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QUETTA VOICE

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BNA Commander Sarfaraz Bangulzai Along With 72 Militants Surrender

Mir Salam Jogezai:

QUETTA: The Commander of the outlawed Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), Sarfaraz Bangulzai, along with 72 militants, surrendered before the authorities and joined the peace process on Wednesday. "I have decided to quit violence and join the peace process," Mr. Bangulzai announced during a news conference at the Sikandar Jamali Auditorium.

Balochistan Caretaker Home Minister, Captain (R) Zubair Jamali, and Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai were also present on the occasion.

Sarfaraz Bangulzai Was Leading BNA

Sarfaraz Bangulzai had been leading the BNA after Gulzar Shambay, the former commander of the militant group, joined the peace process earlier. Speaking at the news conference, the former key commander of the outlawed BNA exposed Indian involvement in Balochistan.

"India is behind all sabotage activities in Balochistan," Mr. Bangulzai stated. He urged the youth to renounce violence and join the peace process for the development and prosperity of the country and the province.

Sarfaraz Ahmed Bangalzai revealed that despite leading a stable life, including owning a house and a car while working in the food department in Balochistan, he succumbed to the influence of certain individuals in 2009.

Former Commander Admitted To Engaging In Actions Under The Guise Of Nationalism

The former BNA commander admitted to engaging in actions under the guise of nationalism. However, he had a change of heart when he observed the ostentatious lifestyles of self-proclaimed leaders, leading him to realize their anti-national stance.

During the event, Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai emphasized the need to bridge misunderstandings and gaps. He called for the inclusion of disgruntled Baloch individuals in the national mainstream.

Bangulzai Exposed Indian Involvement in Balochistan

Jan Achakzai acknowledged the tireless efforts of the caretaker prime minister, Anwar ul Haq Kakar, and army chief, General Syed Asim Munir, in addressing the issue.

He specifically mentioned Gulzar Imam Shambay for facilitating negotiations, highlighting the collective agreement to resolve the problems faced by the angered Baloch population.

Moreover, Achakzai raised concerns about India's alleged attempts to exacerbate the situation in Balochistan, attributing the destruction of their land to the actions of external adversaries.

Two cops injured in explosion at ex-CJP Nisar's residence in Lahore

LAHORE: Two police officials were injured in an explosion that occurred in the garage of the Lahore residence of former Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Saqib Nisar in Lahore, Express News reported.

The incident took place in Lahore's Garden Town, and sources from the rescue team confirmed that Saqib Nisar was present at the time of the occurrence.

Taking notice following the incident, Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Usman Anwar has sought report from CCPO Lahore.

He instructed the provision of the best medical facilities for the injured police personnel, identified as Amir and Khurram.

According to Punjab Police spokesperson, the family of former CJP was unhurt, adding that the IGP has ordered a thorough investigation into the incident.

Also read: Nawaz's disqualification continues to haunt ex-CJ

He said that both police personnel had minor injuries. Senior police officers, including CCPO Lahore, DIG Operations Lahore, and SSP Operations, are present at the scene.

Following the incident, security measures in the area have been heightened. The authorities have also imposed restrictions on the movement of vehicles and pedestrians on the road leading to ex-CJP's residence. **News Desk**

Wadh Blast: 4 Injured in Unexploded Shell Mishap Amidst Tribal Tensions

From Our Correspondent:

KHUZDAR: In a devastating incident that unfolded in Khuzdar Tehsil Wadh Langarji, four individuals, including women and children, suffered severe injuries following the explosion of an inoperative shell. Local authorities, including Levies and police force officials, swiftly responded to the scene to manage the aftermath.

The injured victims were promptly provided with medical assistance, with one individual requiring urgent care being airlifted to Karachi for specialized treatment. Additionally, two others were transferred to local medical facilities in Khuzdar to receive the necessary attention.

Incident Comes Against The Backdrop Of Heightened Tensions

This unfortunate incident comes against the backdrop of heightened tensions in the area. Approximately two months ago, a protracted conflict erupted between two tribal factions in Wadh, lasting for an extended period. The repercussions of this ongoing dispute have cast a shadow over the safety and well-being of the community.

The local authorities are actively engaged in addressing the root causes of the conflict, and efforts are underway to restore peace and stability in the region. Investigations into the inoperative shell explosion are also being conducted to determine the circumstances that led to this tragic incident.

As the community grapples with the aftermath of the explosion, there is a collective call for increased vigilance regarding unexploded ordnance to prevent further casualties. The incident serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive measures to ensure the safety and security of residents in conflict-affected areas.

Tragedy Strikes: 2 Brothers Killed In Dera Murad Jamali Firing

Ayub Bhutto:

NASEERABAD: In a harrowing incident within the jurisdiction of the Police Station, Sadar Dera Murad Jamali limits, two members of the Pechuhu community fell victim to an unidentified assailant's gunfire. The fatal attack occurred on the national highway near Rabi, leading to the untimely demise of the two brothers.

The lifeless bodies of the victims were swiftly transported to the Civil Hospital, where authorities are conducting post-mortem examinations. The local community is grappling with shock and grief as they await answers regarding the motive behind this brutal act.

Lifeless Bodies Shifted To Hospital

Law enforcement agencies are actively investigating the incident, striving to piece together the circumstances surrounding the tragedy.

The identities of the assailants remain unknown at this time, adding a layer of complexity to the case. The Pechuhu community, deeply affected by this senseless violence, is left searching for answers as to why their loved ones were targeted.

Authorities are urging anyone with information related to the incident to come forward, emphasizing the crucial role community cooperation plays in solving such cases.

Justice Demand For Victims

This tragic event sheds light on the pressing need for enhanced security measures along the national highway and underscores the urgency of collaborative efforts to ensure the safety of residents in the region.

As the investigation unfolds, the community is left to mourn the loss of two lives, hoping for swift justice and a resolution to the unanswered questions surrounding this unfortunate incident.

Levies Personnel Engaged In Polio Campaign Injured In Chaman

Sardar Muhammad Khondai:

CHAMAN: In an unfortunate incident on Wednesday, an unidentified assailant injured a levies personnel engaged in an anti-polio campaign in the Guldara Baghicha area of Chaman.

According to police sources, the assailant subjected the levies personnel to torture on the outskirts of Chaman.

Shockingly, other policemen present during the campaign did not intervene to resist the assault on their colleague. This disturbing development occurred shortly after protesters at the Chaman sit-in declared a suspension of the anti-polio campaign in the area.

As of now, no arrests have been made in connection with the attack on the levies personnel.

The Balochistan Health Department's ongoing anti-polio campaign in the Chaman district faces a setback due to this unfortunate incident.

Sardar Israr Tareen Joins PPP In A Meeting With Asif Zardari

Monitoring Desk:

Sardar Israr Tareen, the former federal minister joined the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Tuesday night.

Sardar Tareen called on PPP decision-maker Asif Ali Zardari and announced joining the PPP.

Mr. Tareen was elected as an MNA on the ticket of the former ruling party the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) during 2018 general elections.

Tareen belongs to Dukki district of Balochistan.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Collaborative Growth with German Consulate's Focal Person for Economic Development

Editorial:

In the bustling city of Quetta, where the echoes of development are becoming increasingly audible, the people and business leaders of Balochistan extend a heartfelt appeal to the German Consulate in Karachi. Today, as we reflect on the dynamic friendship between Pakistan and Germany, we take a moment to express our gratitude to the German government for its sponsorship of various development projects that have notably enhanced the socio-economic conditions of our province.

Balochistan, with its vast and untapped potential, stands as a reservoir of economic opportunities awaiting exploration through international partnerships. Recognizing this significant potential for collaboration, we underscore the crucial role that the German Consulate can play in promoting economic growth, facilitating trade, and attracting investments to our resource-rich region.

The spirit of our appeal lies in a call for enhanced cooperation, urging the German Consulate to initiate dialogues and engagement sessions with local entrepreneurs, industrialists, and investors. This collaborative approach promises not only to benefit the business community but also to contribute significantly to the overall economic development of Balochistan.

Our province boasts unique offerings in sectors such as minerals, agriculture, and fisheries, aligning harmoniously with Germany's interests and expertise. By actively involving the business community, the German Consulate has the opportunity to identify mutually beneficial opportunities and contribute to the prosperity of both regions.

While expressing our appreciation for the appointment of a focal person for the business community of Sindh and Balochistan, we humbly stress the importance of broader consultation with all stakeholders in Balochistan. We believe that inclusive decision-making will undoubtedly enhance the success of such initiatives.

We are optimistic that, under its current leadership, the German Consulate will not only recognize the significance of Balochistan's economic landscape but also take proactive steps to strengthen economic ties. Our people and business leaders eagerly anticipate constructive engagement that fosters a lasting partnership between the German Consulate Karachi and our province. Together, as great friends on the global stage, Pakistan and Germany can unlock the full potential of economic collaboration and contribute to the shared prosperity of our regions. Balochistan, with its rich tapestry of opportunities, should not be overlooked in development and key appointments. We trust that our collective efforts will pave the way for a brighter future for all, and as a newspaper, we remain committed to facilitating this collaborative journey toward progress and prosperity."

In heartbeat nurses treat injured of blasts in civil hospital Quetta

Chandni Kakar:

"In a heartbeat, I provide first-aid to injured of blasts", Firdous, a 27-year-old nurse said. Firdous works at the Trauma Center Civil Hospital Quetta for the last five years. She is one of the frontline health workers providing medical treatment to seriously injured people. Since seriously injured people are brought to the Trauma Center, I, therefore provide them with first aid along with senior health professionals, she said.

Balochistan is under the grip of violence for the last more than two decades. Bomb explosions and targeted killings by the outlawed militant organizations have claimed scores of precious human lives.

The worsening law and order situation has far-reaching negative impacts on the population in general and the women segment of society in particular.

"Women suffer psychologically after every terror attack"

"Women suffer psychologically after every terror attack", Azizullah Khan, a senior faculty member at the physiatry department said.

He said most of the women suffer from the post-traumatic disorder (PTDS) after incidents of bomb explosions and targeted killings.

Quetta's civil hospital has witnessed repeated follow-up bomb explosions. At least 70 people including 56 members of the legal fraternity and lawyer's leader Baz Muhammad Kakar and two cameramen of private TV channels were killed on August 8, 2016, when a suicide bomber struck the casualty ward of the hospital.

Lawyers and health workers and media men had gathered after the killing of a senior lawyer Bilal Kasi Advocate when the suicide bomber targeted the crowd in the hospital. Hospital nurses also suffered casualties in the attack.

"When we recall that day we get disturbed", Firdous said

"When we recall that day we get disturbed",

Firdous said. She said all health professionals were extremely concerned about their security after every terror attack in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan.

Human Rights Groups have also demanded of the government to make sure of foolproof security arrangements for all health professionals. "Government has to protect all medical professionals",

Habib Tahir Advocate, the Chief of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) Balochistan chapter said. He said it was the responsibility of the government to protect health professionals.

Elections and fair play

By Zahid Hussain:

THE good news is that the elections will be held on Feb 8. The bad news is that they could end in yet another farce. The Supreme Court's ruling last week, followed by the announcement of the election schedule, may have removed the uncertainty, but the fairness of the process remains in question. It seems that the field is being cleared for the chosen ones.

With every effort being made to keep the PTI out of the race, it is now left to the PML-N and PPP to battle it out. The charade seems to have gone too far, making a mockery of the entire electoral process. It may not be the first time we are witnessing this game but it has never been so vicious. It is all about producing a 'positive' outcome.

But the game is not over yet. The monster could not be culled. The spontaneous show of power by the PTI in KP provides a glimpse of growing resistance, defying persecution and restrictions. A gag order is not effective in this era of social media. A trailblazer in the use of social media platforms, the PTI is now using artificial intelligence to defeat the ban.

Recently, the party organised its first virtual gathering launching its election campaign. It also reportedly used AI to clone the voice of its incarcerated leader Imran Khan. Although internet disruptions marred the five-hour long event, it nevertheless managed to deliver the message to some extent.

Such novel use of AI-based communication technology also demonstrates the limitations of the curbs imposed by the state, affecting political dynamics in the run-up to the elections. It would make it much harder for the powers that be to completely manipulate the political process.

With the other two mainstream political parties, the PML-N and PPP, almost novices in the use of social media, the domain is completely dominated by the PTI, thus increasing the reach of the party's message to the young population. The party's call for voters to turn out in large numbers could complicate the game on polling day. But it seems the establishment has some more cards up its sleeve to stop the PTI from turning the tables on it on election day.

There are already some signs of the state turning more repressive in order to block any challenge from the party. With the approach of elections, the crackdown has now been extended to even the third- and fourth-ranking local party leadership. Those refusing to surrender face severe intimidation. The plight of women prisoners is worse.

The Supreme Court's latest ruling restoring the law that allows civilians to be tried by military courts could be used as an instrument to further intimidate political prisoners. Yet, despite all these draconian measures, the situation doesn't appear to be completely under control.

Although the PTI doesn't seem to have any clear programme beyond rhetoric, state repression has, in fact, increased its support base. Forced exodus from the party and attempts to bar its candidates from taking part in the elections do not seem to have worked in eroding the PTI's support.

This is the environment in which elections will take place. The growing perception that the elections are already being managed has severely damaged the credibility of the process. The big question is whether such elections can lead to political stability in the country, or would they deepen the polarisation. In this age of social media, it is hard for the state to suppress dissenting voices. The doubtful credibility of the elections could cause the situation to become extremely volatile, making it hard for the future government to deal with the multiple challenges the country faces.

Any government coming to power through dubious elections will be on a very weak footing, making it increasingly dependent on the security establishment. It will be a great leap backward for the democratic process in the country.

Most worrisome is the fact that both the PML-N and PPP have become a willing partner in this game of thrones, supporting the establishment in all its repressive actions.

In fact, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif is the major beneficiary of the establishment's new game plan. Given how the entire system can be manipulated, his quick acquittal by the judiciary in all the cases against him has not come as a surprise.

Once declared a 'proclaimed offender', he is now declared kosher by the courts which had earlier convicted him. It is evident that his ouster from power and conviction were part of a plot by the same forces that now seem to be backing his party in the elections. With the removal of his conviction, Nawaz Sharif is now seen as eligible to stand in the elections, strengthening his bid for a fourth term in office. The party seems assured of returning to power.

In an ironic twist, it is now Imran Khan's turn to face charges that range from corruption to sedition. He has already been indicted in the cipher case. Being convicted would disqualify him from holding public office. The dubious credibility of our judicial system and how it has manipulated his conviction would be seen as a yet another case of political victimisation.

Unfortunately, almost all elections in the past are seen as manipulated exercises, yet the ongoing pre-poll management has little precedent. Such brazen distortion of the process has not been seen even under military governments. With the security establishment so deeply entrenched in every sphere of power, the elections are not likely to consolidate civilian supremacy, and will likely lead to another era of hybrid rule, with the civilian administration playing second fiddle.

A country facing an existential threat needs a strong representative government to deal with the challenges it confronts. The country needs political reconciliation and not polarisation. The irony is that our political leaders never learn from their own history. It is all about short-term interests rather than the goal of strengthening democracy.

South Asia's smog

By Jamil Ahmad:

AIR pollution is a major environmental threat of our time, affecting our well-being and posing health hazards to the most vulnerable members of our communities. South Asia, home to a quarter of the global population, has the worst urban air pollution in the world. Most South Asians live in areas where air pollution levels significantly exceed the WHO guidelines, exposing people to unhealthy air year-round and shortening life expectancy.

At the start of winter, air pollution increases to extremely dangerous levels. The toxic mix of smoke and dust is trapped by cold and heavy air, converting it into thick layers of smog over long periods of dry weather. In addition to health hazards, reduced visibility endangers lives on roads and motorways. Only occasional spells of rain provide temporary relief from the smog, even as highly dangerous levels of pollution remain in the air.

The air quality in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal is counted as the worst. Lahore, Peshawar, Gujranwala, New Delhi, and Kolkata rank among the world's most polluted urban centres.

A recent news report labelled South Asia as the 'epicentre' of air pollution. This year, the situation is alarming. The impact of living under such hazardous conditions is particularly calamitous for children, the elderly and those with respiratory and cardiac health conditions.

In Pakistan, due to air pollution, life expectancy has been reduced by four years compared to the global average reduction of 2.3 years. In the worst-affected urban areas, such as Peshawar and Lahore, residents are expected to lose as many as five years of their lives as a result of unhealthy air. The drivers of air pollution are well known, as are the solutions to control it. Toxic emissions from industry, transport, waste burning and seasonal crop residue burning are major sources of air pollution in Pakistan.

In some parts of Pakistan, health advisories have been issued and educational institutes and offices closed for short periods, with the expectation that less human activity would reduce the smog and protect the vulnerable. This is no lasting solution.

A ban on crop residue burning will also not be effective until farmers are provided with an alternative system to clean their land of crop residue in an environmentally friendly way.

Weasel words

By Mahir Ali:

IT took 28 years of UN-sponsored climate conferences for one of them to even acknowledge the primary source of the planet's woes.

That was enough for the circus that concluded in Dubai a week ago to be hailed as a landmark.

It has been patently obvious for decades that fossil fuels are the chief culprits in global warming. Reports prepared for some of the biggest offenders pointed this out as far back as the 1950s. They were covered up, obviously.

And varieties of greenwashing have been the norm since the world woke up to the challenge 30 years later.

Much attention has been focused lately on the Swiss cheese of loopholes that accompany the bland wish to 'transition away' from coal, oil and gas as the sources of most of the globe's energy.

This kind of wishful thinking might have meant something if the turning point had been recognised three decades ago, and efforts launched to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Meaningful investments in solar and wind energy, if launched as recently as the 1980s-90s, could have made a huge difference to Earth's fate. It was not to be.

The COPs since then have been reluctant to spell out the source of the world's woes, partly courtesy of the Saudi injunction that any initiative required consensus. COP28 was deemed a step forward in calling out fossil fuels, but precious little was specified in terms of transcending them as the primary source of energy.

The requisite sound and fury were absent from the 'UAE consensus', which effectively signifies nothing. The worst polluters can step up their activities without violating the meaningless Dubai injunction.

That was apparently the intention. The choice of the Emirati petrostate as the next conference host at the conclusion of COP27 in Egypt occasioned plenty of dark humour even before the UAE picked Sultan al-Jaber, the head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company as its president. The UAE hired leading PR agencies to transform the narrative. It was only partially successful, particularly once it was alleged that al-Jaber was keen on using COP28 as a platform for negotiating lucrative oil deals. And that he doubted the science behind decreeing fossil fuels as the chief hurdle to achieving net zero emissions.

He pushed back against those media reports, acknowledging that the phase-out of fossil fuels was essential to cooling the Earth.

But after the conference concluded, he returned to his job at the helm of the oil company, which reportedly intends to fire up its production levels in the years to come.

Another petrostate will host the next COP, and doubts about whether these conferences serve any useful purpose have steadily been mounting. More than 2,400 fossil fuel lobbyists were accredited to the farce in Dubai, an exponentially higher figure than their numbers in Glasgow and Sharm el-Sheikh.

The numbers in Baku may be even higher. They needn't worry too much, though — the biggest polluters will make sure that next to nothing is agreed that just might salvage the planet.

And even if by some miracle a consensus were to be achieved on phasing out fossil fuels, it would mean very little without an enforcement mechanism — which doesn't exist. Sure, Saudi output, for instance, would be set back if all other nations stopped buying its oil. But, seriously, what are the chances? After all, as George Monbiot points out, "more carbon dioxide from fossil fuels has been released worldwide" since 1992, when climate negotiations began, than in all of human history.

He compares the oil and gas lobbyists' presence in Dubai to "allowing weapons manufacturers to dominate a peace conference". Mind you, one hardly hears of a peace conference these days, whereas they were ubiquitous between the end of World War II and the 1980s.

They didn't achieve much, but nor have the climate conferences. Arguably, even the two exceptions of some consequence, Kyoto and Paris, have simply been ignored by those who didn't particularly care for their injunctions. There is absolutely no reason to expect that the UN climate conference process will ever yield anything resembling a practical road map for edging away from the impending apocalypse.

Decolonising the museum

Rafia Zakaria:

IT is sad that a visit to many of the most famous museums in the world feels like a visit to the treasure trove of a global looter. When one visits the British Museum, for instance, giant stone sculptures stolen from Easter Island, also known as Rapa Nui, are there to greet all visitors. The Ishtar Gate, which once guarded the entrance to the ancient city of Babylon, is not in Iraq but in Berlin at the Pergamon Museum. On more than one occasion, the government of Iraq has officially asked for it to be returned, but its demand has fallen on deaf ears. In the subcontinent, the story of the Kohinoor diamond is well known even though it is just one of the many objects and artifacts that were looted by the British and taken back to Britain before they left India. In the past few years, however, the movement to have all these stolen goods returned to the countries from where they were looted has gained ground. Many scholars in the West have turned their attention to art theft and the issue of 'provenance' or how a particular institution managed to procure a piece for its collection has begun to be discussed. Some have pointed out how museums have circumvented the issue of illegal procurement by encouraging a wealthy donor to acquire an object and then displaying it with the label 'from the collection of XYZ' so that the museum itself does not have to disclose how the object was obtained. This applies to objects that were stolen on the art black market or during the colonial era.

Recently, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art announced it would be returning more than a dozen art objects reported to have been supplied by an art dealer and collector who was running a worldwide antiquities trafficking ring. Most of the sculptures will be returned to Cambodia and a few to Thailand. The ancient statues were part of the collection of British art dealer and collector Douglas Latchford. Many appear to have been taken out of Cambodia during the rule of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s. Art objects often become the subject of looting or illegal trade during periods of political tumult when competing parties or the fog of war obscure what is happening in cultural institutions.

Latchford was finally indicted for the theft of these and many other objects in 2019. However, he conveniently died the next year and so was never convicted and brought to justice. His heirs in the Latchford family admitted that the collection had hundreds of pieces of ancient Khmer objects and pieces of jewellery, which were reported to have been returned to Cambodia. It is very likely all these were procured by Latchford, whose dealings spanned the course of several decades. Other than ancient jewellery, there were statues of the Buddha, including one rare one referred to as the Head of the Buddha. The subject of art theft and the return of looted objects has started to reach the highest levels. A meeting between Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and his British counterpart Rishi Sunak was cancelled because the latter learned that Mitsotakis was going to raise the issue of the stolen Elgin Marbles that were taken from the site of the Parthenon by the British and whose return the Greeks have been demanding for several decades. In an interview with the BBC, the Greek prime minister said, "This is not a question of returning artefacts … this is not an ownership question, this is a reunification argument", going on to provocatively indicate that the Parthenon without the marbles was like the Mona Lisa torn in half.

As for the British Museum itself, it set up a website asking for the public's help in addressing the question of hundreds of objects, mainly "gems and jewellery" dating from the 15th century BC, that had gone missing from its collection. Unsurprisingly, it focused largely on theft from its own stock rather than colonialist looting. It has now concluded an investigation. The museum has also raised issues related to procurement but, tellingly, those relating to a narrow window of time from the 1930s to the end of World War II. These procurement problems are issues around art theft by the Nazis, who took over many European capitals and thus the objects in them. The British were the 'good' guys in that conflict and so it is convenient for the museum to position itself as a do-gooder trying to repatriate items back to European capitals following the consequences of Nazi looting.

Sindh Food Authority Visits BFA Laboratories

News Desk:

(QUETTA)- A technical team from the Sindh Food Authority (SFA), led by Director Technical Dr. Ahmed Ali Shaikh and Technical Advisor Dr. Seema Ashraf, recently visited the newly established laboratories of the Balochistan Food Authority (BFA).

This visit took place at the invitation of the BFA and under the direction of DG SFA Agha Fakhar Hussain.

The primary objective of the visit was to provide guidance, assistance, and testing facilities to the BFA laboratories. The SFA team aimed to enhance the capabilities of the BFA in chemical analysis and microbial analysis.

During the visit, the SFA technical team offered consultations and guidance to the staff of the microbiology lab at BFA. They provided valuable insights on the analysis of loose or unpacked oil/ghee samples, harmonizing the procedure, and implementing uniform strategic Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) followed by the Sindh Food Authority.

Furthermore, the SFA technical team extended their consultation and support to the BFA in chemical analysis.

They provided expertise in food grade and non-food grade color analysis, powdered and infant formula milk analysis, as well as bakery and confectionery item analysis.

This collaborative effort between the SFA and BFA aims to strengthen the food safety infrastructure in Balochistan and ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the production and distribution of food products.

By sharing knowledge, expertise, and resources, both authorities are working towards the common goal of safeguarding public health and promoting consumer confidence in the food industry.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Interior Aftab Durrani in a meeting with the Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki.

CPEC renovated Pakistan's socio-economic landscape: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said that launched in 2013, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has renovated the socio-economic landscape of Pakistan, addressing a dire energy crisis and crumbling infrastructure. While speaking at 8th China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Media Forum in Islamabad, he said CPEC Media Forum holds significant personal importance for him as well.

Murtaza Solangi said that the CPEC Media Forum through its factual information providing, was dedicated to challenging the propaganda, surrounding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

He said before CPEC, Pakistan faced challenges in 2013 including ten hours plus blackouts, 2500 mw electricity deficit, and 250 billion dollar economic loss.

The minister said CPEC came at fortune time for Pakistan, instilling hope, confidence and faith in people of Pakistan.

He said CPEC is not just an infrastructure project, but it has generated over 236 thousand jobs since 2013 and is set to create 1.2 million direct jobs, contributing to local workforce development, and reducing regional disparities.

Murtaza Solangi said CPEC has significantly contributed to Pakistan's economic growth, increasing growth rate.

The minister emphasized that media's crucial role off in shaping the perspectives of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor requires objective reporting.

Iran lashes at Sweden over life sentence for former official

TEHRAN (INP): Tehran lashed out at Sweden for its courts rejection an appeal by a former Iranian prison official against a life sentence handed down over mass executions in 1988.

A day earlier, a Swedish appeals court upheld the jail term handed down against Hamid Noury, 62, in July last year "for grave breaches of international humanitarian law and murder".

In a statement, the Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said, "It is regrettable that the Swedish court, without considering the standards of a fair trial, decided to issue such a destructive verdict."

He condemned the judgment as "fundamentally unacceptable" and said Iran would "use all legal avenues at its disposal" to secure Noury's release.

Noury was arrested at Stockholm airport in November 2019 after Iranian dissidents in Sweden filed police complaints against him.

The case relates to the killing of at least 5,000 prisoners across Iran to avenge attacks carried out by the rebel People's Mujahedin of Iran (MEK) at the end of the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88.

Noury had worked as an assistant prosecutor in a prison near Tehran at the time but argued that he was on leave during the period in question.

Sweden has tried Noury under its principle of universal jurisdiction, which allows it to try a case regardless of where the alleged offence took place.

There have been concerns that the case could have repercussions for the fate of Swedish prisoners in Iran, including EU diplomat Johan Floderus, who has been held for more than 600 days.

Floderus, 33, has been charged with the capital offence of "corruption on earth". He was detained at Tehran airport in April 2022 on his return from a trip abroad.

KARACHI : MQM Pakistan leader Mustafa Kamal talking to media after submitting nomination paper at Office of the deputy Commissioner Kemari for upcoming General Election.

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi speaks to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

Bar councils cry foul over ECP, demand level playing field

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's legal eagles are ruffling feathers. In a rare joint move, the Pakistan Bar Council, Supreme Court Bar, and Sindh High Court Bar have taken aim at the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), raising serious concerns about its ability to conduct transparent and fair elections.

The chorus of discontent stems from the ECP's handling of constituencies and seat distribution, with accusations of gerrymandering and bias flying thick and fast. The Pakistan Bar Council, in a scathing statement, questioned the fairness of the electoral process and demanded equal opportunities for all political parties.

The Bar Council's statement throws a dark cloud over the ECP's credibility. It alleges a "growing perception" that the current Commission lacks the mettle to hold clean elections, and its actions are raising troubling doubts about the integrity of the entire process.

The Bar Council doesn't hold back on the judiciary either. It calls upon the Supreme Court to stop blindly validating every ECP move and instead, scrutinize inconsistencies and take swift action. The message is clear: the Supreme Court must uphold its role as guardian of the Constitution and not be seen as rubber-stamping a compromised electoral process.

The Supreme Court Bar Association is taking matters a step further, announcing an All-Pakistan Representative Convention to discuss the crisis and demand a level playing field for all political parties. The message is loud and clear: Pakistan deserves general elections that are free, fair, and transparent, not a sham orchestrated by a biased election commission.

Will the ECP listen? Will the Supreme Court rise to the occasion? Will Pakistan get the elections it deserves? Only time will tell, but one thing is certain: the legal fraternity is not backing down, and the pressure is mounting on the ECP to clean up its act.

LHC seeks affidavit from Chairman PEMRA regarding ban on Imran's speech

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court on Wednesday held a hearing on petitions challenging the ban on speeches by former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, despite a previous court order delaying the ban. Justice Shams Mahmood Mirza presided over the proceedings, hearing arguments from Khan's lawyer, Ahmed Pansota. The court requested an affidavit from PEMRA Chairman confirming no additional restrictions on Khan's statements or interviews on TV channels. Additionally, the Pakistan Broadcasters Association was ordered to submit a written response.

The hearing has been adjourned until next week. The petitioner argued that blocking Khan's speeches contravenes the principle of equal airtime for political parties, further highlighting the previous court order delaying the ban's implementation.

Khan's speeches were banned by PEMRA on August 21, 2022, citing violations of Section 27 of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002. The notification claimed Khan's speeches contained baseless allegations against state institutions and officers, specifically referencing his address at F-Nine Park, Islamabad. The ban prompted legal challenges that culminated in today's hearing.

The outcome of these legal proceedings will determine whether the ban on Khan's speeches remains in place, potentially impacting the political landscape of Pakistan.

QUETTA: Commissioner, Quetta Division, Hamza Shafaqat And President of Agricultural Development Bank Yaqoob Tahir Bhatti are meeting.

Pakistan explores cooperation with China in field of artificial Intelligence

BEIJING (INP): Dr. Yasar Ayaz, the Director of Pakistan National Center for Artificial Intelligence(NCAI), had a two-week visit to China for exploring cooperation in the field of artificial intelligence (AI).

He visited prominent academic institutions and attended conferences to explore opportunities for Pak-China collaboration in AI. During the visit to Shanghai, Dr. Yasar Ayaz delivered an academic presentation titled Transforming the Future with Artificial Intelligence at Tongji University's Shanghai Autonomous Intelligent Unmanned Systems Science Center and signed a cooperation agreement on industry-academia integration between the center and NCAI.

Further cooperation in joint technological research and talent training were established, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday.

At China University of Mining and Technology (Beijing), Yasar Ayaz introduced significant research advancement of NCAI, including the applications of AI in healthcare, disaster management, crowd monitoring, vehicle recognition systems, and firearm detection systems.

During the interactive session, hot topics in the AI field were discussed, such as AI large-scale models, Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), and innovative applications of AI in the energy and mining sectors.

He also witnessed the official launch of a sensor-based integrated mining safety monitoring product by China University of Mining and Technology (Beijing) during the participation in the World 5G Conference and the 5G and Intelligent Mining Forum.

When attending the 2023 Annual Meeting of the International Forum on Higher Education in Xiamen, Dr. Yasar Ayaz and Mr. Du Yubo, the President of the China Higher Education Society, engaged in in-depth discussions on various topics, including the sustainable development of higher education in the digital age, the integration of AI into industry and academia, and science and technology cooperation among the Belt and Road countries.

"The visit to China aimed at strengthening collaboration and knowledge sharing in the field of artificial intelligence between China and Pakistan," said Dr. Yasar Ayaz.

The signed agreements and fruitful discussions are poised to drive innovation and propel the development of AI solutions that will shape the future of both countries and contribute to global technological advancements.

ٹینڈرز

ٹینڈر نمبر (1) ڈپٹی ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ، سول سیکرٹریٹ کوئٹہ (2) مسٹر پی پی ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ، BHU کوئٹہ کینٹ (3) سید عابد ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ، سول سیکرٹریٹ کوئٹہ (4) ظہور احمد، ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ، سول سیکرٹریٹ کوئٹہ (5) ارشاد، ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ، سول سیکرٹریٹ کوئٹہ (6) عشرت ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ، BHU کینٹ کوئٹہ (7) بے شمار ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ، BHU کینٹ کوئٹہ

رضا حسن مبلغ آربعہ روپے بعوض بالا بصحت کوئٹہ کے مرسلہ نمبر 5-55-55 مورخہ 20 دسمبر 2023ء کے تحت کالعدم خدا کو بوجہ ارسال کی کے آپ تمام ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ کا کھلا کے ساتھ ٹینڈر ایڈوائز ہوا ہیں ہے، اب اوپر اظہار اور درخواست منظور کرائے آخر اور تمام ظاہر رہتے کے حاوی ہو چکے ہیں اور ہر طرح ایڈمنسٹریشن معاہدہ ہوتی رہتے ہیں۔ لہذا آپ ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ کو بذریعہ اشتہار اس کی جانچ کے کہ اس شخص کے اثبات کے ایک بلٹ کے اور اقدار اپنے حفظ ایڈمنسٹریٹر، بلوچستان ریونیو بورڈ کے ذمہ ہے عملی بالبصحت کوئٹہ کو حاضری رپورٹ پیش کریں۔ اور اس کے ساتھ ایک حلفیہ (Affidavit) بھی کوئٹہ کی سیکرٹری سیکرٹری کو کمرہ کے لئے آپ اپنی اپنی باقاعدگی کے ساتھ رابطہ دیں گے بالبصحت دیگر آپ کے مکانات کو ملحق رہا اپنی کیس میں ادا کی جائے گی۔ اور آپ تمام کے ہر کو کا پیسا اور کیوں رجسٹری کا درست سمجھی جائے گی اور اس میں آپ کے طرف سے کوئی مذاق قبول نہیں ہوگی۔

ناظم اعلیٰ امور صحت
بلوچستان کوئٹہ

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PM announces upgradation of KMC, AMC to medical universities

PESHAWAR (INP): Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here on Wednesday announced upgradation of Khyber Medical College (KMC) Peshawar and Ayub Medical College (AMC), Abbottabad as public sector medical universities. The prime minister made the important announcement while addressing the 46th annual meeting of Association of Physicians of Pakistan Descent of North America (APPNA) organized by the alumni of Khyber Medical College, Peshawar at Governor House.

On the request of members of APPNA and its President Dr Arshad Rehman, Prime Minister Kakar said that practical work on upgradation of KMC and AMC as public sector medical universities should be initiated within 35 hours by the respective authorities. Commending APPNA's rich services for ailing humanity and continued long connection with people of their home country, the prime minister directed the Governor and Chief Minister Khyber Pakthunkhwa to give practical shape to upgradation of KMC and AMC to a full fledge medical universities keeping in view of people and APPNA demands.

While lauding services of students of both these medical colleges in healthcare services in the country as well as abroad, the prime minister said that Pakistani doctors serving in United States and others foreign countries were like an ambassador of Pakistan and their medical and surgical services besides philanthropy contribution during earthquake, floods and other natural calamities in Pakistan was highly praised worthy.

Prime Minister Kakar said that he was very pleased that Pakistani doctors, settled in America have established strong roots and bonds with their countrymen and helped Pakistan in every difficult situation.

He said that Pakistani doctors have proved their abilities and professionalism all over the world including USA and played a role of a bridge between Pakistani communities and American citizens while dedication towards duties and treating patients with friendly attitude and warmth was their hallmark.

"Pakistani doctors are the best in the world and graduates of KMC doctors were known internationally for their hard work, professionalism and devotion in healthcare services," he said. On the request of APPNA President, the prime minister announced to recommend name of Dr Umar Taimur Atique, for Nishan-e-Imtiaz, the first non-American President of the College of Physician of America for his great services for Pakistan.

QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki is presiding over the 8th session of board of B-TEVTA.

PESHAWAR: Peshawar: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the 46th Winter Khyber Medical College Convention organized in collaboration with Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America.

Hearing of Toshakhana case against Nawaz, Zardari adjourned till January 4

ISLAMABAD (INP): An accountability court of Islamabad deferred the hearing of the Toshakhana reference pertaining to luxury vehicles against PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, President PPP-P President Asif Ali Zardari and Yousaf Raza Gilani till January 4.

Hearing of the Toshakhana case against Nawaz, Zardari and others was conducted by accountability court Judge Muhammad Bashir on Wednesday.

Sharif's counsel Qazi Misbah and pleader Rana Irfan appeared before judge whereas NAB's special prosecutor Irfan Bhola and Sohail Arif were also present in the court.

The court was prayed to restore applications filed by general public. These applications were filed about auction of properties owned by Sharif and court orders issued over that.

The defence counsel told the court that applicants had raised objections and after amendment in the law hearing over those objections were put off. These were six applications. He requested the court to issue orders over these applications.

He added that there were five miscellaneous applications too. He said details of these applications will be provided to the court. The prosecutor told the court that investigation officer had been transferred so he needed more time for preparation.

Meanwhile, former prime minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani submitted an application in the court seeking exemption from attending the court hearing. The defence counsel took the stance that Gilani could not attend the court as he was busy in election campaign in his locality. The court, while directing the investigation officer to appear before it on next date, adjourned case hearing till January 4, 2024.

The court also heard the Park Lane reference against former president Asif Ali Zardari and others. Judge Muhammad Bashir remarked that court would take a decision after hearing the arguments on next date whether it had jurisdiction in this regard or otherwise.

Awareness seminar held on public participation in budgeting process

CHITRAL (INP): An awareness seminar on participation of public in budgeting process was organized by Young Star Development Organization (YSDO) in collaboration with Center for Peace and Development Initiative (CPDE) and Citizen Network for Budget Accountability (CNBA).

The theme of awareness creating event held at Boni, district headquarters of Upper Chitral was 'Stakeholders Dialogue on Transparent Budgeting'.

Former Nazim Union Council Rashun Amirullah was chief guest while Subedar Major Mirza Alam presided over the seminar. Inamullah, manager of YSDO while performing as stage secretary, highlighted the aims and objectives of the event.

Addressing the event, Inamullah said that YSDO organizes such awareness seminars and workshops on public opinion and their involvement in the budgeting process in collaboration with these partners organizations so that public opinion can also be included in the budgeting process because Budget is prepared for the welfare and development of the people, in which if public opinion is also taken, its transparency will be further improved.

Chairman YSDO Asfandiar Khan also expressed his concern and highlighted the importance of public network in the process of public participation in the budgeting process and accountability. Commenting on this process, he said that CPDI has released its fourth annual report on "Status of Budget Transparency in Pakistan, International Best Practices".

The report identified shortcomings in the budgeting process at the federal and provincial levels and called for a broader discussion of budget proposals with civic groups, government agencies and key stakeholders. The purpose of this report is not only to present findings but to facilitate dialogue between governments, civil society and citizens at large.

The report states that Pakistan should consider launching a centralized digital platform to promote citizen participation. The platform should be designed to present complex budget details in a manner that citizens can easily understand. Governments should prioritize the initiation of nationwide public consultations, including town hall meetings and workshops, during the critical phase of budget formulation.

The report also calls for the preparation and release of separate budget statements for women, minorities, children and persons with disabilities, outlining specific allocations and strategies tailored to each group's unique needs and challenges. The report calls for regularization of the citizen budgeting process in Pakistan through specific legislation or regulations.

According to the CPDI report, governments should make budget data available in widely machine-readable formats such as Excel and CSV. In addition, citizen participation in the budget-making process should be legally protected. And government institutions should be mandated to consult citizens during various stages of the budgeting process, especially the role of parliamentarians should be enhanced during budget formulation and implementation.

With elected representatives, local government representatives, civil society representatives during the "Stakeholder Dialogue on Transparent Budgeting" organized by CNBA member organization (Citizens Network for Budget Accountability).

Chairman YSDO Asfandyar Khan said that since last one decade, CPDI has been working to improve the budgeting process in Pakistan from district to federal level to promote transparency in it. As a result, the fourth report on "Status of Budget Transparency in Pakistan 2023" has been released. This report not only assesses budget transparency but also helps assess the effectiveness of access to information laws in Pakistan to access budget information. Instead of extending it further, it should be sent to the Finance Committees of the Federal and Provincial Assemblies in advance. The CPDI report also called for all Planning Commission forms (PC-I to PC-V) to be made available to the public at all federal and provincial levels. There is a need to focus on citizen participation in budgeting, monitoring of the legislature, budget debate period in parliament and fair budgeting.

QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Interior Minister Captain (R) Muhammad Zubair Jamali receiving the Sounir from Mir Sanaullah Buzdar, Syed Irfan Ali Shah and Baki Langov are also present on this occasion.

Ex-CEO DRAP arrested by FIA for holding fake PHD degree

ISLAMABAD, Dec 20 (INP): Former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) Sheikh Akhtar Hussain was arrested by Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Wednesday for holding fake PhD degree.

According to details, an FIR was registered by FIA Islamabad against Sheikh Akhtar for deceiving authorities through fake reports of his death to escape a fake degree case against him. However, Afzal Niazi, Deputy Director FIA Anti-Corruption Circle, upon conclusion of his investigations arrested the accused.

A joint enquiry team was constituted by Rana Jabar, additional director general North FIA, to conduct enquiries on more than 100 different applications against various officials of the DRAP. Afzal Niazi constituted 12 teams to arrest Hussain and several raids were conducted on the house, offices, and factories to arrest Hussain but all efforts failed in the past. FIA had placed his name on the Stop List to leave Pakistan and also moved an application in court to block his CNIC for his unconditional surrender. Hussain was accused of Mega corruption and accumulation of wealth of more than Rs100 billion along with fake death claims to save himself from arrest in two NAB cases No.40/2001 and 16/2004.

Other charges included abuse of official powers, fake degree, Getting PhD allowance on fake degree since 2001 from taxpayers' money, drawing salaries after the termination from government service since 17 March 2021.

He was drawing Leave Encashment Allowance of LPR more than Rs2.5 million after termination from government service.

KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Balochistan Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezai is meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tesori.

SC seeks candidates' stance in lifetime disqualification issue of lawmakers

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) through and advertisement on Wednesday has sought the candidates' stance in issue of lifetime disqualification of lawmakers.

The apex court ad was aimed to resolve the discrepancy between the judicial decision on lifetime disqualification under Article 62 (1) (f) and the amendments made to the Elections Act, 2017.

The candidates willing to contest general elections in the matter of lifetime disqualification have been invited for inputs through advertisement released in the different newspapers.

"Interested candidates can submit detailed written replies to SC if they want," the ad read.

A seven-member bench of SC will take up pleas to resolve the discrepancy between the judicial decision on lifetime disqualification under Article 62 (1) (f) and section 232 of the amended Elections Act, 2017.

The advertisement released by SC further stated that the decision on the pleas can affect the candidates willing to contest the general elections 2024.

In the last hearing on the pleas on December 11, SC issued notices to Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan, advocate generals of all the provinces and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to assist the court.

The apex court's notice came on a petition filed by a former MPA of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN), Shamona Badshah Qaisrani, who was disqualified over a fake degree in 2007.

The lifetime disqualification matter

In 2018, a five-judge bench of Supreme Court unanimously held that disqualification handed down under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution is for life.

Under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution of Pakistan, which sets the precondition for a member of parliament to be 'sadiq and ameen' (honest and righteous), former prime minister and PMLN chief Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the SC bench on July 28, 2017, in references pertaining to the Panama Papers.

Similarly, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder was also disqualified under the same article in the Toshakhana case earlier this year.

However, in June, the then-coalition government passed an amendment to the Elections Act 2017, which limited the disqualification of lawmakers to five years.