

QUETTA VOICE

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No Bat Electoral Symbol For PTI

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday restored the Election Commission of Pakistan's December 22 order which had deemed the PTI's intra-party polls "unconstitutional" and revoked the party's iconic 'bat' electoral symbol.

The verdict, reserved earlier in the day, was announced by Justice Ejaz Khan on ECP's review petitions. The decision comes as a blow for the party which has alleged it is not being provided a level playing field in the run-up to the general election.

In case a party fails to obtain an election symbol through a judicial intervention, its candidates have to contest for the national and provincial assemblies' seats as independents. In that case, it would not be possible for them to join the PTI, even after winning the elections, because they can only join a party duly enlisted with the ECP.

In that scenario, they may face pressure to join other parties, with no fear of losing their seats under the defection clause. The PTI has stated it will approach the SC against today's verdict.

On December 22, the ECP had decided against letting PTI retain its electoral symbol for the February 8 election, saying that it had failed to hold intra-party polls — which saw Barrister Gohar Khan becoming the PTI chairman — in accordance with its prevailing constitution and election laws.

Subsequently, the PTI had approached the PHC. On Dec 26, the PHC had suspended till Jan 9 the ECP's declaration of the PTI's intra-party polls as unconstitutional as well as the subsequent revocation of the 'bat' symbol. It



had also noted that general elections were scheduled for February 8 and the last date for allotment of election symbols was January 13.

On Saturday, the electoral watchdog had filed a review petition in the PHC. At the previous hearing, ECP lawyers argued that the court had overstepped its jurisdiction by suspending the commission's declaration on PTI's intra-party polls and the subsequent revocation of its election symbol. The written order issued by the PHC, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, said that the PTI had challenged the ECP order but due to winter vacations, a divisional bench was unavailable to hear the plea.

"Therefore, to the extent of interim relief, the same was fixed

and placed before a single bench of Dec 26 and the desired interim relief was granted to it," it said.

It said that the ECP had argued that it was not provided an opportunity of hearing, while the interim relief granted to the PTI amounted to "grant of final relief which is not permissible under the law". The order said that the learned counsels for both the parties had raised substantial legal questions but the same could not be addressed by the court as the "main writ petition is pending adjudication before this court" and it said that the decision to suspend the ECP order was being recalled as it was passed without providing any opportunity of hearing to the ECP, it amounted to "final relief for all legal, factual and practical purposes", the as-

pect of its effectiveness beyond the court's territorial jurisdiction was not taken into consideration, and it had hindered the "smooth process" of the election process.

"In view of the above, the interim order of this court passed in favour of the writ petitioner/PTI is hereby recalled/vacated and consequently the ECP is directed to proceed with the election process as per its constitutional mandate 1," the order said.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail shortly after the verdict was announced, PTI's Barrister Gohar Khan said, he had met with party founder Imran Khan for consultation on party tickets. Commenting on the PHC's verdict, he said that it was the "biggest reflection of the ECP's bias". **News Desk.**

Election Tribunal Allows Candidates for Contest

Manan Mandokhail:



QUETTA: The Election Tribunal in Balochistan has approved for more than twelve candidates to participate in the upcoming general elections. The tribunal, led by senior judges Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar and Justice Amir Nawaz Rana of the Balochistan High Court, addressed over 100 appeals. Across Balochistan, as other regions, returning officers overseeing fair elections rejected numerous nomination papers due to issues such as unpaid utility bills.

Tahir Mehmood, Khalid Hazara, Majeed Achakzai Allowed To Contest Polls

Seven appeals challenging the rejection of nomination papers were successfully accepted by the tribunal, allowing candidates like Abdul Khalid Hazara (HDP), Tahir Mehmood Khan (PPP), Ahmed Nawaz Baloch (BNP), Mehmood Khan Sherani,

Mufti Gulab (JUI-F), Zakir Hussain Kasi, and Muhammad Hussain to participate in the elections. Notably, Sardar Akhtar Mengal (BNP), Khushal Khan Kakar (PNAP), and Nawab Ayaz Khan Jozegai (PKMAP) had their nomination papers rejected by the returning officer on one constituency.

Mengal Yet To Challenge RO's Decision

Sardar Akhtar Mengal has expressed intent to challenge the rejection in court, but no formal appeal has been lodged with the election tribunal in Balochistan as of now. The hearing drew the attention of supporters from various political parties, anxiously awaiting the tribunal's decisions at the Balochistan High Court premises. To ensure security, strict measures were taken by the Quetta administration in anticipation of the tribunal's proceedings, aiming to prevent any untoward incidents during the hearing.

Double Tragedy: Abro Tribe Members Gunned Down Near Usta Muhammad

From Our Correspondent:

USTA MUHAMMAD: In a shocking incident near Usta Muhammad Sadabahar Hotel, two members of the Abro tribe lost their lives in a fatal firing. Sohrah Ali Abro and Dilamrad Abro succumbed to gunshot wounds on the spot. The assailant managed to escape the scene, leaving the city in a state of unrest. Preliminary investigations point towards tribal enmity as the motive behind this heinous act.



City police swiftly responded to the distress call, arriving at the scene to secure the area. The bodies of the victims were carefully transferred to the Civil Hospital Usta Muhammad for post-mortem examinations and further legal procedures. As the investigation intensifies, authorities are leaving no stone unturned to apprehend the perpetrator responsible for this brutal crime. The incident has sent shockwaves through the Abro community, prompting concerns about the underlying tensions that led to the tragic loss of two lives. The police are urging anyone with information related to the incident to come forward and assist in the ongoing investigation. The city remains on high alert as law enforcement agencies work tirelessly to bring justice to the grieving Barro tribe and restore peace to the affected community.

FM Jilani reaffirms commitment to 'mutually beneficial ties' with Afghanistan

KANBAHAR: In a meeting with senior Afghan Taliban officials, Mullah Shirin Akhund on Wednesday, interim Foreign Minister Jali Abbas Jilani reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to "continued engagement and mutually beneficial ties with Afghanistan". In a post on social media platform X, FM Jilani said he had a "productive meeting" with Akhund, who is the governor of Kandahar and the strategic intelligence deputy of the Afghan defence ministry. "Also stressed importance of addressing all issues to harness full potential for trade and connectivity," he said. Earlier in the day, the Afghan embassy said that the sixth meeting of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Coordination Committee would take place in Islamabad today. It said that Akhund would be leading the Afghan delegation. "During this meeting, as a follow-up to previous sessions, participants will

engage in discussions and make essential decisions concerning the resolution of potential conflicts along the Durand Line and the establishment of essential facilities for people on both sides," it had said. Akhund, a key figure in the Afghan Taliban, has played various roles in the group's military and political spheres. His close ties to the senior leadership and involvement in significant Taliban activities make him a prominent and influential member of the Afghan rulers' leadership structure. He has previously been engaging with Pakistan and is known to have liaised with the TTP on behalf of the Taliban administration. Today's meeting between Jilani and Akhund comes at a time when relations between the two countries have suffered due to a spike in terrorist attacks, mostly claimed by the outlawed militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) group. **News Desk.**

BRA Achieves 40% Growth Target

News Desk:

Chairperson of the Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA), Mr. Noor Ul Haq Baloch stated that "BRA has achieved an outstanding 40% growth in revenue collection during the first six months of the financial year 2023-24, overcoming significant economic challenges".

The total collection stands at an impressive Rs.12.2 billion, comprising Rs.9.8 billion from the Balochistan Sales Tax on Services (BSTS) and Rs.2.4 billion from Cess, Mr Baloch added.

In a press release about the revenue collection by BRA, it was stated that a remarkable highlight is the substantial growth in Cess collection, reaching Rs.2.4 billion from July to December this year, a staggering 90% increase compared to the same period last year when Rs.1.3 billion was collected. Additionally, the BRA has successfully gathered Rs.57.3 million for the Worker's Welfare Fund, marking a historic achievement. This extraordinary success is attributed to the visionary leadership and diligent efforts of the management team at the Authority. Their strategic planning, innovative approaches, and unwavering commitment to optimizing revenue streams have played a pivotal role in achieving these remarkable results.



vering commitment to optimizing revenue streams have played a pivotal role in achieving these remarkable results.

BRA Acknowledges Taxpayers' Commitment and Plans Future Success

Expressing gratitude, the Authority extends its deepest appreciation to the conscientious taxpayers who have consistently fulfilled their tax obligations, showcasing a strong sense of civic responsibility. The proactive partnership and diligent efforts of the management team at the Authority. Their strategic planning, innovative approaches, and unwavering



Jameel Baloch Leads From Front

From Our Correspondent:

In a daring move to eradicate anti-social elements, Deputy Commissioner Kachhi, Captain (R) Jameel Ahmed, has spearheaded a relentless operation.

Displaying exemplary leadership, Captain Ahmed has taken the forefront, leading by example to boost the morale of the leaves force.

His bold initiative has not only instilled confidence within

the law enforcement ranks but has also become a beacon of inspiration for the entire community. The ongoing operation, under Captain Ahmed's strategic guidance, aims to create a safer environment, free from the clutches of criminal elements. The Deputy Commissioner's unwavering commitment and hands-on approach mark a significant milestone in the region's fight against crime.

SC Upholds Disqualification Of Ex-Finance Minister Balochistan

Dawood Ahmed:

ISLAMABAD: In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has dismissed a petition seeking the withdrawal of disqualification for the former provincial finance minister of Balochistan, Khalid Langove, to participate in the upcoming general elections. The decision was made by a 3-member bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa.

During the hearing, the petitioner's lawyer argued that Khalid Langove intended to participate in the general elections, and thus, the decision of disqualification should be suspended. However, the court maintained that a candidate cannot contest elections while facing a suspended punishment.

Langove Wants To Loot Again In Balochistan? Asks CJ Qazi

Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa highlighted the gravity of the case, pointing out that a substantial amount of money was seized from Langove's residence. A staggering 2 billion 24 crore 91 lakh rupees were confiscated, and the former minister was handed a relatively lenient sentence of only 26 months. The Chief Justice expressed concern over the seemingly inadequate punishment, stating that individuals like Langove, associated with large-scale fi-



ancial misconduct, should be barred from participating in elections.

CJ Questioned Lenient Punishment To Langove

The court further emphasized that Langove's actions, including the discovery of substantial amounts of domestic and foreign currency loaded

onto trucks and taken away from his residence, painted him as an enemy of Balochistan. The Chief Justice questioned the reasoning behind the comparatively lenient punishment, stating that such individuals should be kept away from the political arena.

SC Decision Sends Strong Message

Justice Qazi Faiz Isa went on to inquire whether the intention of contesting elections was to gain further opportunities for financial misconduct, suggesting that Langove's past actions raised concerns about his commitment to the wellbeing of Balochistan.

This decision by the Supreme Court sends a strong message against corruption and financial malpractices, emphasizing the need to uphold the integrity of the electoral process by keeping individuals with questionable records away from the political arena.

Another telling proof of Indian Army leadership's incompetence

SRINAGAR (INP): Several Indian Army officers and officials have been killed in attacks by Kashmiri freedom fighters in 2023, as the military unleashed a wave of cruelty on innocent Kashmiris, violating UN resolutions for decades. In 2019, India's BJP-led government stripped of the special status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of its constitution. In December, Lt General Sandeep Jain, a three-star officer of the Indian Army, was dismissed over the killing of three citizens. Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva then took over the charge of White Knight Corps General Officer Commanding from Lt Gen Jain. The Indian media claimed the officer was removed over poor performance. Lt Gen Jain was held responsible for the death of fellow soldiers and innocent Kashmiris.

On Dec 21, 2023, four Indian soldiers were killed in a terrorist attack in Rajouri. The army had blamed three innocent civilians for the killings. The Indian Army had brutally tortured the innocent Kashmiris and martyred them. Later, their videos were broadcast on social media, in which the atrocities of the Indian army could be seen. The leadership of the Indian Army seems lacking in skills and decision-making powers. The continuous failure of the top army leadership is proving to be an embarrassment for the forces. The professional incapability of the Indian Army's top leadership is proving disastrous for its soldiers deployed in Kashmir. Due to its incompetence, the Indian Army forces have failed to suppress the independent Kashmir movement.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Syed addressing in a ceremony held in honor of CDA sanitary workers on their retirement at E-7 Park. Senator Fozia Arshad, Chaudry Yaseen, and others also sitting on stage.

Harvard president resigns after rows over plagiarism, anti-Semitism

MASSACHUSETTS (INP): The president of Harvard University resigned Tuesday after coming under ferocious attack over plagiarism accusations and her response to anti-Semitism on campus amid the Israel-Hamas conflict. Claude Gay was criticized in recent months after reports surfaced alleging that she did not properly cite scholarly sources. The most recent accusations came Tuesday, published anonymously in a conservative online outlet. Gay was also engulfed by scandal after she declined to say unequivocally whether calling for genocide of Jews would violate Harvard's code of conduct, during testimony to Congress alongside the heads of MIT and the University of Pennsylvania last month. Gay, who made history as the first Black person to be president of the powerhouse university in Cambridge, Massachusetts, said in her resignation letter that she'd been subjected to personal threats and "racial animus". Her downfall comes after the university's governing Harvard Corporation had initially backed her after the public rela-

tions disaster of the congressional testimony. But the body did criticize the university's initial response to the Hamas October 7 attacks that Israel said killed 1,140 people inside Israel and saw around 240 people taken hostage. Israel's offensive has reduced much of Gaza to rubble and killed at least 22,185 people, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's health ministry. More than 70 lawmakers, including two Democrats, demanded her resignation, while a number of high-profile Harvard alumni and donors also called for her departure. Still, more than 700 Harvard faculty members had signed a letter supporting Gay and her job had appeared to be safe. The resignation, first reported by the student-run newspaper the Harvard Crimson, was confirmed shortly after by Gay herself. "It is with a heavy heart but a deep love for Harvard that I will be stepping down as president," Gay said in a statement. Gay also wrote that she had faced threats to her safety and "racial animus" in the wake of the furor over her handling of claims of mounting anti-Semitism on campus. The university's governing Harvard Corporation said that Gay had "shown remarkable resilience in the face of deeply personal and sustained attacks." "While some of this has played out in the public domain, much of it has taken the form of repugnant and in some cases racist vitriol directed at her through disgraceful emails and phone calls. We condemn such attacks." In the United States, the anti-Semitism on campus controversy came amid a rise in attacks and violent rhetoric targeting Jews and Muslims, including at universities, since the Israel-Hamas war erupted. Gay, 53, was born in New York to Haitian immigrants and is a professor of political science who in July became the first Black president of 368-year-old Harvard. "Leadership failure and denial of anti-Semitism have a price. Hope glorious Harvard University learns from this dismal conduct," wrote new Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz in response to Gay's departure.



KARACHI: Shopkeeper displaying different political parties flag to attract customers for upcoming Pakistan parliamentary election, 2024 on Thursday, 8 February 2024.



QUETTA: Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Abdul Khabir Azad addressing a press conference.

US warns Israel, clarifies Gaza belongs to Palestinians

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States rejected the inflammatory and irresponsible statements from Israeli Ministers Smotrich and Ben Gvir and clarified there should be no mass displacement of Palestinians from Gaza. Far-right Israeli ministers Hamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich said this week that Israel should "encourage emigration" from the coastal enclave, home to an estimated 2.3 million Palestinians. "If there are 100,000 or 200,000 Arabs in Gaza and not two million Arabs, the entire discussion on the day after the war ends will be totally different," Smotrich said on Sunday, calling for the "voluntary migration" of Palestinians. The Israeli army has said it is "prepared for any scenario" after a strike in Beirut that killed Hamas's deputy chief, stoking fears the war in the Gaza Strip could boil over into wider regional conflict. A high-level security official in Lebanon told foreign news agency that Saleh al-Aruri was killed along with his bodyguards in a strike by Israel, which has vowed to destroy Hamas after the movement's shock October 7 attacks. A second security official confirmed the information, while Hamas TV also reported Israel had killed Aruri in Lebanon. Israeli army spokesman Daniel Hagari did not directly comment on the killing, but said afterwards that the military was in "very high state of readiness in all arenas, in defence and offence. We are highly prepared for any scenario". Israel has previously announced the deaths of Israel-Hamas commanders and officials during the war but Aruri is the most high-profile figure to be killed, and his death came in the first strike on the Lebanese capital since hostilities began. The strike adds to widespread fears that the nearly three-month-old Israel-Hamas war could become a wider regional conflagration. Hamas said Aruri's death would not lead to its defeat, while its Lebanon-based ally Hezbollah vowed the killing would not go unpunished, calling it "a serious assault on Lebanon... and a dangerous development". Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikat condemned the killing and said it "aims to draw Lebanon further into the war. Aruri, who lived in exile,

is accused by Israel of masterminding numerous attacks. Following his death, Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh said "our leaders fall as martyrs for the dignity of our people and our nation will never be defeated". Hamas's bloody October 7 attack on Israel resulted in the deaths of around 1,140 people, most of them civilians. Militants also took around 250 hostages back to Hamas-ruled Gaza, of whom 129 remain in captivity, according to Israeli figures. After the attack the worst in its history, Israel began a relentless bombardment and ground offensive that has killed at least 22,185 people, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's health ministry. Israel's army said soldiers in Gaza had killed "dozens of terrorists" in fighting on Tuesday, and had also raised a weapons storage compound in the southern city of Khan Yunis. In the aftermath of a strike on the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, Palestinians rushed to rescue victims and retrieve bodies from the rubble. "There are about 12 martyrs until now, mostly children. What was their fault? Among them my one-month-old son, what did he do to Israel?" asked Ghazi Darwish. "My other son is five years old, he was also martyred." Further south in Khan Yunis, the Palestine Red Crescent Society said Israel had twice struck its headquarters, resulting in "five casualties and three injuries" among displaced people who had sought refuge there and at a nearby hospital. "They told us to go to the south, which is safe, but they are liars," shouted Fathi al-Af, pointing to his wounded daughter on a stretcher on the floor of Nasser Hospital after the Red Crescent strike. The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) denounced the alleged strikes as "unconscionable". The strikes in Khan Yunis continued overnight into Wednesday morning, with the Hamas health ministry reporting "numerous" deaths. United Nations agencies have voiced alarm over Gaza's spiraling humanitarian crisis, which has left 2.4 million people under siege, most of them displaced and crowded into shelters and tents during winter rains.



JAPAN: A view of buildings destroyed by the earthquake in Wajima, Ishikawa Prefecture.

Doctors in England to hold longest NHS strike ever

LONDON (INP): Hospital doctors in England on Wednesday began their longest consecutive strike in the seven-decade history of Britain's National Health Service (NHS). The strike starts at 7:00am (0700GMT) and is due to end at the same time on Tuesday January 9. The British Medical Association (BMA) announced the walkout in December after a breakdown in talks with the government. The union said junior doctors have been offered a 3.0-percent rise on top of the average 8.8-percent increase they were given earlier this year. It rejected the offer because the cash would be split unevenly across different doctor grades and would "still amount to pay cuts for many doctors". Junior doctors have gone on strike at least seven times since

March. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and hospital leaders have criticised the action. Health policy is a devolved matter for the administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the UK government overseeing England. Junior doctors in Wales are due to walk out for 72 hours from January 15. Those in Northern Ireland have voted for potential strike action. Their Scottish counterparts have struck a deal with the government in Edinburgh. The NHS typically sees a rise in the number of people in hospital in the two weeks after Christmas, due to people delaying seeking treatment in order to spend the festive season with loved ones. The service is already facing huge backlogs in waiting times for appointments and surgery, blamed on treatment postponement during Covid but also years of under-funding.

CORRIGENDUM section with text regarding a correction in the newspaper's content.

Shutdown strike in Balochistan as SC set to resume hearing petition against missing persons

ISLAMABAD (INP): As the Supreme Court is set to resume hearing a petition against the chronic malaise of enforced disappearances, a shutdown strike was observed in several cities of Balochistan on Wednesday against "state oppression" and "atrocities" committed in the province for the last 70 years.

Photos shared by the Balochistan Yakjehi Committee, one of the organisers of the Baloch long march against extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances in Islamabad, showed deserted streets as businesses remained closed in Gaddani, Nohski, Khuzdar, Turbat and other areas. A day earlier, Baloch protesters — who have been camping in freezing cold outside the National Press Club in Islamabad — called for a shutdown demonstration across the country after their seven-day ultimatum to the government expired.

Their demands included the release of all protesters detained during police action, detailed investigation into rights

violations in Balochistan, elimination of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, release of all victims of enforced disappearances, restrictions on the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and elimination of "state-sponsored death squads".

Last night, the BYC said the state had failed to negotiate with the protesters and announced that a press conference would be held at 3pm today.

It also said that a large number of Islamabad police officials had arrived in front of their sit-in camp. "We are concerned that they're going to crack down on us and arrest the peaceful protesters," it stated.

Moreover, the protesters said police were not allowing them food, tents, sound systems and other facilities. "In this cold weather, old mothers and sisters are desperately facing harsh difficulties. Anything can happen to their health," it added.

SC to resume hearing petition against enforced disappearances

Meanwhile, a three-member SC bench will take up the case brought forward by Barrister Ataz Ahsan that highlighted how the unlawful practice of enforced disappearances continued unabated, haunting generations upon generations.

Headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, the bench comprises Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali.

A day earlier, the top judge had emphasised that the case held great public importance and that the court intended to resolve the matter for good but insisted that the matter could be settled only if all accepted responsibility. "This country belongs to all of us. Even those who may have other viewpoints," he had observed and called for making Pakistan "strong from within".

The court had also requested Ahsan's counsel, Shoaib Shaheen, to present concise points on potential legal actions regarding enforced disappearances.



USTA MUHAMMAD: Member of Chief Minister Balochistan Inspection Committee Omid Ali Khokhar receiving awareness from flood victims about Tractor Hour Project.

Justice Mazahir Naqvi submits response against SJC's notice

ISLAMABAD (INP): Justice Mazahir Naqvi on Wednesday submitted a detailed response against the second show cause notice in the Supreme Judicial Council, sources said.

In his response, Justice Mazahir Naqvi pleaded before the judicial council rejected the complaints against him, stating that after hearing constitutional petitions in open court, the action of the judicial council was unjustified.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Supreme Judicial Council had given Justice

Mazahir Naqvi a last chance to submit his response in time. Meanwhile, the next hearing of the Judicial Council against Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi will be held on January 11.

It is worth mentioning here that the complaint was filed against Supreme Court Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi in the Supreme Judicial Council.

The complaint was filed against the apex court judge in the judicial council, by Mian Dawood Advocate.

The complaint included

charges of misconduct, illegal assets, and amassing money with frontmen. The complainant has pleaded to the judicial council to remove Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi from the august office of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

In April, Justice Isa and Justice Masood had written a judicial letter to Justice Bandial, then the CJP, to convene an SJC meeting to review these allegations. In May, Justice Bandial referred the matter to Justice Tariq Masood for a legal opinion.

1st executive body meeting of PCVTI held, important decisions made

ISLAMABAD (INP): First executive body meeting of Pak-China Vocational Training Institute was held in the office Gwadar Port Authority (GPA).

Chairman of GPA Passand Khan Buledi presided. Other participating members of executive body meeting included Yu Bo, Chairman China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC), Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Pro-VC Gwadar University and interim Director of the vocational institute and Rector of Shandong Institute of Commerce and Technology.

The tetra-partite agree-

ment signed between the four parties (COPHC, GPA, University of Gwadar and Shandong Institute) was approved. Furthermore, in the meeting the existing courses and the expansion of the scope of teaching courses came under discussion.

New diploma courses will be offered this spring, which was decided at the meeting. Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday.

The organization and governance structure of the Institute was discussed, with further job creation for administrative and teaching staff.

The body agreed to the proposal to induct students for 3-year diploma program.

As per the agreement, initially, 1 year will be taught in the institute and for the rest 2 year, students will be sent to Shandong to complete their diploma. GPA also agreed to bear the administrative costs of the institute.

Currently the institute offers 3-year diploma courses in port and maritime management, information technology and tourism management and 1-year diploma in advanced Chinese language and culture and advanced English.



ISLAMABAD: A scene of traffic moving on a road in heavy fog.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malak Abdul Wali Khan Kakar is meeting with Commissioner Quetta Division Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat.

Identical rulings by Returning Officers surprises Election Tribunal Judge

ISLAMABAD (INP): Hearing at the Election Tribunal of the Islamabad High Court on Wednesday, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir expressed astonishment at what appeared to be arbitrary decisions made by separate returning officers.

During the proceedings, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir noted with surprise that the returning officers for both NA 47 and NA 48 constituencies were identical. Shaheen contested this, asserting that the officers for the two constituencies were different. However, Justice Tahir pointed out that there was not a single

word of difference in the orders issued by the two returning officers, suggesting a striking similarity that raised suspicions about the decision-making process.

Shoaib Shaheen defended his stance, claiming that while the officers might be different, the orders seemed to be crafted in the same place, evident from their exact replication.

Expressing concern, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir emphasized the lack of variation between the two orders, raising questions about the independence and fairness of the decision-making process. After the arguments from both parties, the Islamabad Election Tribunal reserved its decision on the matter.

PTI leader Niazullah Niazi, addressing the media outside the Islamabad High Court, shed light on the unusual circumstances surrounding the objection-raising process on December 30. Niazi revealed that the returning officers spent four hours that night scrutinizing nomination papers and raised objections that he described as "ridiculous." He further stated that even the judge found some objections amusing. Notably, an identical decision was issued by three different circles of returning officers, adding another layer of suspicion to the overall electoral proceedings.

The Election Tribunal's decision is now eagerly awaited as questions about the integrity of the election process in NA 47 and NA 48 linger.

FBR report reveals one-third of February election candidates violate tax laws

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has exposed a startling revelation that one out of every three candidates for upcoming national elections is entangled in violations of tax laws. The report highlights instances of candidates either not being registered taxpayers, non-filers of income tax for at least one year in the last three years, or both.

According to media reports, this concerning trend sheds light on the pervasive non-tax culture in the country, with a significant number of aspiring national representatives showing a disregard for financial transparency and compliance with tax regulations.

A government source disclosed that the Election Commission

provided data on approximately 28,000 candidates, revealing that a staggering 9,200 of them are either not registered with the FBR or have failed to file income tax for one of the past three years. Astonishingly, these candidates are allowed to contest the general elections despite clear violations of parliamentary acts.

Further analysis of the data indicates that over 4,200 candidates have not filed income tax returns for the past three years, while more than 5,000 candidates are not even registered with income tax authorities.

During the scrutiny process, the FBR identified more than 1,100 defaulters who promptly cleared their dues before the approval of their candidature. An impressive

recovery of around six billion rupees was made from these candidates, exposing a pattern of non-disclosure of true wealth.

Remarkably, the amount recovered from these defaulters surpasses the total income tax paid by the members of the National Assembly and Senate in 2019. The FBR's current tax directory reveals that in 2019, the combined income of the members amounted to 11 billion rupees, with only 76 million rupees paid in taxes—equivalent to a mere 5.2 percent of their income, significantly less than the 35 percent tax rate imposed on salary earners.

A regrettable aspect of the situation is the inconsistency in the acceptance of candidature papers.



ZIARAT: Additional Deputy Commissioner Najebullah Kakar is visiting various levels police stations on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Rehman.

Courts standing with every political party regarding elections: CJP Isa

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa has said that courts are standing with every political party regarding the elections.

On Wednesday, a three-member bench, headed by CJP Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali, heard the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petition regarding the level playing field in elections.

The Supreme Court later adjourned the hearing in the case till January 8.

At the outset of the hearing, the PTI's lawyers submitted additional documents to the Supreme Court stating that the nomination papers of 668 key PTI leaders, as well as around 2,000 proposers and seconders have been rejected.

According to the additional documents, 56 cases of snatching of nomination papers of PTI leaders took place, while proposers and seconders were also arrested, and it was decided to video evidence in this regard in the Supreme Court.

CJP Isa expressed indignation at the prefix of Sardar along with the name of PTI lawyer Latif Khosa. He remarked that the Sardar-Nawab system ceases to exist now and would not be tolerated in court.

The chief justice told Latif Khosa that his government of the PPP legislated on abolishing the chieftaincy system, while now his sons had also become sardars. At this, Khosa replied that it was written by the stenographer and wouldn't happen again.

Latif Khosa, opening his arguments, took the stance that a level playing field was necessary for healthy competition.

At this, Justice Muhammad Ali Mahzar remarked that this is a case of contempt of court, not a new petition. He then asked about the contempt committed by the ECP.

The CJP then asked what the link was between the inspector general of police and chief secretaries, and the election commission.

Latif Khosa told the court that their candidates were obstructed, on which the CJP in-

quired about the evidence.

The chief justice also remarked that if the lawyer wanted action against people individually, he must file a separate application. If someone's nomination papers have been rejected, they should file an appeal, to which Latif Khosa said they had not been given copies of the orders of the returning officer for three days.

Justice Mazhar asked how many of candidates' nomination papers have been approved. Khosa said they had not received the copies of RO's orders, and could not file appeals against them.

"You want us to do the work of ECP?"

The CJP remarked that the lawyer wanted the court to do the job of the election commission. If they did not get a copy of the RO's decision, they should apply to the tribunal without a copy. "How can we ask for the papers of one party to be accepted or rejected?" the CJP questioned. CJP Isa remarked that the courts are standing behind every political party for the elections.