

QUETTA VOICE

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Health Card Balochistan: 82% Patients Treated in Private Hospitals

Syed Ali Shah:



QUETTA: In a significant milestone, 8217 patients from Balochistan have benefited from free medical treatment within just 40 days through the innovative Balochistan Health Card initiative. The program, operational in 150 hospitals across various provinces of the country, has provided a glimmer of hope to those in need.

Caretaker Provincial Health Minister, Amir Muhammad Khan Jozzei, shared these remarkable achievements in a press conference held in conjunction with healthcare professionals. Jozzei revealed that an impressive average of 205 patients are availing themselves of medical services daily, a testament to the initiative's immediate impact.

The statistics further highlight a balanced distribution of patients, with 18 percent receiving treatment in government hospitals and the remaining 82 percent admitted to private healthcare facilities. This diverse approach ensures that individuals from all walks of life have access to quality healthcare.

32 Crore Rupees Spent on Treatment of Patients

To date, the financial commitment at 32 crore rupees, reflecting the dedication of the caretaker government to prioritize the health and well-being

of its citizens. Jozzei acknowledged the efforts of the previous government in attempting to introduce health cards in Balochistan, expressing gratitude while recognizing the challenges they faced.

Jozzei emphasized the tangible relief provided to impoverished patients through the issuance of health cards, effectively mitigating their financial burdens. The initiative has not only facilitated treatment but has also paved the way for increased transparency and accountability in healthcare services.

NADRA Verification Call Center Established

In a move toward enhanced

public convenience, a National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) verification call center was inaugurated. This center will play a crucial role in post-discharge follow-ups, ensuring that patients receive continuous support and addressing any concerns they may have.

As the Balochistan Health Card initiative continues to make strides, Amir Muhammad Khan Jozzei reassured the public that efforts to improve the program were ongoing.

He encouraged citizens to share feedback, including any complaints, to further refine the system and ensure its effectiveness in meeting the healthcare needs of the community.

BAP Chief Condemns PTI's Alleged Attempt to Delay General Elections

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: In a strongly-worded condemnation, Nawabzada Khalid Magsi, the Central President of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), criticized the Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI) for what he claims is the party's attempt to postpone the upcoming general elections in the country. Speaking at a news conference held in Quetta, Mr. Magsi expressed his concerns over the perceived tactics employed by the PTI and other political parties to delay the democratic process.

Senate elections are scheduled for March 2024

During the press conference, Mr. Magsi highlighted the significance of holding timely elections, emphasizing that the Senate elections are



scheduled for March 2024. He raised a crucial question about the constitutional implications if the elections are not conducted as scheduled. The BAP chief called attention to the potential ramifications of any delay in the constitutional status of the electoral process.

Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani was Also Present

Mr. Magsi referred to a recent court order related to the polls, questioning the timing of the order about the iss-

uance of the elections schedule. "I am surprised to see this," he remarked, adding a layer of skepticism to the unfolding situation.

Questions Imperative For Transparency in A Democratic Country

As tensions rise and political maneuvering continues, the BAP leader's strong condemnation sheds light on the complex dynamics surrounding the electoral process in Pakistan, raising important questions about the adherence to constitutional norms and the need for transparency in the democratic system. The unfolding events are sure to capture the attention of both the public and political observers as the country navigates through these critical times leading up to the elections.

SJC gives Justice Naqvi till Jan 1 to submit reply to show-cause notice

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on Thursday directed Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, who is facing allegations of misconduct, to submit his reply to the show-cause notice issued to him by Jan 1.

Headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, the SJC comprises Justice Tariq Masood, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Lahore High Court Chief Justice (CJ) Muhammad Ameer Bhatti, and Balochistan High Court (BHC) CJ Naem Akhtar.

It issued the directives as it conducted open proceedings of Justice Naqvi's case after he filed an application seeking the same.

On October 27, the SJC had issued a show-cause notice to Justice Naqvi in connection with 10 complaints lodged against him and directed the judge to submit a reply within two weeks.

In a preliminary reply submitted on November 10, Justice Naqvi had cited "serious preju-



dice" against him and said CJP Isa, Justice Masood, and CJ Akhtar should recuse themselves and not hear the matter.

On Nov 20, Justice Naqvi had contested the SJC proceedings against him and also challenged the show-cause notice issued to him by the council, stating the initiation of proceedings was corrupt non-justice and without lawful authority.

Subsequently, the SJC had issued a fresh show-cause notice to Justice Naqvi, with a direction to come up with his defence by filing a reply within a fortnight.

On December 4, Justice Naqvi had again approached the apex court and expressed his intention to pursue the constitutional petition he had moved earlier seeking to quash the revised show-cause notice issued by the SJC.

2 Heroin Addicts Injured In A Hand Grenade Attack In Mastung

From Our Correspondent:



At least two heroin addicts were injured in a hand grenade attack in Balochistan's Mastung district on Thursday morning.

Police sources said unknown motorcycle riders lobbed a hand grenade at the two addicts in the Wali Khan Police

Station jurisdiction. The attack left two addicts injured. Rescue workers were quick at the spot and the addicts were shifted to a nearby hospital for medical treatment.

Motive behind the attack could not be ascertained immediately.

PTI's Sher Afzal Marwat 'abducted' outside LHC:

LAHORE: PTI Senior Vice President (SVP) Sher Afzal Marwat was detained outside the Lahore High Court (LHC) by uniformed personnel, the party said on its X (formerly Twitter) social media account.

Footage of Marwat's arrest shared by the PTI on X showed policemen dragging him by the collar as several lawyers tried to stop them.

The PTI described the "abduction" as "absolutely shameful" and said it represented "the respect for courts in the eyes of those in power". The party also urged LHC judges to ensure Marwat's safe recovery.

In a separate statement, it said Marwat's arrest was a "manifestation of the prevailing lawlessness in the country and the fear and cowardice of the people in power".

"The aim of these unconstitutional and illegal tactics is to escape from the elections and im-



pose on the public those who were brought under the "London plan", the PTI alleged, adding that the "continued silence of the judiciary" was encouraging such illegal actions.

PTI Chairman Gohar Khan, while speaking to media persons outside the Election Commission of Pakistan in Islamabad, also condemned Marwat's arrest.

He said such actions against the party would affect free and fair elections in the country. PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan said Marwat was apprehended by Punjab police when he was enroute to address lawyers in Lahore. News Desk

PPP to field Bilawal for PM, Zardari for president: Faisal Kundi

KARACHI: PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari will stand for the coveted role of prime minister while his father and former president Asif Ali Zardari will be the nominee for president in the upcoming polls, party information secretary Faisal Karim Kundi said on Thursday.

His statement comes days after Zardari indicated that the party had yet to finalise who it would field for the role of the premier.

He had said the next prime minister could be from the PPP and that time would tell who it would be when questioned if it could be Bilawal.

"Bilawal can be the [candidate] and I can be too... Khurshid Shah also says he can be made [the prime minister]," he had stated.

Speaking to the media today in Islamabad, Kundi confirmed that Bilawal will be the candidate for the seat of prime minister.

"Our wish will be that we re-play 2018 [scenario] and make Asif Zardari the president," he added, possibly referring to the 2008 elections when Zardari was elected as the president.

The leader also reiterated that the party's soft-voiced stance that the elections "should not be delayed" beyond Feb 8, 2024 after Zardari said that a delay of "eight to 10 days" would make no difference.

"It is better than selection and becoming a kadli (favourite) that we sit in the opposition," Kundi said in an apparent reference to PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif.

Terming formerly PML-N's politics as "drawing room politics", the PPP leader wondered why the "party that calls itself the country's biggest is running away from elections".

"If a party is this big, then why does it talk about delay of two months in the elections?" he asked. News Desk

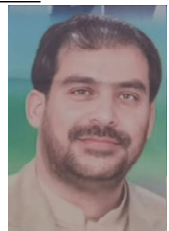
Former PTI Member Mobeen Khilji Defects to BAP, Signaling Political Realignment

News Desk:

QUETTA: In a surprising turn of events, Mobeen Khilji, a prominent figure within the Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI), has officially joined the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP). This unexpected move by Khilji is seen as a significant development, indicating a shift in political alliances and prompting speculation about the underlying dynamics within the political landscape.

The announcement was made during a press conference in Quetta, where Mobeen Khilji, flanked by BAP leaders, declared his decision to align himself with the Balochistan-based political party. The move adds an intriguing dimension to the political scenario, as Khilji's association with PTI had been a notable one.

Nawabzada Khalid Magsi, the Central President of BAP, welcomed Mobeen Khilji into the party fold, emphasizing the



party's commitment to inclusivity and diversity.

The BAP leadership highlighted the importance of collaboration and shared goals in shaping the political future of the region.

EDITORIAL

Editor: Asim Khan

Balochistan needs motorway not a ministry

Editorial:

Balochistan needs a motorway, not a ministry in the federal cabinet as demanded by the ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP). The ruling party expressed reservations about its share in the federal cabinet during its lawmakers' meeting chaired by the chief minister, Jam Kamal Khan.

The party demanded a fair share in the federal cabinet and mentioned that it has sufficient representation in the Senate and National Assembly (NA). Simply, the party demands another federal ministry. The track record shows ministers offer no panacea to the ills of Balochistan.

In fact, Balochistan that covers half of the country in terms of the area has not a single kilometre motorway. Although, most parts of the country connected through motorways from Islamabad to Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Sukkur, and other cities. Linking Balochistan with the rest of the country through a motorway was not and is not on the radar of governments.

Construction of motorways across the country has reduced the suffering of masses in Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, Balochistan has not been on the agenda of rulers with regard to the construction of motorways to enable its masses to cover long distances in short times.

Nawaz's nationalist partners also fail to construct a motorway National allies of former ruler Pakistan Muslim League (N) failed to launch construction of a motorway in Balochistan despite having cordial relations with former premier Nawaz Sharif. Similarly, chief minister Jam Kamal has repeatedly lamented that the province has not a single kilometre motorway. But, he is yet to mount pressure on the federal government to convince it to launch the construction of the motorway.

Motorway, for the people of Balochistan, seems to be day-dreaming since the Quetta-Karachi highway, commonly called the "killer highway" has not been expanded, and work on its dualization is yet to be commenced. The RCD highway is a one-lane road with a heavy traffic as it connects the capital cities of two provinces. Since its construction by Iran and Turkey under the banner of RCD, it has never been improved, although the traffic has greatly increased on this road.

Moreover, the lack of motorway police, except at some spots, is yet another cause of concern. There are no checks by the traffic controlling agencies on the 813km highway. Vehicle papers and driving licenses are not checked, while there is no action against those who violate the safety rules.

The ruling BAP has come up with a demand for the construction of a motorway to address the long-standing demand of the people of Balochistan. Indeed, this would be a great service to the people. For the federal government, it must demonstrate responsibility to turn its words into action and bring Balochistan at par with other parts of the country.

Baying at the moon

By F.S. Aijazuddin:

THE New Year was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 1st, 2024. He addressed the nation and promised to take the country forward. He also mentioned that he would work towards the development of the country. He also mentioned that he would work towards the development of the country.

By Ali Tauqeer Sheikh:

THE climate summit in the UAE had a dramatic start: the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) was established, a pledge to replenish the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was made, and the UAE-led Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action was adopted. These were Pakistan's major concerns in climate negotiations. If followed, these developments alone can keep us busy until the next summit, slated for the petro city, Baku.

There is more. Various other parties also made financial pledges on energy transition, agriculture and food security, water, urban planning, disaster risk reduction, the SDGs, regional collaboration, and philanthropic commitments. Most, however, will seek private sector leveraging and partnerships.

This may not altogether be good news for Pakistan. We have for years struggled to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). A series of internal institutional and legal reforms are needed for an enabling environment for these pledges to flow into Pakistan.

The total pledges amounted to over \$57 billion in the first four days of the conference, including \$725 million for LDF, \$3.5bn for GCF, \$2.7bn for health, \$2.6bn for nature-based solutions, \$2.5bn for renewable energy, \$1.2bn for relief and recovery, and \$1.2bn to invest in the operationalisation of the

New climate finances

LDF, urged developed nations to fund their commitment of providing \$100bn in climate finance, and more specifically, it has taken the lead on financing for eradicating neglected tropical diseases that will worsen as temperatures increase. The UAE and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have pledged \$100m each for climate-related health risks. This complex landscape is indicative of the international climate finance architecture that has become an impossible maze to understand and traverse.

From a multilateral development banks (MDBs) perspective, four developments deserve close examination. First, the multilateral development banks (MDBs) have announced the adaptation of existing frameworks to the new realities of climate change by pausing (not cancelling) debt service for climate-vulnerable countries. Second, multilateral climate funds (Adaptation, Resilience, and Loss and Damage) have announced to simplify their processes and enhance direct access to financing through joint programming, mobilising their debt. The debate now centres around the exact funding targets and mechanisms are unclear.

Third, the MDBs have signed at the climate summit a co-financing framework agreement with 16 financial institutions to partner with private financial institutions and cooperate with

other partners. In other words, the institutions outside the traditional MDBs' sphere will be expected to follow principles agreed at the UAE summit. Fourth, the World Bank launched an initiative to support methane reduction from rice production, livestock, and waste management at the national or sub-national levels. Pakistan joined the Global Methane Pledge in Glasgow in 2021 and committed to cut methane emissions by 30pc by 2030. The World Bank has announced that it will mobilise catalytic financing for scaling up successful projects in 15 countries in the next 18 months, but Pakistan is not on their list even though we are one of the world's top 10 methane emitters.

The World Bank's representative at the Pakistan pavilion urged the government of Punjab to proactively engage and become the first country in the queue.

The level of our engagement in the coming years will determine the implications for Pakistan of the first three points. The 2022 joint report by MDBs reveals their new lending architecture programming, mobilising private sector finance, and increasing funding for climate adaptation. The report shows that a total of \$60.9bn were lent to low- and middle-income economies during the period and this included, in the same order of magnitude, investment loans, policy-based financing, credit lines, grants, guarantees, results-based financing, equity, and other new

What's up at the stock market?

By Khurram Husain:

IN case you are thinking of jumping into the stock market given the sustained gains it has seen since July, be sure to ask yourself a few simple questions before you make any decision. I rarely write about the stock market, and whenever I do, it is not flattering. Especially not when the market is in the doldrums. A big reason for this is simple: there is always a catch, and rarely do retail investors come out ahead.

The brokers are adept at selling stories, by which I mean that they will tell you whatever they need to sell. When it is rising, their story will tell you how these gains have only just begun, how they still have a long way to go, and how the bad old days are over.

When the market falls, the stories will tell you that it was never a better time to buy than this. When the dust settles, you will be left with the story and the broker will have your money. Of course, there are exceptions, important ones, but the majority of stock market brokers should be dealt with cautiously.

So what makes me suspicious of the current rise? Just ask a few simple questions. First of all, when was the last time you noticed something from July to the first week of December? A big reason for this is simple: there is always a catch, and rarely do retail investors come out ahead.

Second, the system was adjusted to reflect the reality under an IMF programme.

And since most large industry in our country, especially banks and energy companies, rely almost exclusively on government-administered prices for their earnings, they almost always benefit when these prices are adjusted to reflect the market reality.

That is what has happened since July. The price of money, the price of government debt, and so on, have all been adjusted to reflect market reality. One key price—the price of the dollar—has been adjusted to the same way, but it is very likely that it too will see an adjustment in the months ahead.

With all these adjustments, the earnings of all big industry have been similarly adjusted because in almost all cases, they rely on returns as per a government formula, often indexed to the dollar. If you entered the stock market earlier this year, and have managed to ride this wave, you are lucky. But if you are looking at the performance, and listening to the stories your broker is likely

telling you, stories that are designed to entice you to enter, be very careful.

You will need to know how much more of their price adjustments will be reflected in future earnings, and very importantly, you will need to know the direction of the exchange rate, because very often what-over returns you make in these markets are blown away with one devaluation.

Be careful with the brokers as well. Some of them run professional shops, but they are not large in number. For most of them, their business model is to deal with the money of a single, or maybe two, high-net-worth individuals. Their trading strategy is designed to benefit the client, and all retail clients are subordinate in their trading strategy to the interests of their primary client. This is how they develop lyrical stories around certain investments, and why this or that stock, because most likely they are trying to generate buyers for their primary client. The economy is adjusting under an IMF programme, and firms are caught up in this process too. It times like these, it is not a good idea to take on more risk, at least not with your savings or your nest egg.

Wretched of the earth

By Abraham Shah:

IN his seminal work, The Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon paints a dismal picture of the Manichean world of colonial Algeria. In the suburbs, large boulevards run through neighbourhoods, imparting a sense of calm and order. In contrast, the cramped streets where the natives are chaotic, plagued with anomie, dissolution, and lawlessness.

Recently released pictures from Gaza depicting Palestinian men stripped and paraded in the streets reveal similar juxtapositions. These images, however, highlight a deeper tension that permeates colonised spaces—one that goes beyond the marked differences in infrastructure, public services, law and order. This tension extends beyond the physical, and spills over into the realm of the psychological, where Fanon draws a sharp distinction between the humanity and individual dignity of the native and coloniser.

Colonising a territory meant breaking the minds of its inhabitants, instilling fear and a sense of inferiority in relation to the white 'civiliser'. Central to this were notions of 'primitive' natives that in all aspects — culture, language, lifestyle — remained inferior to the colonisers.

At its core, colonisation was an exercise in dehumanisation, denigrating entire populations in racist and offensive terminology. The dehumanisation of Palestinian men re-stripped and paraded in the streets reveal similar

guilty simply on account of their race and religion. These denominators of identity made the natives easy targets of violence and disorder in the eyes of the white coloniser, thus requiring surveillance and control.

Notice again the erosion of the black and brown man's humanity and individualism, as well as seen as more inclined towards violence, harbouring lust for white women and posing a threat to the social order, traits that make him less human and more primal. These tendencies are seen as ubiquitous in

sympathy around the world in terms of the violence unleashed on Palestine and the losses suffered by Israel.

Dehumanisation and the systemic control of brown populations is not unique to Israel. The entire edifice of the modern 'war on terror', in fact, rests on the Orientalist perceptions of Palestinian men being paraded in their undergarments, evokes the same sense of melancholy and hopelessness that emanated from Abu Ghraib — the infamous sight of torture inflicted on the

bodies of brown men seen as less than human. On the flipside, this de-humanisation is — in some ways — a violation of — violations of sovereignty — as Laura Bush, then first lady of the US, once stated when she said America's war against Afghanistan made Afghan women safe. It was a violation of the implicit Orientalist tendencies to view brown, black or Muslim men as dangerous. These biases underpin the Patriot Act and the mass surveillance of

FIA launches TIP Hotline for reporting human trafficking cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): For the first time in the country, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Thursday launched a national Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Hotline for reporting human trafficking cases...

provinces, also attended the ceremony. Shireen Malik Sher, Additional Director, FIA, who is the focal person of the project, worked under the supervision of Israr Ahmed Khan, Director Anti-Human Smuggling Directorate of FIA...



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Resident Coordinator of United Nations in Pakistan Julien Harrais calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Awam-e-Sadr.

Rumours of forced labour stands baseless, Uyghur Muslims enjoy prosperity

ISLAMABAD (INP): Rumours of forced labour stand baseless as the Uyghur Muslims in the financial support of the Chinese government, the safe drinking water project was established in 2019 and the drinking water problem was solved in 2020...

the role of China's vocational education and training centers. Having trained there, Uyghur Muslims are becoming well-equipped with modern skills to fit for merits of jobs.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed launches the reports of National Transfer of Account & Provincial Transfer Accounts in collaboration with UNFPA and PIDE at local hotel.

US House launches impeachment inquiry against President Biden

WASHINGTON (INP): The US House of Representatives voted Wednesday to formalize an impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden, escalating Republicans' battle with Democrats ahead of the 2024 election...

distract from the federal criminal trials facing his almost certain challenger Donald Trump. The vote of 221 to 212 along strict party lines, while every Republican voted for it and every Democrat voted against it...

He said that with the solution to the drinking water problem, Jishi's economy is booming, and the catering and tourism industries are changing with each passing day. Answering the question, he said local Uyghur Muslims are also beneficiary of employment in the project.

Pakistan rejects reports, speculations of talks with TTP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has vehemently rejected reports and speculations of talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Responding to the queries of media persons at her weekly briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said there is absolutely no dialogue taking place with TTP.

person said the Indian Supreme Court has absolutely no jurisdiction over Jammu and Kashmir which is an internationally recognized disputed territory. The final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir will be guided by the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Economy developing, still need to improve trust of foreign institutions, investors: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said that the country's economy is on its way to stability but there is need to properly manage the repayment of debts so that the trust of foreign institutions as well as investors can be improved and confidence of local investors can increase.

Hussain further said that the IMF and other international organizations were satisfied with the actions of the current government, and in case of another agreement with the IMF, not only the domestic problems will be reduced, but also the global ranking of Pakistan will improve.



QUETTA: Additional Chief Secretary Interior Zahid Saleem is presiding over the meeting regarding the opening ceremony of the development package of Quetta.

TENDER NOTICE
Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Deputy Conservator of Forest, Naserabad invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2023 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 of Percentage Rates PSDP No.3303 Z/2019/1986 'Ten Billion Tree Tsunami' Programme Upscaling of Green Pakistan Programme (Forestry component).

DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FOREST NASERABAD
PRO No. 1183/14-12-2023

LESCO detects 269 power pilferers in a day. have arrested seven suspects

AHORE (INP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) netting 269 individuals across various categories, have arrested seven suspects during 24 hours. According to LESCO spokesperson on Thursday, this aggressive operation, spearheaded by Chief Executive Engineer Shahid Haider, marks a significant escalation in LESCO's ongoing anti-theft campaign.

"We will not tolerate this blatant disregard for the law and the financial implications it has on the system," declared Engineer Haider. "Our operation will continue relentlessly until electricity theft is completely eradicated."

The swift action resulted in the disconnection of all illegal connections and the imposition of hefty detection bills totaling 10,493,756 rupees (approximately USD 53,200). Notably, among those caught were large commercial consumers, highlighting the widespread nature of the problem. Individual detection bills for these comm-

ercial culprits ranged from 130,760 rupees to 200,000 rupees, sending a clear message that no sector is exempt from the crackdown.

Furthermore, LESCO has filed First Response (FR) applications against all 269 suspects in the respective police stations. While 134 of these applications have already been registered, swift police action has led to the arrest of 7 individuals thus far. This decisive action demonstrates LESCO's commitment to pursuing legal consequences for those engaging in illegal electricity practices.

This operation is part of a broader 96-day campaign launched by LESCO, which has yielded impressive results. To date, a total of 25,482 individuals have been identified as involved in electricity theft. Of these, FR applications have been submitted for 35,092, and cases have been registered against 33,774, leading to the arrest of 15,891 individuals. The total amount of detection bills imposed during this period

stands at a staggering 224,263,3504 rupees (approximately USD 1.13 billion), highlighting the scale of the financial losses LESCO has incurred due to illegal electricity usage.

LESCO officials emphasize that the campaign is not merely targeting consumers but also LESCO officers and employees who may be complicit in these illegal activities. "We will not tolerate any internal corruption," stated Engineer Haider. "Anyone found to be aiding or abetting electricity theft will face severe disciplinary action and legal prosecution."

LESCO's unwavering commitment to combating electricity theft is expected to have a significant impact on the company's finances and overall efficiency.

This sustained crackdown serves as a strong deterrent to potential offenders and sends a clear message that LESCO will not hesitate to take decisive action against those who jeopardize the integrity of the electricity supply system.



QUETTA VOICE: Director General Excise and Taxation Aurangzeb Kasi is meeting the caretaker provincial interior minister Captain (R) Muhammad Zubair Jamali.

ANF seizes 74kg narcotics, arrests 8 in 14 countrywide operations

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized 74 kg drugs and 1830 intoxicated tablets besides arresting eight drug peddlers during 14 operations conducted across the country.

A spokesman of ANF Headquarters said on Thursday, that 110.4 kg opium and 403.2 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Aminpur Interchange, Faisalabad.

In another operation, in Peshawan area of Gwadar 130 kg hashish was recovered.

The ANF conducted a raid on Shikapur Road Sukkur and seized 110 kg hashish while over 100kg hashish was recovered from an uninhabited area of Chaman.

The spokesman in formed that 84 kg opium was recovered

from an uninhabited area of Nekundi Chagan.

Similarly, 51.4 kg hashish was recovered from Bajaur area. ANF conducted a raid and managed to recover 14.4 kg opium and 28.8 kg hashish from a vehicle intercepted near Warsak Road Peshawar. An accused was also arrested during the operation.

During an operation in a nullah near Kuchlak Bypass Quetta, 24 kg hashish was recovered. Ten kilogram ice was recovered from a parcel being sent to Japan at a courier office located on Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi.

Three accused were held after recovery of 3.6 kg hashish from their possession in Zakhakhel Khyber area.

900 grams ice drug was re-

covered from a passenger's trolley at Basma Khan International Airport. The accused was leaving for Doha by flight number QR-601.

2.4 kg of opium was recovered from a vehicle intercepted at Labor Colony Peshawar while two accused were netted during the operation.

ANF in a raid conducted at a courier office in Johar Town Lahore recovered 640 grams ice from a parcel being sent to Qatar. 1830 intoxicated tablets were recovered from a parcel at Pak-Afghan border, Chaman.

Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.

Pakistan-China to promote joint ventures in furniture industry

BEIJING (INP): A delegation of Pakistan Furniture Council, headed by its Chief Executive Officer, Mian Kashif Ashfaq, arrived in Guangzhou to seek collaboration in the furniture industry with their Chinese counterparts. Talking to newsmen, the CEO said the exploration of joint ventures in the furniture industry signifies a proactive approach to leverage each country's strengths in the furniture sector, fostering innovation and sustainable growth. He said the primary objective of this delegation is to delve into potential export markets, foster collaborations, and explore opportunities for joint ventures in the furniture industry.

The furniture industry in Pakistan is made up of numerous small and medium-sized businesses. Because of this, there is fierce competition in the market. Pakistan's revenue from the furniture industry reached \$800 million by the end of 2022.

Pakistan's major buyers of wooden furniture are the United Kingdom, the United States, Sri Lanka, and Gulf countries including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait. Pakistan's hand-made furniture is in high demand by high-end customers. The leading wood-furniture-making areas of Pakistan are Chinot, Gujrat, Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi. Traditional Pakistani

furniture design reflects the rich cultural heritage of the country. With intricate craftsmanship, beautiful carvings, and ornate details, this style encompasses a sense of elegance and tradition.

Traditional Pakistani furniture is often made of quality wood such as sheesham and walnut, and is known for its durability and timeless beauty. Therefore, collaboration between the two countries will help furniture associations, producers, suppliers, and customers at both ends. It will create more cooperation, cultural interchange, and economic development, moving the furniture sector forward in both regions, GwadarPro reported on Thursday.



SOHRATPUR: Commissioner Tariq Qamar Baloch is being briefed by Exean Buildings Engineer Ahmed Nawaz regarding the work of Inraai District Complex.



MUZAFFARABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar observes the Guard of Honour by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Police Guards.

PM reaffirms Pakistan's support to Kashmiris; terms Indian SC verdict as politically motivated

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Kashmir, and rejected the recent verdict of the Indian supreme court calling it a politically motivated and a tool to consolidate Indian illegal occupation.

The prime minister, in his address at the special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, called for India to desist from consolidating its occupation, revoke the illegal unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 and not change the demography of the disputed territory.

Addressed by Speaker of AJK Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar, the session was attended by AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq and members of the Assembly.

The prime minister also stressed upon India to halt the human rights abuses in IIOJK, repeal emergency laws, withdraw heavy military presence and provide unhindered access to UN bodies and the international media. The prime minister, who was the first-ever caretaker PM to address the AJK Legislative Assembly, paid tribute to the martyrs of the Kashmir movement and those living along the Line of Control and suffered losses due to the Indian ceasefire violations.

He said Pakistan would continue to stand alongside the people of Kashmir in their struggle and wished them to enjoy their due rights. "Kashmir is Pakistan's jugular vein. The word 'Pakistan' is incomplete without Kashmir. The people of Pakistan and Kashmir are bound by unique affinity.

We share joys and sorrow. Pakistan cannot remain indifferent to the situation in Kashmir... Kashmir runs in our blood. Jammu and Kashmir remains an important facet of Pakistan's foreign policy," he remarked.

He said across the political divide, the entire Pakistani leadership stood united to support Kashmiris for their right to self-determination.

Giving a historical account, the prime minister said the Kashmiris had suffered enormously from conflicts in history. Even today, the situation has not improved as the majority was still under the subjugation of an oppressor with a different name.

Prime Minister Kakar told the House that Kashmir was the oldest unsettled agenda of the United Nations as the UNSC resolutions remained unimplemented and the Indian government was bent upon consolidating its occupation of disputed territory through a series of legislative and administrative measures.

Referring to the Indian decision to take the Kashmir issue to the United Nations and repeated Indian leaders recognizing it as a dispute, he said the current Indian government must honor its longstanding commitment to UN resolutions. He said the Indian SC verdict was politically motivated instead of grounded in law to validate the illegal unilateral measures of August 5, 2019.

He said India was afraid of Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Geelani even after his death and sought the death penalty for another leader Yaseen Malik which manifested its failure to suppress the spirit of freedom.

raised to cover up the marginalization of minorities, state-sponsored terrorism and illegal occupation.

Calling the Indian actions in IIOJK a breach of the UN charter, the UNSC resolutions and international laws, he said the main objective of the Indian measures was to convert Kashmir into a disempowered community in their land.

However, he said the domestic legislation and judicial verdicts could not avoid India of its obligations.

He said, on the one hand, India wished to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, while on the other its leadership took pride in trampling upon international laws. Such contradictions reinforced by the Hindutva ideology should be an eye-opener for the international community, he added.

He said thousands of Kashmiris have been killed, thousands faced forced disappearances and pellet gun injuries and thousands of the women suffered molestation and that the human rights abuses were also documented in two of the UN reports.

Questioning the conscience of the international community, he said despite killings, illegal detention of Kashmiri leaders and destruction of structures, India could not extinguish the flame of freedom from the hearts of Kashmiris.

He said India was afraid of Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Geelani even after his death and sought the death penalty for another leader Yaseen Malik which manifested its failure to suppress the spirit of freedom.



QUETTA: Anjuman Tajran Balochistan President Rahim Agha addressing a press conference.

Fuelled by arrest fears, repatriation of illegal Afghans gathers pace

ISLAMABAD (INP): The repatriation of Afghans residing illegally in Pakistan is accelerating, driven by both government enforcement and self-deportation fuelled by fear.

Even before the announcement by the government, a large number of illegal Afghans started going to Afghanistan over fears of arrest. On December 13 alone, 2,423 Afghans, including 687 men, 326 women, and 1,410 children, crossed the border into Afghanistan, bringing the total number of returnees to 429,288 since the process began.

While the government officially launched the repatriation effort recently, many undocumented Afghans have been proactively leaving Pakistan in recent months to pre-empt potential arrest. This wave of self-deportation is driven by anxieties over uncertain legal status and fears of detention as authorities crack down on undocumented residents.

On Dec 13, 235 families departed in 114 vehicles, highlighting the scale of the movement. This trend raises concerns about the capacity of Afghanistan to

absorb such a large influx of people, particularly amidst its ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Official records indicate that on December 12, an additional 2,023 Afghan nationals voluntarily returned to their homeland. This included 536 men, 412 women, and 175 children in Afghan cities. The repatriation process involved 93 vehicles transporting 182 families to Afghanistan. On Wednesday, the federal cabinet had announced an extension in the stay period for Afghan nationals in Pakistan who are in the process of evacuating to third countries.

The extension stretches from the initial deadline of December 31 to February 29, 2024. However, those remaining after the specified date will incur a monthly fine of \$100, with a capped maximum limit of \$800.

The caretaker government emphasized that the extension is accompanied by a penalty system. Damages will be applied at \$100 per month for individuals staying beyond the revised deadline, with a financial ceiling of \$800. Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi highlighted that the cabinet also approved a

reduction in the processing fee for Afghan nationals being evacuated to third countries. The processing fee, initially set at \$800, has now been halved to \$400.

The caretaker cabinet aims to encourage Afghan nationals residing in Pakistan illegally to either obtain legal documents or finalize evacuation agreements promptly.

The reasons for the Afghans' presence in Pakistan vary. Some fled decades ago during the Soviet-Afghan War, while others sought refuge more recently from the Taliban's 2021 takeover. The complex history and intertwined lives of the two countries add layers of difficulty to the repatriation process.

While the Pakistani government emphasizes security concerns as the driving force behind the deportations, the human cost of the operation remains a crucial consideration. Ensuring safe and dignified returns, considering the vulnerable families involved, is essential. Additionally, international cooperation and support are crucial to help Afghanistan absorb the returning population and prevent further humanitarian hardship.