compared to the same period last year when Rs.1.3 billion was collected.

Additionally, the BRA has successfully gathered Rs.3 million for the Worker's Welfare Fund, marking a historic achievement.

This extraordinary success is attributed to the visionary leadership and diligent efforts of the management team at the Authority. Their strategic planning, innovative approaches, and unwavering commitment to optimizing



revenue streams have played a pivotal role in achieving these remarkable results.

BRA Acknowledges Taxpayers' Commitment and Plans Future Success

Expressing gratitude, the Authority extends its deepest appreciation to the conscientious taxpayers who have consistently fulfilled their tax obligations, showcasing a strong sense of civic responsibility. The proactive participation of the public has been a cornerstone of this revenue

surge, reflecting a harmonious partnership between the government and the citizens in the pursuit of economic development.

Looking forward, the Balochistan Revenue Authority remains steadfast in its commitment to achieving set targets and surpassing expectations. The Authority is dedicated to upholding principles of fiscal responsibility, integrity, and service excellence, ensuring continued efforts to enhance revenue collection and contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the region.

A Taste of History: Landi – Preserving Tradition and Flavor in the Rugged Frontier

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: High in the wind-swept mountains of Pakistan's Frontier Regions, bordering Afghanistan, lies a culinary legacy dating back centuries.

Landi. This sun-dried meat, a testament to human ingenuity and adaptation, isn't just food, it's a story etched in every savory bite. For generations, tribesmen have relied on Landi as a way to combat the harsh realities of their environment.

Inhospitable terrain, unpredictable weather, and the ever-present threat of blocked roads and communication loss necessitated a solution for food preservation. Enter Landi, a method as simple as it is effective.



From Necessity to Delicacy:

Landi's story begins with "special lambs," imported from Afghanistan and carefully chosen for their meat quality.

Haji Hameedullah, owner of two Landi shops on the bustling Quetta-Chaman road, describes the process with reverence. Salt and a unique blend of mountainous herbs are rubbed onto the meat, infusing it with an earthy aroma that speaks of ancient wisdom.

Beyond Hunger, a Cultural Touchstone:

Landi wasn't just a weapon against hunger; it was a shield against the biting cold of the region's deserts and villages.

Nomadic communities and frontier families alike depended on this portable source of protein, a

vital companion on their journeys and a reliable comfort during harsh winters.

A Taste of Adventure for Modern Palates

Today, Landi transcends its practical origins to become a sought-after delicacy. Foodies and travelers, captivated by its rich history and unique flavor profile, flock to Quetta and Chaman to experience this taste of the Frontier.

Hameedullah's shops, steeped in the aroma of sun-dried meat and open arms, welcome them with warm smiles.

IN THE FOCUS

Editor: Asim Khan

Quetta Green Bus Promise: Govt Urged to Turn Commitments into Action

Editorial:

In a seemingly promising move to uplift transportation standards, the Balochistan government has unfolded plans for an extensive expansion of the green bus fleet. The vision, spearheaded by Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan, CEO of Balochistan Public Private Partnership (BPPP), aims to introduce 25 additional eco-friendly buses to the streets of Quetta. However, as the government unveils plans, the pressing question looms – will these promises translate into tangible improvements for the provincial capital's long-suffering commuters?

Green Bus Expansion Now A Long Standing Demand

Originally sanctioned by former Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan, the plan now gaining momentum under the current administration, underscores the government's commitment to sustainable and accessible transportation. With an ambitious target of deploying 100 green buses across Quetta in the imminent months, the expansion spans beyond the city center, promising relief to residents in areas like Hazrat Jinnah Road, Samungli Road, Sarfari Custom, Nawab Killi, and other vital parts of Quetta.

Expansion Of Project Directly Responds To Public Demand: Dr. Faisal

Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan asserts that this expansion directly responds to the persistent public demand for improved transportation. The stark reality, however, reveals that currently, a meager eight buses operate from Balochistan University to Belli Airport Road, leaving bare the glaring inadequacy in green bus availability.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar's recent proclamation, vowing an additional 100 green buses for Balochistan, signifies the government's purported dedication to elevating public transportation standards in the region. While commendable in words, the onus now falls on Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan to translate these verbal commitments into swift and substantive action.

CS Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan Can Play A Key Role

Commendations for the government's seemingly progressive approach must be met with an urgent plea for Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan's decisive leadership in ensuring efficient execution. Quetta's residents, long fatigued by the lack of a dependable public transportation system, now demand more than promises – they demand a concrete reality. The introduction of green buses holds the potential to alleviate the longstanding commuting challenges, creating a pathway to a more sustainable and accessible future for the people of Balochistan.

The call for action is not merely a suggestion, it's a critical imperative, and the responsibility squarely rests with Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan to lead the way in turning promises into tangible, transformative actions.

Fertiliser subsidy

By Aijaz A. Nizamani:

WHEAT is the most important dietary component in food consumed in Pakistan. The same is reflected in Pakistan's cultivation trends, with over 22 million acres of farmland – more than 50 per cent of the cropped area – allocated to wheat crops in the winter. The winter season is when fertiliser requirements peak, and fertiliser plants have to compete with power plants for natural gas in order to produce nitrogenous fertiliser.

However, dwindling domestic supplies and increased competition in the international market for natural gas have made these competing demands nearly impossible for Pakistan's policymakers to manage. Invariably, bureaucrats and politicians make a mess of the situation, and the high cost of their mess is passed on to consumers and producers alike. It is no surprise that the country imports millions of tonnes of wheat worth hundreds of millions of dollars every year. The current year's budget has allocated Rs30 billion for fertiliser subsidies for farmers. This subsidy is used to pay for cheap gas to fertiliser plants, which, in return, are supposed to provide their urea and phosphate fertiliser products at administered rates to farmers through their distribution networks. The list of ministries and bureaucracies involved in the disbursement of this subsidy is mind-boggling. For a comparatively low figure of

Rs30bn, the list of ministries involved includes the Ministry of Industries and Production, the Ministry of Petroleum, the Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority, the Cabinet Division, the Ministry of Food Security and Research and the Ministry of Finance.

Since their bureaucrats get caught up in turf wars, making timely decisions is not possible. Even the government prices on setting gas decisions for fertiliser plants also result in bottlenecks in the value chain. Gas supply bottlenecks give rise to discrimination: the Competition Commission of Pakistan is often approached by plants that do not receive enough supply of gas, while others are reportedly favoured.

The impact of this mess is most acutely felt in the small-town markets of rural Pakistan, where farmers are paying between Rs5.00 and Rs5.50 for a bag of urea in the black market, which is supposed to be sold at Rs3.25 this season. The situation was no different under the PTI government when farmers queued daily to receive just two bags of fertiliser. Industry sources say the country has market-based mechanisms to produce more fertiliser than needed by local farmers. So, why are wheat farmers forced to buy from the black market each year in winter, especially for a crop as important as wheat? The price differential is not the only issue: producers also suffer from

what economists call high transaction costs, as well as the loss of valuable time. They are unable to provide crops with vital nutrients when they are critically needed, resulting in loss of production, which is ultimately met through wheat imports.

The fertiliser subsidy is not provided to farmers but to fertiliser plants – in other words, to industrialists. The rationale provided for this arrangement is that it ultimately helps farmers. However, as the expense varies every year, so does it, it does not work that way, as farmers invariably pay more than administered prices for their requirements. While by the Pakistan Institute for Development Economics also show that the fertiliser subsidy does not significantly impact food costs for the poor. The logical question is: why not do away with the subsidy altogether, and let consumers and producers (farmers) do not get the value it is paid for?

Since farmers are net losers in this subsidy regime, it is they who should demand a liberal fertiliser import and export mechanism. It looks like even fertiliser manufacturers are not averse to a market-based mechanism: they believe they can export fertiliser under such a regime, bringing in as much as \$500m in foreign exchange. Free imports and an export facilitation policy would go a long way towards improving food security while cutting out middle-bureaucracies.

With this mosque in the crosshairs of a right-wing government, this New Year column hopes to offer a handy fact sheet on a truer India to celebrities like Amitabh Bachchan, Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli who were invited to the inauguration in Ayodhya this month.

built on the rubble of the Babri Masjid, the supreme court's directives – another landmark mosque in the sight of the parliament house is gasping for the lack of the turkey at the White House. A solitary reference to ally spared the knife on Thanksgiving Day, a symbol of the US president's generosity.

The Sunehri Bagh mosque has enjoyed the attention of the media, but mostly cooped up, to glean less familiar facts about Lord Ram in India and abroad, and about the enrichment of Hindu motifs and cultural expressions by Muslim writers, old and new. There's no gansaying that the general election in May, and the event in Ayodhya is primed to mobilise glib voters.

Two dates are important to bear in mind, one that seeks to dispel the Hindu-Muslim mix with muscular nationalism, and the other as a thinly veiled assault on a campaign to expel caste hierarchies from Hindu society. Jawaharlal Nehru was the target in the first instance.

By Arifa Noor:

SHAKESPEARE may have come up with a line for all times when he wrote, "to be or not to be", but in Pakistan we have found a dilemma just as important and worthy of much debate. We have been wondering whether or not this past year and what it brought in politics was unprecedented. Is it simply more of the same aka 2018 main bhi yehi hua tha, or have the excesses against the judiciary touched new heights – or should it be, less? At this rate, is discussion will continue as we enter 2024 because we Pakistanis believe in carrying our baggage with us, as we do our circular debts. But instead of a recap of the year that passed, let me try and offer a slightly different, or zara hat kai, version of what we have been experiencing for the past few years, and why it really is "unprecedented".

Pakistan has evolved as a country which has become used to living on international rents, thanks to our geostrategic position. From Ayub Khan's decision to join the Western bloc to the two Afghan wars, we picked friends and allies who carried bearing gifts in the form of aid and dollars, which were then used to make the economy grow and 'buy' legitimacy for the unelectable leaders ruling us.

But more important, this crisis of the economy has weakened consensus among the elite – an elite which was willing to let the military establishment be the primary stakeholder at home because of its ability to secure rents from abroad. And if this primary role meant that the latter intervened in politics, disrupted the political process and dominated policymaking, so be it.

The judiciary would provide legal cover, the politicians would take part in elections and provide a form of legitimacy. Even the business elite would pay homage to the 'stability' brought about by the establishment to enjoy legitimacy and claim it had the people's support.

However, this started changing in the post-Musharraf period as the elites began to argue that the 2013 PML-N term onwards, intervention in politics and the resultant instability has garnered more and more criticism from social activists in the elite and because in the absence of international rents, it is hard to camouflage the instability that interventions cause in politics.

With the economic crisis intensifying, criticism simply grew in the wake of the PTI, beginning with its removal from

power and the crack-down which followed in 2023. This absence of consensus is not just the establishment's plans (or scripts) difficult to implement, but also in the reluctance of politicians to fall in line.

Forming the king's party is not the walk in the park it used to be because state patronage is not proving enough to muster the numbers needed to secure victories. And as the populace, for the reasons mentioned, is also optimistic about the PTI (in mainstream areas such as Punjab), electables are being forced to choose between the people – or their choice of party – and the establishment. If it was PML-N in 2018, it is PTI in 2023.

This is one reason for the harsh measures for the business elite in recent years where politicians have faced imprisonment, torture, threats to family and business. If this meant disenfranchisement and punishment for the PML-N 2017 onwards, it has at present led to temporary enforced disappearances for those in the PTI, as well as kidnappings of family members and raids on their homes.

They will not spend their resources on such an empty thing as 'Temple Entry'. Ambedkar recounted how Europeans barred Indians from entering their clubs, and also noted that Indians didn't grovel to be allowed to enter. An Untouchable by profession in a place from which he has been excluded by the arrogance of the Hindus? He is prepared to say to the Hindus: To open or not to open your temples is a question for you to consider and not for me to agitate.

Ambedkar on mass converted his community to Buddhism. As for the Muslims, they were by no means indulgent to Hindu culture and religion than Ambedkar could be. In fact, it's difficult to find a Muslim writer who didn't express respect and adulation for Hindu traditions from Wali Dakhani (1667-1707), whose grave was flattened during the Gaurant pogroms with a crowd built over it, to Mir Ghalib, Iqbal to Hasrat Mohani and Majaz.

There's no dearth of affection for Hindu motifs. Ram was Iqbal's Imam-i-Hind. Krishna was Nazir Akbarabadi's muse. Muslim scholars translated the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata into Urdu and Persian during Mughal rule. Rahi Masoom Raza

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the death anniversary of the Dalit leader Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar. Gandhiji pleaded with Ambedkar to join his efforts to press for a Temple Entry law that would remove the Brahmanical bar on Dalit leader Hindu temples. Ambedkar described his community as 'Depressed Classes' and refused Gandhi's overture in February 1933. The decision hasn't lost importance. Ambedkar's reply: "The Depressed Classes think that the surest way of elevation lies in education, higher employment and better ways of earning a living. ... Proceeding on these lines ..."

In other words, the establishment has turned to harsher tactics, as it faces loss of legitimacy, not just among the people but also the political elite, who were earlier willing to play second fiddle.

Ask any PTI politician who has to contest an election and he will explain that while the establishment is pressuring him to switch sides, the voters have warned him that he can only win if the stands firm. And there are no solutions to this equation, it seems.

The point of this spiel was not just to explain that what's unprecedented is the fragile consensus which had existed earlier among the elite. In fact, it is also to argue that the 'haves' electables are being forced to choose between the people – or their choice of party – and the establishment. If it was PML-N in 2018, it is PTI in 2023.

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An invitation to embrace reason

By Jawed Naqvi:

As Prime Minister Modi leads the inauguration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya this month, the Supreme Court's directives – another landmark mosque in the sight of the parliament house is gasping for the lack of the turkey at the White House. A solitary reference to ally spared the knife on Thanksgiving Day, a symbol of the US president's generosity.

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By Aisha Khan:

THE end of the 28th session of the Conference of Parties in December 2023 moved the needle forward on climate action but not at the pace needed to avert the sixth mass extinction. As eco-anxiety grows and optimists try to rationalise slow progress, with the inherent constraints of multilateral processes, the clock keeps ticking, reminding us of the perils and unpredictions of change and the timescale for keeping life systems alive.

The conversation on climate has become so

argon filled and technical in its approach that at times it loses sight of the here and now, becoming occasionally desiccated and sometimes capricious.

Anatomically, modern humans emerged about 200,000 years ago in a process of evolution from ancestral Homo sapiens dating back to around 6,000 years back and the advent of industrial age began in 1850.

In the span of 173 years, humans have succeeded in labours that moon had degraded eco-

systems and destroyed the environment on planet Earth. Today, with advancements in science and technology, life expectancy has increased, progress in communication has transformed connectivity and creature comforts have enhanced life quality beyond imagination.

Ironically, all this has come at the cost of development that has turned into an existential threat. The main culprit for disrupting planetary balance are greenhouse gases. As we enter 2024, it is important to put some things in perspective.

The blame game at negotiations has gone on for 28 years. Perhaps it is time to take more individual responsibility and combine the two to save our species. A change in perspective may also alter thinking and help in finding solutions.

The dilemma facing the world is not only about how to reduce carbon emissions; the fact, it is more about how to retain existing lifestyles without compromising on quality of life. However, changing consumption patterns.

At COP28 Sultan al-Jaber cannot talk for the statement that was inter-

preted to mean that giving fossil fuels a quantum to going back to the cave age. Seen in a broader perspective, perhaps it suggests that no one is quite ready yet to give up on lifestyles supported by fossil fuel.

This applies to people from all tiers of society, across sectors, institutions and affiliations. The outcry is every year at climate summits is on the ascendant, and disappointment/outcry is every year, the fundamental question that holds the key to the climate conundrum is: How much are we willing to give up on current consumption patterns in a low-carbon footprint lifestyle? After all, it is possible to curtail supply by reducing demand.

Data demonstrates that modern food systems drive 90 per cent of deforestation and 60pc of biodiversity loss, and account for 70pc of the world's use of freshwater. Overall, food systems alone contribute to over 30pc of global greenhouse emissions. By going vegan the global population could reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food pro-

duction by 28pc. And yet only 1-2pc of the world population is vegan.

The list of possible individual actions is as long as the list of commitments made by nations at climate summits. Extinction is not a new phenomenon on planet Earth. There have been five previous mass extinctions in the last 500 million years. Many researchers argue that the extinction of 27pc of plants and animals by 2100. This continued disruption in the biosphere poses an extinction threat to one-half of Earth's higher life forms in the turn of the century.

years ago was the largest mass extinction event in Earth's history, affecting a range of species. The loss of biodiversity is as life. Today, the overgrowth and transformative behaviour of a single species is destroying habitats and unleashing a crisis. A European Commission modelling study estimates the extinction of 27pc of plants and animals by 2100. This continued disruption in the biosphere poses an extinction threat to one-half of Earth's higher life forms in the turn of the century.

South Africa's David Bedingham eyes 'life after cricket' in England

LONDON (INP): Batsman David Bedingham, who made an impressive Test debut for South Africa against India last week, said he is still trying to secure a British passport — but not so he can play for England.

Bedingham made 56 in the first Test at Centurion and impressed observers with his stroke play, calm demeanour and shot selection. The 29-year-old right-handed batsman has played English county cricket for Durham since 2020.

He has a claim to British citizenship through ancestry and took no part in the 2022/23 South African

domestic season, leading to speculation that he saw his future in England.

"I'm still trying to get a passport in England but it's not for cricket, it's for after cricket," he told journalists on Monday ahead of the second Test starting at Newlands on Wednesday. "I'd like to continue playing there (in England) but since I've gone there I've played as an overseas player and I don't think that will change."

David Bedingham refuted that he had entertained ambitions of playing for England.

"I had ambitions of playing (county cricket) as a local player if I was going to play

for England it would still be another three or four years," he said.

He added a call from South African coach Shukri Conrad had persuaded him to make himself available for the Test team rather than seek a place in the SA20, South Africa's T20 franchise competition.

Bedingham and Keegan Petersen are the only two players who took part in the first Test who have been named in South Africa's squad for two Test matches in New Zealand, with all the other first-choice players committed to the SA20.

"I took my name out of the draft so that I could play in New

Zealand," he said.

"Shuks (Conrad) called and said there's a possibility. When I heard that, I got out from SA20 can play I thought my chances of playing are quite high. I didn't have a second thought. I told him I would take my name out of the draft." He said being selected for the series against India had come as a surprise.

David Bedingham played for South Africa Under-19 in 2012/13 and was long regarded as one of the country's most promising young players. But a serious car accident in 2016 kept him out of cricket for a year, contributing to him making a relatively late international debut.



ISLAMABAD: Engr. Aamir Hasan, Member, PMIC is chairing the meeting at PMIC, PM Office, Islamabad on PSDP project titled "Construction of Model Prison at H-16, Islamabad" on 02-01-2024 and getting briefing from the officers of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ministry of Housing & Works, Pak PWD, NHA, ICT, CDA, RDA and Punjab Prison Department.

Death toll rises to 30 in powerful Japan quake

HONSHU (INP): The death toll from a powerful earthquake in central Japan rose to 30 on Tuesday, local authorities said, with 14 others seriously injured.

Half the deaths were recorded in the city of Wajima, where a huge blaze tore through homes, the Ishikawa prefectural government said.

The 7.5-magnitude quake, which hit Ishikawa prefecture on the main island of Honshu, triggered tsunami waves more than a metre high, toppled buildings, caused a major fire and tore apart roads.

As daylight arrived, the scale of the destruction on the Noto Peninsula emerged with buildings still smoldering, houses flattened, fishing boats sunk or washed ashore and highways hit by landslides.

"It was such a powerful jolt," Tsugumasa Mihara, 73, told as he queued with hundreds of others for water in the town of Shika. "What a terrible way to start the year," he said.

Police said six people had been killed although the toll was almost certain to climb. The Kyodo news agency reported that 24 people had died, includ-

ing 15 in the badly hit port city of Wajima.

"Very extensive damage has been confirmed, including numerous casualties, building collapses and fires," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said after a disaster response meeting.

"We have to race against time to search for and rescue victims of the disaster." Aerial news footage showed devastation from the major fire in Wajima, where a seven-storey commercial building collapsed. Almost 45,000 households were without power in the region, which saw temperatures touch freezing overnight, the local energy provider said. Many cities were

without running water.

The US Geological Survey (USGS) said the quake had a magnitude of 7.5. Japan's meteorological agency measured it at 7.6, and said it was one of more than 150 to shake the region through Tuesday morning.

Several strong jolts were felt early Tuesday, including one measuring 5.6 that prompted national broadcaster NHK to switch to a special programme. "Please take deep breaths," the presenter said, reminding viewers to check for fires in their kitchens.

Trade deficit shrinks by 34% in Pakistan's Fiscal H1

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has reported a significant 34% reduction in its trade deficit during the first six months of the current fiscal year, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The noteworthy decline in trade deficit is attributed to a 5% surge in exports combined with a 16% reduction in imports.

For the period from July to December 2023, the trade deficit stood at \$11.14 billion, marking a substantial improvement from the \$16.96 billion recorded in the same pe-

riod of the previous fiscal year. In December 2023 alone, the trade deficit was \$1.702 billion, showing a 13% decrease compared to June and December 2022.

The statistics reveal a commendable 5% increase in domestic exports during the first half of the financial year. From July to December 2023, Pakistan's exports reached \$14.98 billion, compared to \$14.24 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. Notably, December 2023 witnessed a

surge in domestic exports, reaching \$2.81 billion, a substantial 22% increase from December 2022.

In the same vein, the volume of Pakistan's exports in December 2023 was \$2.301 billion, reflecting a 9% month-on-month growth compared to November. The foreign exchange earnings from domestic exports also saw a significant boost, rising from \$2.57 billion in November to \$2.81 billion in December. The positive trend is further underscored by a 16% reduction in domestic imports during the

first six months of the financial year.

From July to November, the volume of imports stood at \$26.12 billion, a notable decline from the \$31.20 billion recorded in the same period of the previous fiscal year. December 2023 witnessed a 1% monthly decrease in imports compared to November, with the volume reaching \$5.14 billion.

This economic resilience is indicative of Pakistan's efforts to rebalance its trade dynamics, fostering a more sustainable and robust economic outlook.



ISLAMABAD: UAE Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zubai called on Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting during his visit to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSP/PAH) Head Office.

Sheikh Rashid files appeal against rejection of nomination papers from NA-56

ISLAMABAD (INP): Awami Muslim League chief and former federal minister Sheikh Rashid on Tuesday lodged an appeal against the rejection of his nomination papers from the NA-56 constituency in Rawalpindi.

In a statement to a private TV channel, Sheikh Rashid's lawyer asserted that the receipts for rest house arrears are fabricated, emphasizing that Sheikh Rashid never stayed at the rest

house. The legal representative urged the annulment of the returning officer's decision to reject the nomination papers.

The rejection of Sheikh Rashid's nomination papers was officially communicated on January 1, following a written decision by Constituency NA-56 Returning Officer Nazarat Shah. The decision outlined that if objections to Sheikh Rashid's nomination papers were substantiated, the papers

would be dismissed. The written judgment, issued by Returning Officer Nazarat Shah, highlighted Sheikh Rashid's alleged involvement in land fraud, defaulter status, and false statements in income tax returns.

The judgment contended that this violated Section 62(9)(c) of the Election Act, 2017, rendering Sheikh Rashid ineligible as a valid nominee.

The document stated that Sheikh

Rashid failed to furnish details about his assets and liabilities in Form-B of the nomination papers. Additionally, the verdict pointed out non-compliance with para (U) of the affidavit submitted along with the nomination papers, emphasizing the failure to settle rest house charges.

As Sheikh Rashid challenges the decision, the legal battle intensifies, casting a spotlight on the intricacies of the election process.

Asad Qaiser calls for 'free and fair' elections

SWABI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former speaker of the National Assembly (NA) Asad Qaiser on Tuesday called for 'free and fair' elections in the country.

In an exclusive interview with a private TV channel Asad Qaiser urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to play a more effective role in ensuring the

'free and fair' polls rather than

He termed the election commission's role during the upcoming general election 2024 as 'worst', stating that the electoral watchdog should play its role as a neutral institution.

"Such elections will not bring stability but things will get worse in Pakistan," Qaiser asserted, he accused the ECP of

'supporting' a political party, and stated that

despite the pre-poll rigging tactics, PTI will win the upcoming elections."

He highlighted that the propaganda campaign of the PML-N's Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz will eventually fail, asserting that the PML-N leadership should not use tactics for personal grudges.

Asad Qaiser

claimed that the PTI is

still popular among the people,

alleging that the opposition is playing dirty tactics to 'rule out' the senior leadership of PTI from the general election contest. Qaiser expressed optimism related to the general election 2024 and stated that despite all the rigging tactics by the opposition, PTI will sweep the general election.



ISLAMABAD: Musa Ali, who traveled from near Siachen to Islamabad with a message of peace on a horse, met with the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gul Bar Khan at his Office. Provisional Minister Finance Muhammad Ismail and member GB assembly Anjad Hussain Adv also present.

South Korean opposition leader stabbed in neck

BUSAN (INP): South Korean opposition party leader Lee Jae-myung was stabbed in the neck on Tuesday while talking to reporters in the port city of Busan.

Lee was walking in a crowd of journalists after visiting the site of a new airport when a man in front of him lunged and struck him in the neck, footage on South Korean television channels showed.

The 59-year-old was seen collapsing to the ground as people rushed to aid him. One man was seen pressing a handkerchief on Lee's neck. He was "walking to his car while talking to reporters when the attacker asked for his autograph", a witness told local broadcaster YTN, adding that Lee was struck with what "looked like a knife". Emergency responders were seen carrying Lee into an ambulance. He was later

taken to hospital on a helicopter, according to a news agency.

The agency said he was bleeding but conscious as he was transported to the Pusan National University Hospital. "This is an act of terror against Lee and a serious threat to democracy that should never occur under any circumstances," Kwon Chil-seung, an MP from Lee's Democratic Party, told reporters outside the hospital. "As to Lee's condition, we are waiting for the medical staff's assessment," he added, demanding a "thorough" police investigation into the attack.

Police in Busan said Lee suffered a "one-centimetre laceration on his neck" and that he "remains conscious and bleeding is minor", according to South Korean news outlet Chosun Ilbo. TV footage showed police officials wrestling

the attacker to the ground. He was seen wearing a hat with Lee's name on it. Yonhap said the assailant has been arrested. Lee lost in 2022 presidential race in South Korea's history. Yoon Suk Yeol in the tightest

run-off. "This is an act of terror against Lee and a serious threat to democracy that should never occur under any circumstances," Kwon Chil-seung, an MP from Lee's Democratic Party, told reporters outside the hospital. "As to Lee's condition, we are waiting for the medical staff's assessment," he added, demanding a "thorough" police investigation into the attack.

Lee's bid for the top office has been overshadowed by a string of scandals.

He is widely expected to run for president again in 2027, and recent polls have indicated that he remains a strong contender. But Lee's bid for the top office has been overshadowed by a string of scandals.

CORRIGENDUM

The tender notice initially dated December 9, 2023, published in the Morning Quota newspaper, etc. under PRC No. 1119/05-12-2023 and BPPRA T-23/24/12345678 with the original opening date of January 1, 2024, should be considered with a revised opening date of January 9, 2024. The estimated cost mentioned on the BPPRA website, originally Rs. 10,000,000, should now be understood as Rs. 9,999,000. Note: Contractors holding a 100% Christian are eligible for the extended tender deadline, and all other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

PRQ No. 1287/02-01-2024
www.bppra.gov.pk | #id: #prq | #id: #prq | #id: #prq

Executive Engineer (R)
O&P Department,
District Hamaal

Private schools in Rawalpindi defy government order

RAWALPINDI (INP) Defying the Punjab government's extension of winter holidays, several private schools in Rawalpindi reopened their doors on Tuesday, leaving parents fuming and students facing the harsh realities of extreme cold and fog.

The Punjab government, citing concerns over the prevailing severe weather conditions, had announced an extension of winter vacations for all schools in the province until January 9th. However, several private institutions in Rawalpindi chose to disregard this directive, forcing students back into classrooms amidst biting temperatures and heavy fog.

This blatant disregard for the government's order has sparked outrage among parents who are fed up with the arbitrariness and lack of adherence to regulations exhibited by some private schools. Many took to social media to express their anger and frustration, demanding that the

Punjab government take immediate action against these defiant institutions.

"It's absolutely outrageous that these schools are putting the health and safety of our children at risk," stated one parent, whose child attends a school that reopened today. "The government ordered the extension for a reason, and they should not be allowed to simply ignore it."

Several other parents echoed this sentiment, highlighting the challenges of sending their children to school in such adverse weather conditions. Concerns ranged from increased risks of cold-related illnesses to compromised visibility due to fog, potentially posing safety hazards during commutes. The disregard for the government order raises questions about accountability and compliance within the private education sector. Parents expect that schools will follow established regulations and prioritize the well-

being of their students. This incident showcases a concerning disregard for both, leaving the Punjab government with the crucial task of addressing this issue and ensuring adherence to its directives.

It is expected that the Punjab government will take notice of the situation and take appropriate action against the schools that have flouted its orders. The potential consequences could range from warnings to fines or even temporary closures. Whatever the response, it is crucial that the government sends a clear message that such blatant disregard for its rulings will not be tolerated.

This incident underlines the importance of enforcing regulations and ensuring accountability within the private education sector. Parents deserve the assurance that their children are being placed in safe and responsible environments, and the government must act decisively to restore trust and uphold its authority.



QUETTA: Mobtullah Agha and Mufti Muhammad Zubair are meeting with Governor Balochistan Malak Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Lahore police resolves over 15,000 complaints in 2023

LAHORE (INP) The Complaint Cell of Lahore Police processed a total of 16,005 applications, successfully disposing of 15,543 cases, while 462 applications are still under review in the year 2023. Additionally, 32 C29 and 302 C299 applications received from the Chief Minister's House portal have been successfully addressed.

Capital City Police Officer Bilal Siddique Kamana reported that out of 4,822 applicants who visited the CCPO

office seeking resolution, 6,345 applications have been processed, with 137 cases still in progress. Among the 6,806 applications received by post, 6,583 have been resolved, and 223 are currently being addressed. From the platform of overseas Pakistanis, 58 out of 65 applications have been disposed of, showcasing the commitment of Lahore Police to addressing the concerns of citizens across borders.

CCPO Bilal Siddique Kamana highlighted that out of the 2,303 requests received

through the helpline, 1,787 have been resolved, with 88 cases still in progress. On the 1242 helpline, 14 out of 15 requests have been successfully addressed, while one is currently under review.

Encouraging citizens to report complaints without hesitation, Lahore Police Chief emphasized the importance of registering concerns on the helpline 1242 for swift legal action. Kamana directed staff and urged citizens to maintain constant communication with complainants until justice is served.

AKAPHC unveils plan to observe Jan 5 as Right to Self-Determination Day

SRINAGAR (INP) The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has announced that Kashmiris will observe 5 January as Right to Self-Determination Day by organizing protest demonstrations, rallies, seminars and other programs to invite world attention towards the urgency of resolving the long-pending Kashmir dispute to avert Jammu and Kashmir from turning into another Palestine.

According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar said, the unresolved Kashmir dispute is a big question mark on the credibility of the United Nations.

"If the UN wants to restore its credibility it needs to implement its resolutions on Kashmir without further delay," he said.

It was on 5th January in 1949 when UN Security Council passed a historic resolution

saying, "The question of accession of the State of Jammu & Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite".

The APHC said that seven decades have passed but the promised plebiscite remains unfulfilled till date. The APHC said that by deploying over one million trigger-happy troops, India has turned Kashmir into a gigantic prison. Indian troops who have been given license to kill Kashmiris are trampling humanity under their jackboots, he added. "Martyrdom of over one lakh Kashmiris, destruction of thousands of houses and structures, molestation, blinding youth is a glaring proof how India is hell-bent on annihilating Kashmiris and occupy their land," he informed.

The statement said that after 5 August 2019, Hindutva BJP-RSS regime has broken

all previous records of brutalities. It is using Israel-type tactics to deprive Kashmiris of their economy, properties and impose its devilish Hindutva agenda in IIOJK.

Issuing of domiciles to thousands of non-Kashmiris, granting them land rights in occupied territory and introduction of other anti-Kashmir and anti-Muslim laws have made the evil intentions of Hindutva forces very clear that they want to strip Kashmiris of their identity, culture and land.

The APHC appealed to the Kashmiris and Pakistanis all over the world to organize large scale protest demonstrations in different countries of the world and to invite the world's attention towards the Kashmir issue. He also urged the world community especially the UN to take concrete steps for the settlement of Kashmir dispute.



QUETTA: The first meeting of the executive body of Pakistan China Technical and Vocational Institute Gwadar University is being held under the chairmanship of Chairman Gwadar Port Authority Pansad Khan Biliidi.



LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets with the President of Pakistan Muslim League (Q) Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

Lahore DHA accident: ATC extends judicial remand of Afnan

LAHORE (INP) The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore on Tuesday extended the judicial remand of the underage driver, Afnan, the man accused in Lahore's DHA accident case.

The police produced the underage driver before Judge Ahsan Gail Khan's court after completing his judicial remand and seeking an extension.

The Investigation Officer (IO) argued before the court that the accused Afnan had to be present before the medical board for age determination and pleaded to extend the underage driver's judicial remand.

The judge after hearing the argument from both sides ap-

proved the plea and extended the judicial remand of Afnan for two weeks.

It is pertinent to mention here that six members of the same family were killed in a tragic car accident in Lahore's Defence Phase 7 area. The family was reportedly returning home in two cars after visiting relatives in Shadab Colony on Ferozpur Road.

As they reached a roundabout, the car rammed into their vehicle.

The tragic incident also led the head of the family to traumatic stress when he saw his wife Rukhsana Bibi (45), son Husnain (25), daughter-in-law Ayesha (23), son-in-law Sajjad (30), four-month-old grandson

Huzafa, and granddaughter Anaya (4) in a pool of blood. Car driver Afnan Shafiq, who was overpowered by the locals on the spot, appeared to be a teen and the police arrested and booked him soon after the incident.

Underage driver, Afnan Shafiq, who was involved in the deadly road accident in Phase-VII of the Defence Housing Authority (DHA), has 'intentionally' rammed his car into the family, it was learned.

Afnan in his confessional statement said that he was driving his car at over 100 km/h. In the video statement, he admitted that he had been driving his car for one year despite his parents stopping him.

PTI prepares appeals against Khan's nomination papers rejection from NA-122, NA-89

LAHORE (INP) The legal team of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has swiftly prepared appeals in response to the rejection of founder Imran Khan's nomination papers for NA-122 and NA-89 Mianwali.

These appeals are slated to be submitted to the election tribunal after Imran Khan signs them at Adiala Jail. The filing of appeals is anticipated tomorrow.

Sources reveal that the appeals for NA-122 in Lahore and NA-89 in Mianwali will be formally lodged after the rejection of Imran Khan's nomination papers for both constituencies. This development bars PTI leaders from participating

in elections in NA-122 and NA-89. Notably, the nominations of PTI Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his son Zain Qureshi for NA-214 Thar Parker have also faced rejection.

In a parallel setback, the nomination papers of Zulfi Bukhari for NA-50 Islamabad were dismissed, prompting him to announce his intention to seek recourse through the High Court. His appeal aims to address concerns regarding the detention of lawyers, supporters, and proposers associated with the case.

Reports indicate that the Returning Officer (RO) for NA-15 Manshehra rejected PTI

leader Azam Swati's nomination papers in a contest against PM-N leader Nawaz Sharif. Similarly, the nomination papers of Usman Dar's mother and Umar Dar's wife faced rejection in NA-71 Sialkot due to non-payment of social security dues and non-disclosure of assets. Meanwhile, the nomination papers of Fahmida Mirza, Zulfiqar Mirza, and Hussam Mirza from NA-223 in Badin, Sindh, have been rejected.

The PTI and its prominent leaders find themselves engaged in a legal battle, contesting the rejection of multiple nomination papers, adding an element of uncertainty to their electoral prospects.



QUETTA: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed presents shield of honor to Caretaker Provincial Interior Minister Captain (R) Muhammad Zubair-Jamali.

PHC reserves verdict on ECP's review plea regarding PTI election symbol

PESHAWAR (INP) The Peshawar High Court on Tuesday reserved its verdict on the review petition of the Election Commission (ECP) against restoration of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) electoral symbol.

Counsel for the ECP Sikander Mohmand submitted before Justice Ejaz Khan that the decision of PHC regarding suspension of the ECP's body's verdict be withdrawn.

Justice Khan remarked that single bench would not decide the case as it was set before a division bench for January 9 and reserved the verdict.

It may be noted that the Justice Kamran Hayat had suspended the decision of the ECP regarding anilment of results of the PTI intra-party elections and withdrawal of its electoral symbol.

The court had ordered the ECP to issue the PTI intra-party election certificate on its website and also restore the party's electoral symbol 'bat'.

The ECP filed a review petition against Justice Kamran Hayat's decision on December 30.

At the outset of proceedings, Justice Khan questioned Advocate Mohmand was there any precedence that the Supreme Court has observed that a high court order applies to the entire country when he requested for suspension of the PHC decision.

The counsel submitted that the Supreme Court had suspended the decision of the Lahore High Court regarding a returning officer's observation.

Continuing his arguments, Advocate Mohmand said the PHC issued orders ex parte.

Moreover, the PTI sought interim relief and a decision in one application, that was why he requested for suspension of the order. Justice Khan asked the counsel whether the petitioner in the case was the lawyer replied he did not know.

Advocate Mohmand requested the court to suspend the PHC order till January 9 when the division bench would hear the case, but Justice Khan observed that the court would not issue a verdict and announced reserving his decision.

After days of deliberations, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Saturday finally challenged the verdict passed by a single member Peshawar High Court (PHC) bench, which allowed the PTI to contest the February 8 general elections on "bat" - the party symbol.