

QUETTA VOICE

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Friday, January 12,2024

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Gas Injustice Chronicles: Sui Southern Gas Company Under Scrutiny

Syed Ali Shah:

As the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) awaits an impending judgment, it finds itself entangled in allegations that go beyond mere billing discrepancies. Increasing gas meter tampering exposes a systemic problem within the company in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan, prompting this editorial to underscore the urgent need for the SSGC to address these issues, especially in light of allegations linking some officials to major gas thefts.

A court order issued a few months ago brought to light the alarming rate of gas meter tampering, resulting in significant financial losses for the SSGC. These losses, coupled with allegations of illicit connections between certain officials and major gas thieves, unfairly burden the economically vulnerable.

Unannounced load shedding has become an unfortunate norm, exacerbating the challenges faced by consumers already grappling with inadequate gas pressure and exorbitant bills.

SSGC Must Acknowledge The Gravity Of The Situation

The SSGC must acknowledge the gravity of the situation and take immediate steps to rectify its practices. The alleged ties between the com-



pany and those involved in gas theft not only raise ethical concerns but also perpetuate a vicious cycle of inequality. These connections, whether direct or indirect, erode public trust and undermine the integrity of the entire energy sector.

The impending judgment marks a pivotal moment for the SSGC, going beyond financial implications for the company. This case will set a precedent for accountability within the energy sector, emphasizing the need for the SSGC to prioritize the welfare of its consumers and work towards restoring public trust in its operations.

Recent protests in Quetta against overbilling and gas load shedding underscore the urgency of the situation. Allegations of disproportionate billing variations in charges between regions, and inflated bills in Balochistan demand a thorough and transparent investigation. The company must demonstrate a commitment to fair and transparent billing for all consumers, regardless of their geographical location. Failure to address these issues not only harms the company's reputation but deepens the existing trust deficit between the SSGC and its consumers.

Company Must Take Steps To Ensure Justice For Consumers

In conclusion, the Sui Southern Gas Company cannot afford to delay corrective measures any longer. The pursuit of gas justice necessitates immediate action, rectification of billing practices, and a commitment to transparency. Addressing these issues head-on is the only way for the SSGC to rebuild public trust and fulfill its responsibility to provide a reliable and equitable gas supply to all consumers. The company must act swiftly to prevent further harm to its reputation and, more importantly, to ensure justice for its consumers.

After Justice Naqvi, Justice Ijazul Ahsan resigns as SC judge

NEWS DESK: In a surprising turn of events, Justice Ijazul Ahsan of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has tendered his resignation, stepping down from his judicial duties. Express News reported on Thursday.

According to sources, Justice Ahsan has submitted his written resignation to President Dr Arif Alvi.

He was slated to become the next chief justice of Pakistan following incumbent CJP Qazi Faez Isa's retirement in October this year.

The development comes a day after Justice Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi - who faces charges of misconduct - resigned as a judge of the Supreme Court, saying it was no longer possible for him to continue holding this position.

Also read: President Alvi accepts Justice Naqvi's resignation

Justice Naqvi is accused of misconduct and embroiled in ongoing proceedings at the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) in this connection. His resignation was accepted by the president earlier in the day.

On Tuesday, Justice Ijazul Ahsan raised concerns about the manner in which the SJC is conducting proceedings on complaints filed against another SC judge Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi.

Justice Ahsan had called for



the withdrawal of the show cause notice issued to Justice Naqvi on November 22.

The senior judge issued his 4-page opinion highlighting the reasons why he disagreed with the majority verdict to issue show cause notices to Naqvi. "Before I set out my reasons, I wish to say something about the manner in which these [SJC] proceedings are being conducted. Unfortunately, in my opinion, proceedings are being conducted in undue haste contrary to established norms," he said.

According to the judge, the council, entrusted as it is with enormous constitutional responsibilities under Article 209 of the Constitution, is a body that must act with deliberate care and after full, frank and detailed discussion. "This is especially so where there is no unanimity and some members (or even one member) are inclined to disagree with [the] majority. This approach has been entirely lacking in the present proceedings. Debate and discussion has been non-existent and has not been permitted."

Justice Ahsan also said the SJC proceedings on November 22, 2023, when it issued the second notice to Justice Naqvi were completely devoid of any discussion or deliberation whatsoever. This manner of proceedings, he said, has cast an unwelcome doubt over the whole process. "I, therefore, disagree with the process followed.

Gas Leakage Blast Injured 5 In Jinnah Town Quetta

Manan Mandokhail:

QUETTA: In a devastating incident that unfolded earlier today, the peaceful neighborhood of Jinnah Town in Quetta was shaken by a powerful explosion resulting from a gas leak. The incident occurred on the roof of a residential building, causing significant injuries to several residents. Police sources confirmed five people including two women were injured in the blast that was heard far and wide in the provincial capital.

Emergency services were promptly deployed to the scene, where the injured were quickly shifted to nearby hospitals for urgent medical attention. The explosion has left the community in shock and raised concerns about the safety of gas infrastructure in the area.

Explosion Triggered By A Gas Leak: Police

Local authorities have confirmed that the explosion was triggered by a gas leak within the building. The precise cause of the leak is under investigation, with officials from the gas utility company working closely with law enforcement to determine the factors leading to this unfortunate incident.

Eyewitnesses reported a sudden and powerful blast, with



debris scattered across the vicinity. Rescue teams, including firefighters and paramedics, swiftly arrived at the scene to assist the affected residents and secure the area.

Hospitals In Quetta On High Alert

As of now, the number of casualties and the extent of injuries are being assessed by medical professionals. Hospitals in the Quetta area have been placed on high alert to accommodate the influx of patients.

The local community has ral-

lied together to support those affected, with volunteers aiding in the evacuation process and providing comfort to distressed families.

Relief efforts are underway, with the government pledging to provide necessary assistance to those impacted by the explosion.

Authorities are urging residents to exercise caution and report any gas-related concerns to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Meanwhile, a thorough investigation is being conducted to ascertain the root cause of the gas leak and ensure accountability.

Gas Pipeline Blown Up In Bolan Balochistan, Repair Underway

Inran Sumalani:

BOLAN: In a concerning incident near Dhadar in Bolan, a 12-inch diameter gas pipeline suffered partial damage due to an explosion in the Bolan mountainous area. The immediate aftermath saw a fire erupt along the gas pipeline, prompting a rapid response from the local Levies and Sui Gas teams.

The explosion reported near the Bolan River, resulted in the partial damage of a crucial 12-inch diameter gas pipeline. The Levies were quick to respond, and a subsequent fire broke out along the affected pipeline, escalating the urgency of the situation.

Gas Team On The Spot To Repair The Damaged Pipe

Upon receiving information

about the incident, the Sui Gas staff promptly mobilized to the location of the explosion. The swift response aimed to assess the extent of the damage and mitigate any potential risks associated with the compromised gas pipeline.

Zonal Manager Gas assured that the safety of the surrounding areas is a top priority. The gas crew, along with a dedicated repair team, is set to commence operations after successfully extinguishing the fire. This proactive approach ensures a rapid resolution to the situation, preventing any further escalation of the incident. Stay tuned for further updates



on this developing situation as Daily Quetta Voice always tries to publish information based on facts and figures from local and official sources in the area.

BAP Secures 'Cow' Symbol for Elections

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: In a surprising turn of events, the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) is set to re-enter the political arena, reclaiming its iconic 'Cow' symbol.

The Election Commission, responding to BAP's request, has approved the restoration of the 'Cow' symbol for the party, overturning its earlier allotment of the 'Eye' symbol.

Initially, on January 9, the Election Commission released a list assigning the 'Eye' symbol to BAP. However, following subsequent deliberations, the commission reversed its decision, now designating the 'Cow' symbol to the party instead.

This sudden alteration in symbols has also led to an adjustment in the allotment for independent candidates. The 'Eye' symbol, initially reserved for BAP, is now available for independent contenders to choose from.



Political observers are closely watching BAP's return to the election field under the familiar 'Cow' symbol, anticipating the strategic implications of this symbolic shift on the upcoming political landscape in Balochistan.

The party's move is likely to spark discussions and speculations among voters and political analysts alike. Stay tuned for more updates as the electoral drama unfolds.

INFLATION AND DEVALUATION

By Miftah Ismail:

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

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

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

Expansion Of Project Directly Responds To Public Demand: Dr. Faisal
Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan asserts that this expansion directly responds to the persistent public demand for improved transportation facilities. He states, however, reveals that currently, a meager eight buses operate from Balochistan University to Beliti Airport Road, laying bare the glaring inadequacy in green bus availability.

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

CS Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan Can Play A Key Role
Commitment for the government's seemingly progressive approach must be met with an urgent plea for Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan's decisive leadership in ensuring efficient execution. Quetta's residents, long fatigued by the lack of a dependable public transportation system, now demand more than promises – they demand a concrete reality. The introduction of green buses, however, alleviates the longstanding commuting challenges, creating a pathway to a more sustainable and accessible future for the people of Balochistan. The call for action is not merely a suggestion; it's a critical imperative, and the responsibility squarely rests with Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan to lead the way in turning promises into tangible, transformative actions.

Championing SDGs

By Furqan Hyder Shaikh:

PAKISTAN is one of the countries which adopted the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 – also called 'global goals' – in order to attain lasting development, peace, and prosperity for its people. It is a matter of much pride that Pakistan was the first country to adopt the SDGs at the country level when it officially passed a parliamentary resolution to this effect in 2016.

The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has since established SDG Support Units through provincial planning and development departments to provide guidance on their implementation and track the progress made.

Implementing the SDGs in spirit promises to end poverty and inequality, ensure the protection of the Earth, and ensure that all people on this planet have access to the enjoyment of health, justice, and prosperity. Pakistan has spent eight years engaging with the SDGs and localising them.

But though it was proactive in adopting the SDGs, their implementation could be better. One wonders how many people know about the SDGs in, for example, Sindh's Tharparkar and coastal belt.

How many SDG-driven schools have been operationalised? How many children at Sindh's high schools and colleges know about

the SDGs? How many introductory sessions have been organised at schools and colleges in Hyderabad? In mid-2023, I moved to Mithi, Tharparkar, where I asked a member of a local business association about the SDGs. Puzzled, he asked, "What is an SDG?" The reply made me think that if the business community is not aware of the SDGs, how could the SDGs be localised and streamlined? An honest, meaningful commitment to achieving SDGs entails localising them on the ground level.

The business community, academia, health sector, food entities, builders, exploration and production companies, universities, development sector, transportation sector, and parliamentarians all need to educate themselves on SDGs and think about what practical initiatives they can take in this regard.

A much-needed step in streamlining and localising the SDGs is to translate them into local languages. For example, in Sindh, these languages would include Sindhi, Urdu, Marwari, Brahvi and Dhatki. In Tharparkar (as well as in a large portion of the areas that comprise the Mirpurkhas division), Dhatki is the most common language spoken locally. Access to a Dhatki version of the SDGs would greatly help the locals as they go about planning their future business and non-business activities.

In December 2023, consumer prices were 29.7 per cent higher compared to December a year earlier. This means that every month for more than a year our year-on-year inflation number has been above 20pc.

There was however positive news in the recent inflation data too. Prices in December rose by only 0.8pc over November, which was the second smallest monthly increase in a year.

And just like November 2023, the increase in prices was only due to the increased cost of gas and electricity – in fact, food and services were down 1.2pc in December. The tight monetary policy being pursued by SBP has finally begun to pay for the price juice out of our economy and we are going to see inflation and interest rates come down.

The Worlds Most Incredible Dog FULL HD has been so high inflation in Pakistan. We have such persistently high inflation when in fact never went so high globally and has receded for months?

To understand, let's think of a simple economy with three sellers each selling a food packet and three buyers each given Rs100 by the government. It stands to reason that packets would sell for Rs100 each. Now if the price of these food packets abroad is one dollar, we will have an exchange rate of one dollar being equal to Rs100.

If the government had given each consumer Rs200 and we still had three food packets available, then the price for each food packet would have been Rs200. Again, since the international price of a food packet is one dollar, the rupee would have depreciated by 100pc and the new exchange parity would have been Rs200 to a dollar.

The only thing that changed in this economy was that the money chasing the same amount of goods, therefore doubling the price for each and every packet. This is our difficulty. In the last few years, as our budget deficit has ballooned, to pay for the deficit we have printed more and more money and as more rupees are chasing the same amount of goods, we have experienced persistently high inflation and rapid depreciation.

In five-and-a-half years since the start of fiscal year 2018, our rupee has depreciated by over 100pc, with the fastest increase coming in the six-month period between January and June of last year, with February to May showing the four highest monthly inflation numbers in our history. Since then the rapid growth in money supply has declined and we are witnessing inflation tapering down.

But unfortunately our government, in the face of higher interest rates leading to higher debt service payments, has not been able to cut the deficit. Instead it has borrowed more, causing the money supply to increase. This has led to the persistence of our inflation.

In our simple economy with three consumers and three food packets, we saw that when money doubled, so did prices. But if the number of food packets was also doubled when the money supply increased, the prices would not double, but if the government decides to increase the output of goods and services as money supply increases, we wouldn't have seen inflation.

Pakistan is not unique in running a budget deficit or increasing money supply. But we stand out in our almost total failure to use our government spending to increase worker productivity or the economy's productive capacity. Economists argue that national income (or output) grows when labour or capital grows, not primarily when there is technical progress – i.e. increases in education, skills and technological know-how. But this has never been a priority for us in this country where 58pc of kids under five are either stunted or wasted and where 78pc of 10-year-old kids cannot properly read, such improvement in productivity remains a pipe dream.

So the anaemic economic growth we have had over the last two decades is due primarily to the increase in our labour force and a little increase in capital and technology. The improvement in skills or policymaking will perhaps get us short-term relief, but as has always been the case, it will cause long-term damage.

Each priced at Rs200 and the international price of food packets being one dollar, each dollar should be worth Rs200. Now, if our government decides to sell dollars for Rs150, it would mean that food packet could be exported from Pakistan and traders would turn to importing food packets.

This has happened to Pakistan too, when various governments, to keep current prices low and voters happy, sacrificed exports and manufacturing and gave rise to huge current account deficits. (This is not to say that we should not stop smuggling or hawala. But SBP should not be selling dollars in the interbank market for less than the predetermined value.)

There are no magic solutions to our economic problems. We are a poor and uneducated country and will remain poor until we are reformed. This SBP has successfully done in the case of our private sector.

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However, to reduce inflation we must reduce the budget deficit. At the same time to achieve growth, we must invest in our people and increase their productivity and the country's productive capacity. Finally, it is important to keep a flexible, market-driven exchange rate so our exports can increase.

Deviations from rational economic policymaking will perhaps get us short-term relief, but as has always been the case, it will cause long-term damage.

Reassembling Pakistan

By Khurram Husain:

MUCH has been said about "reimagining Pakistan" but it is important to ask what the task comes of the day after. For now, the focus needs to be on "reassembling" the country, which has been severely fractured. Given the growing deficits and rising debt, it can be argued that Pakistan has been run by interim governments ever since 2017.

One critical element in executive decision-making at the policy level is the quality of information. If a government is spending heavily, it needs to ensure that the requisite information is available to do this. The list goes on and on, but the point is that the quality of information is crucial when there is somebody at the top who has the birds-eye view and is taking stock of how decisions made in one area impact other areas.

Pakistan is not famous for its policy coherence. This is one reason why the country keeps going round in boom and bust cycles. But what happened after 2017 is whatever minimal levels of policy coherence there might have been also blown. The reimagining Pakistan left decision-making in the country severely fractured.

Given the growing deficits and rising debt, it can be argued that Pakistan has been run by interim governments ever since 2017. One critical element in executive decision-making at the policy level is the quality of information. If a government is spending heavily, it needs to ensure that the requisite information is available to do this.

The list goes on and on, but the point is that the quality of information is crucial when there is somebody at the top who has the birds-eye view and is taking stock of how decisions made in one area impact other areas. Pakistan is not famous for its policy coherence. This is one reason why the country keeps going round in boom and bust cycles. But what happened after 2017 is whatever minimal levels of policy coherence there might have been also blown.

The reimagining Pakistan left decision-making in the country severely fractured. Given the growing deficits and rising debt, it can be argued that Pakistan has been run by interim governments ever since 2017.

The next round when policy coherence (or whatever little there was) crumbled altogether was in late 2012, leading up to the election in 2013. Once again, the printing presses were fired up and spending went out of all control. This time the consequences were not in the form of inflation because the government managed to keep the exchange rate steady and fuel prices began coming off their record highs in global markets. Instead, the consequences came in the form of a runaway trade deficit, which was financed with borrowing and the result was borrowing skyrocketed from 2013 onward.

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By F.S. Aijazuddin:

MANI Shankar Aiyar is the last Pakistani left in India. It is his 'second favourite country'. It was once an option available to millions of Indian Muslims. Since 1947, Indian Muslims have witnessed with disappointment Pakistan's descent into democratic decadence and irresponsible insolvency. They would prefer (like the Buddhists in medieval times) to quit the subcontinent and migrate to the more hospitable shores.

Two periods in Mani's long life (he is 83 years old) have conditioned his personality, his career, and his literary output. The first was his time spent as India's consul general in Karachi (1978-82). It provided a seemingly bottomless reservoir of material which he has used in various books. His memoirs of a Maverick (1941-1991) – was released last year. He intended his next book to be an autobiographical sequel. His publisher, though, felt it was more appropriate to the second Him-ayal in his life – the late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. They suggested a biography of Rajiv instead. Hence,

Mani's fresh book, The Rajiv I Knew And Why He Was India's Most Misunderstood Prime Minister (2024). Ever since 1992, when Mani wrote his affectionate memoir Remembering Rajiv within a year of Rajiv's assassination, Mani has been more loyal to the memory of Rajiv Gandhi than Rajiv's widow Sonia and the Congress party have been to him. The book opens with a chapter on Rajiv's domestic successions with China and Pakistan, Indian intervention in the Maldives in 1988, and the establishment of the

AF-R----ICA Fund in 1986. Mani provided the comment in acronym: 'Act-ion For Resis-ting Invasion [in Mozambique], Colonialism [in Namibia], and Apartheid [in South Africa]'. The fourth chapter is titled 'Domes-tic Initiatives – a checklist of Rajiv's radical interest in technology, privatisation, Cultural Centres and Apsa Utsavs, Island Development Authority, and credit proofing and the economy.

Mani tried to bring the country out of its stage. Instead, in 2013, Mani was eased off stage by Congress president Sonia Gandhi. To Pakistanis, Mani's comments about Pakistan – kistan will be of primary interest. He deals openly with Operation Brasstacks, laun-ched with Rajiv's approval and conducted in 1986. That provocative operation – "bigger than any Nalo exercise and more costly than the 1986 War II" – took place in the vicinity of the Pakistan border, involving half a million troops – half the Indian Army within a hundred miles. Despite the high-level cordiality between Rajiv and Ziaul Haq (they met at least six times), Mani regards Rajiv's "landmark to Pakistan's commercial capital, Karachi". On January 28, 1987, President Ziaul Haq retaliated smocklessly by allowing Dr A.Q. Khan to reveal to the Indian journalist Kuldip Nayyar that Pakistan had gone nuclear. Nayyar (hoping to earn more than kudos for his explosive disclosure) deliberately withheld Nayyar's name – till March 1, by which time confrontation had cooled to consultation. Despite the high-level cordiality between Rajiv and Ziaul Haq (they met at least six times), Mani regards Rajiv's "landmark

World added 50% more renewable energy capacity last year over 2022

PARIS (INP): The world added 50 percent more renewable energy capacity in 2023 over the year before, the International Energy Agency said Thursday, predicting booming growth in the next five years.

The United Nations-led COP28 summit concluded in Dubai last month with nearly 200 nations agreeing to a first-ever call for the world to transition away from fossil fuels.

"The amount of renewable energy capacity added to energy systems around the

world grew by 50 percent in 2023, reaching almost 510 gigawatts, with solar PV accounting for three-quarters of additions worldwide," the energy watchdog said in a statement.

It said the largest growth took place in China, which commissioned as much solar PV in 2023 as the entire world did in 2022, while China's wind power additions rose by 66 percent year-on-year.

"The increases in renewable energy ca-

capacity in Europe, the United States and Brazil also hit all-time highs," said the report on the sector.

IEA chief Fatih Birol said the report showed that "under current policies and market conditions, global renewable capacity is already on course to increase by two-and-a-half times by 2030."

"It's not enough yet to reach the COP28 goal of tripling renewables, but we're moving closer — and governments have the tools needed to close

the gap," he added.

Birol said onshore wind and solar PV were cheaper now than new fossil fuel plants as well as existing fossil fuel plants in most countries.

"The most important challenge for the international community is rapidly scaling up financing and deployment of renewables in most emerging and developing economies," he said.

"Success in meeting the tripling goal will hinge on this," Birol added.



GAZA: Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of Palestine at the United Nations, speaking at the General Assembly session on the US veto on Gaza in the Security Council.

Israel army claims two journalists slain in Gaza strike were 'terror operatives'

TEL AVIV (NP): Israel's army claimed on Wednesday that two Al Jazeera journalists killed in an air strike in Gaza were "terror operatives".

Hamza Wael Dahdoh and Mustafa Thuria, who also worked as a video stringer for a foreign news agency and other news organisations, were killed on Sunday while they were on an assignment for the Qatar-based channel in the city of Rafah.

The army said in a statement on Wednesday its "intelligence has confirmed that both the deceased were members of Gaza-based terrorist organisations actively involved in attacks against IDF (army) forces".

"Prior to the strike, the two operated drones, posing an imminent threat to IDF troops," the army said.

There was no immediate reaction available from the television chan-

nel and families of the two men.

When asked on Wednesday reporters about what kind of drones were used by the two men and the nature of the threat the drones posed to Israeli troops, the army said it was "checking".

It said Thuria was identified in a document found by troops in Gaza to be a member of Hamas's Gaza City Brigade, while Dahdoh was identified as a "terrorist" belonging to Islamic Jihad.

The army statement included a copy of a document it said was a list of "operatives from an electronic engineering unit of the Islamic Jihad, including Dahdoh and his military number". Dahdoh and Thuria were killed when the car they were travelling in was hit by two rockets on a street in Rafah, according to witnesses. A third journalist and the driver of the car were wounded.

Thuria, in his 30s, had contributed for a foreign media since 2019 and had also worked with other international media outlets.

He and Dahdoh had been tasked with filming the aftermath of a strike on a house in Rafah and their car was hit while they were on their way back.

Soon after the strike, Al Jazeera said it "strongly condemns the Israeli occupation forces' targeting of the Palestinian journalists' car", accusing Israel of "targeting journalists and 'violating the principles of freedom of the press'".

In a brief statement, Hamas's press office said the army's claims were false and that Israel "creates false pretexts to justify its massacres and crimes against Palestinian civilians and journalists". Hamas's father Wael al-Dahdoh is Al Jazeera's Gaza bureau chief, and was recently wounded in a strike himself after his wife and two

other children were killed in Israeli bombardment in the initial weeks of the war. Soon after Dahdoh and Thuria were killed, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that their deaths were an "unimaginable tragedy".

"And that's also been the case for... far too many innocent Palestinian men, women and children," Blinken said.

On Monday, Wael's two nephews Ahmed al-Dahdoh and Muhammad al-Dahdoh were also killed in a strike when travelling in a car in Rafah, according to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza.

The war in Gaza erupted when Hamas militants stormed across Gaza's border into Israel in an unprecedented attack on October 7 which left some 1,140 people dead, mostly civilians.

Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas, denounced as a terrorist group by the US and EU, and has kept up a relentless bombing of Gaza.



KARACHI: Worker busy in preparing political party PPP flag Election on ahead of start General Election.

SHC orders to use modern technology, social media for missing persons recovery

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) has mandated the adoption of modern technology and the dissemination of photos on social media platforms in efforts to locate missing individuals. The directive was issued by a two-member bench, with Justice Nimatullah Phalphoto presiding over petitions related to the recovery of missing persons.

During the hearing, Justice Nimatullah

Phalphoto questioned the investigating officer about the measures taken to trace the missing persons. The officer reported that 21 Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) and 16 provincial task force meetings had been conducted to address the issue.

Despite these efforts, family members expressed their distress, citing the case of Muhammad Zubair who went missing

from Baghdadi in 2014, with no progress in locating him to date. Offering reassurance, Justice Nimatullah Phalphoto stated, "You people should not worry, we assure you that you will get justice."

In a similar case, the family of Saqib Afridi, missing since 2015, sought answers from the investigating officer. The court pressed for details on the steps taken to recover the missing citizen.

quired about the number of JITs conducted, to which the investigating officer responded that 30 JITs and 12 provincial task force meetings had taken place.

In a similar case, the family of Saqib Afridi, missing since 2015, sought answers from the investigating officer. The court pressed for details on the steps taken to recover the missing citizen.



QUETTA: Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem meeting Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Kakar. Photo DGPR

President accepts resignation of Justice Mazhar Ali Naqvi

ISLAMABAD, Jan 11 (INP): President Arif Alvi on Thursday accepted the resignation of Supreme Court Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi against whom the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) is hearing a reference over the misconduct allegations, mainly revolving around amassing wealth beyond his resources.

In his resignation sent to Alvi on Wednesday, he said it wasn't possible for him to continue working, as he mentioned his tenure both at the Supreme Court and the Lahore High Court (LHC).

In the circumstances which are a matter of public knowledge and to some extent public record, it is no longer possible for me to continue to serve as a judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Considerations of due process also compel

me to resign. The resignation letter reads.

Naqvi's resignation came just hours after a Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Faez Isa upheld the death sentence handed down to late Pervez Musharraf by a special court under Dec 17, 2019, by a special court under Article 6 of the Constitution.

Later in January 2020, a three-member LHC bench headed by Naqvi quashed the verdict given by the special court verdict and declaring its formation as 'unconstitutional'.

The judgment had raised many eyebrows given the fact that special court was formed by the Supreme Court. And on Wednesday, the Supreme Court stamped the special court's status and judgment through its latest verdict. Earlier on Tuesday, the Supreme

Court had rejected the request to stay the proceedings of Supreme Judicial Council — a conversation with former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi about fixing the case before a particular bench or judge, prompting a Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) office holder to move the Supreme Judicial Council.

It remains to be seen how the SJC will proceed in the coming days given that the chief justice is scheduled to chair a meeting tomorrow (Thursday) of the top body responsible for accountability of judges.

In his comments, PML-N senior leader Khawaja Asif said acceptance of resignation wasn't enough, as the Supreme Court judge and his heirs should face a probe into their assets in a way similar to what a politician has to go through in these matters.



ISLAMABAD: - Caretaker Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan addresses closing ceremony of Global Health Security Summit.

Khawaja displays dove and olive branch symbol in BBL

BRISBANE (INP): Usman Khawajahas displayed the dove and olive branch symbol, which the ICC banned, on his shoes and bat during the BBL match against Perth Scorchers in Brisbane.

The image was approved by the Cricket Australia board prior to the Boxing Day Test against Pakistan, but despite Khawaja's submission to the ICC the governing body denied him permission to use it during the game. The ICC has no oversight on the BBL as it is a domestic tournament.

The symbol was on the back of his bat that he started the innings with, but he broke it in the first over and the replacement did not show it.

Khawaja had initially wanted to take the field in the Perth Test with humanitarian messages raising awareness of the Gaza conflict on his shoes but that was stopped by ICC.

He then wore a black armband, which was understood to relate to his social media posts on the

humanitarian crisis, but before the Melbourne Test Khawajahas had been for a personal bereavement.

The logo on Khawaja's shoes and bat also references article one of the universal declaration of human rights which reads: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Khawaja previously said he did not believe the ICC had been consistent in applying regulations.

"I never ever stated it was for anything else. The shoes were a different matter. I'm happy to say that. The armband makes no sense to me. I followed all the regulations, past precedents, guys that put stickers on their bats, names on their shoes, done all sorts of

things in the past without ICC approval and never been reprimanded."

Khawaja has spoken openly about how affected he has been with images coming out of the conflict in Gaza.

"When I'm looking at my Instagram and seeing innocent kids, innocents of them dying, passing away, that's what hit me the hardest," he had said. "I just imagine my young daughter in my arms and the same thing. I get emotional talking about it again. I don't have any hidden agenda."

"If anything this brings up more negativity towards me. I don't get anything out of this. I just feel like it's my responsibility to speak up on this. We live in such a beautiful country. I'm blessed to live in Australia. I can walk outside, don't have to worry about a thing. My kids can do the same. I just want that for the rest of the world."

In a subsequent interview on Fox Cricket, he said: "I don't do these things on whim — this is something that has affected me for a long time."

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IHC withdraws stay on cipher case trial, annuls proceedings from Dec 14

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court has accepted an appeal of former prime minister Imran Khan against the in-camera trial of the cipher case against him, and annulled the proceedings of the case from December 14 onwards.

The Islamabad High Court has also suspended the stay order in the cipher case in a verdict issued by Justice Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb.

The Islamabad High Court had stayed the trial of the cipher case in the trial court on December 28.

During Thursday's proceedings, the judge asked Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan if he wanted the proceedings

to be reversed to backdate, adding that if that has to be done, it should happen from the date the order was passed.

Justice Aurangzeb said that a formal order will also be issued in this regard. The AGP assured the court that the prosecution would conduct the in-camera proceedings afresh. He added that they were ready to record the statements of 15 witnesses all over again.

Thus, on the assurance of AGP Awan, the court withdrew the stay order against the cipher trial.

On Dec 28, the IHC had issued a stay order on the ongoing cipher case trial against former prime minister Imran Khan till January 11.

The high court heard a plea against the indictment of Imran Khan and PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the cipher case.

The PTI had challenged the trial court's order of December 12 to indict Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood in the case.

Justice Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb issued the order for today's hearing.

The court granted the request for an immediate stay order on the cipher trial and has stopped the proceedings of the case till January 11. The court issued a notice to the federal government in this regard and ordered that all necessary documents should be submitted at the next hearing.



QUETTA: JUI-N provincial Ameer Maulana Abdul Qadir Loni addressing a press conference.

MQM-P names contestants from Karachi, leaves 15 national and provincial seats for allies

KARACHI (INP): In a major development, the MQM-P has decided not field candidates in 15 constituencies – five national and 10 provincial – of Karachi to accommodate the allied parties, mainly the PML-N, as the February 8 elections are now less than a month away.

On the other hand, the MQM-P also announced the list of candidates for National Assembly from Karachi as it is eyeing to regain its hold on the city's politics after the divisions it faced after 2013, leading to disappointing results in 2018.

At the same time, details are emerging about how the different parties will try to weaken the PPP in Sindh with a final decision expected later today (Thursday) after their leaders hold a final meeting.

Most of the candidates in Kashmir, Jacobabad and Shikarpur will reportedly be from the JUI-F with the PML-N providing in some constituencies.

Rashid Soomro – the JUI-F provincial chief – will challenge PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in Larkana for the national legislature.

as the party will field the majority of candidates for provincial assembly in Ghotki, Kashmir and Shikarpur.

However, the likeminded parties have decided to give PS-5, PS-6 and PS-9 to the PML-N which

will also enjoy their support in NA-205 Naushehro Feroze I with Asghar Ali Shah being its candidate. Same is the case with NA-211 Mirpurkhas. In NA-216 Matiari, PML-N Sindh President Bashir Memon is the joint candidate.

The seat adjustment comes as megacity could play a decisive role in future politics at both national and provincial levels thanks to its sheer size.

After the latest delimitations, Karachi has 22 National Assembly seats and 47 for the Sindh Assembly for which 130 members are to be elected directly on February 8.

However, NA-242 remains the point of contention after both PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif and MQM-P Senior Deputy Convener Mustafa Kamal filed nomination papers for the constituency, as three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif zoomed in on Karachi in his attempt to enter the coveted office for a record fourth term. PML-N, other parties table initial proposals for seat adjustment in Karachi.

But it is expected the two parties will develop a consensus due to the understanding reached for not only these elections but also a long-term relationship after the two sides agreed to empower local governments across Pakistan – the main slogan of the MQM-P which wants the urban centres in

Sindh to govern the affairs locally.

The latest decision on seat adjustment in Karachi came at meeting of likeminded parties on Wednesday, as they are getting ready for a surprise in Sindh and bring a change in the PPP's stronghold where it is in government since 2008.

Accordingly, the MQM-P will have the backing of allied parties for the Sindh Assembly seats in Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah (Sheheed Benazirabad) and Shikarpur.

For the National Assembly seats from these districts, the allied parties – PML-N, GDA (an alliance dominated by the PML-F) and the JUI-F are going to have their candidates.

Also on Wednesday, the MQM-P shared the names of those contesting elections for National Assembly on February 8. Their details are given below.

NA-232 Asia Ishaque, NA-233 Javed Hanif, NA-234 Muhammad Anubakar, NA-235 Iqbal Mehsud, NA-236 Hassan Sahir, NA-237 Rafiq Siddiqui, NA-238 Sadiq Hkhtar, NA-240 Ashhad Vohra, NA-241 and NA-244 Dr Farooq Sattar, NA-242 and NA-247 Mustafa Kamal, NA-243 Humayun Usman, NA-245 Syed Hafeezuddin, NA-246 Syed Aminul Haque, NA-248 Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, NA-249 Ahmed Saleem Siddiqui and NA-250 Farhan Chishty.

CM Naqvi orders increasing workforce for Jinnah Hospital's upgradation

LAHORE (INP): Showing his disappointment over the slow pace of work on the upgradation of Jinnah Hospital in Lahore, Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday ordered increasing the number of labourers working at the project site.

During a visit to the hospital, he ordered that 1,000 labourers should work in two shifts, 500 in each shift.

He said that there would be a proper monitoring of the strength of the workforce.

The chief minister was also indignant to find beds and other goods lying in a corridor.

He ordered the hospital administration to shift the goods to a safe place.

The CM directed the special secretary health to visit the hospital at night and monitor the situation. Taking notice of the development of cracks in the hospital's building, he stressed the need for immediately finding a lasting solution to the problem. Similarly, taking notice of the

complaint by an attendant that he had to go outside the hospital to purchase medicines for the patient, the chief minister directed the hospital administration to launch an inquiry into it. "Ensure the provision of medicines to the patients free of cost and that too from within the hospital," he directed.

Provincial ministers Dr. Javed Akram, Amir Mir, secretary health, commissioner Lahore, special secretary health and other concerned officials were also present on the occasion.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakesh Qadir Khan chairing meeting of executive committee of public private partnership: Photo DGPR



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the KP Police Darbar Ceremony.

FO expresses regret over unleashing of Pakistan bashing narrative in India

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has expressed regret over the unleashing of a Pakistan bashing jingoistic and militaristic narrative in India ahead of the next Lok Sabha elections.

Responding to a question regarding the book of former Indian diplomat Ajay Bisaria, at her weekly news briefing in Islamabad, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said it is a matter of common knowledge that the ruling dispensation in India used Pulwama episode for domestic political gains. She said the book of the former Indian diplomat appears to advance India's fictitious narratives around the developments of February 2019.

The spokesperson said Balakot was a military fiasco for India. It was an instance of Indian adventurism that went badly and embarrassingly wrong for them. She recalled that the Indian aircraft were shot down and an Indian pilot was taken as a prisoner by Pakistan. She said despite India's adventurism, Pakistan

behaved responsibly to de-escalate the situation while demonstrating its capacity to respond when its security is threatened.

The spokesperson said it is very shocking that a professional diplomat is advocating coercion and use of force as a means to conduct diplomacy. This, she said, reflects the rise of fascist mindset in India.

Responding to volley of questions regarding Afghanistan, the Foreign Office Spokesperson once again demanded the Afghan authorities take effective action against terrorist elements including the TTP leadership. She said the Afghan authorities should ensure the elimination of terrorist hideouts and hand over to Islamabad those responsible for terror incidents in Pakistan.

The spokesperson said there is no change in Pakistan's policy towards the TTP. She said we have no dialogue taking place with the TTP nor do we have the intent to hold talks with it which is responsible for several terror incidents in Pakistan.

PML-N awards election ticket to father-in-law of Farah Gogi

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) has officially granted an election ticket to Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal, who is the father-in-law of Farah Gogi, a close friend of former First Lady Bushra Bibi. Media reports suggest that Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal previously served as a member of the Punjab Assembly on the PML-N ticket.

In the 2018 elections, he faced defeat against Chaudhry Parvez Elahi in the race for the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly. As part of his preparations for the upcoming

general elections, the PML-N has unveiled its candidates for constituencies in Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jehlum, and Talagang. Key candidates announced include Osama Sarwar Abbasi for National Assembly Constituency NA-51, Bilal Yamin Sati for Provincial Assembly Constituency PP-6, and Raja Sagheer Ahmed for PP-7 – all running on the PML-N ticket.

Further nominations include Javed Ikhlas for NA-52, Raja Osama Sarwar for NA-53, Malik Abrar for NA-55, and Hanif

Abbasi for NA-56. Additionally, Daniyal Chaudhry is set to contest from NA-57 and N. Major (red) Tahir Iqbal has secured the ticket for NA-58, while Sardar Ghulam Abbas is the PML-N candidate for NA-59.

The PML-N has also finalized its choices for various provincial assembly seats, with candidates like Hameed Akhtar for PP-3, Sher Ali Khan for PP-4, Malik Pravi Khan for PP-5, Muhammad Bilal Yasin for PP-6, Raja Sagheer Ahmed for PP-7, and others. This move signals the party's



QUETTA: Hazariganji tribal leader Mir Wajid Ali addressing a press conference.

ECP to challenge PHC's decision about PTI electoral symbol in Supreme Court

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to challenge in Supreme Court the Peshawar High Court's verdict restoring 'bat' as the electoral symbol of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf sources said.

The decision was taken at an ECP meeting held here on Thursday under the chair of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja.

According to the sources, the Commission will soon prepare a petition which will be filed in the Supreme Court.

A PHC divisional bench on Wednesday restored 'bat' as the election symbol of PTI.

The PHC short order consisted of three points, according to which the December 22 order of the Election Commission of Pakistan was declared as unconstitutional which revoked the PTI's 'bat' electoral symbol and rejected its intra-party polls.

The order further declared that the PTI is entitled to the election symbol strictly in terms of Sections 215 and 217 read with any other enabling provision of the Electoral Act, 2017 and Election Rules, 2017.

The verdict was pronounced by a divisional bench of the Peshawar High Court which comprised Justice Ejaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali.

The decision came shortly after the party withdrew from the Supreme Court its appeal seeking the restoration of its electoral symbol.

A two-judge bench of the PHC comprising Justice Ejaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali heard a petition of the PTI to which the ECP order cancelling the party's 'bat' symbol and declaring its intra-party polls unconstitutional.

PTI poll symbol struggle On Dec 22, the ECP declared

the intra-party polls of the PTI unconstitutional and revoked 'bat' as its poll symbol. The PTI moved to the PHC on Dec 26 and challenged the ECP decision. A single bench of the PHC restored the electoral symbol of the party till January 9 and directed that the case be fixed before a divisional bench.

The ECP, on Dec 30, filed a review plea in the PHC, and the divisional bench of the same court withdrew its stay on the ECP order, thus depriving the PTI of its symbol again.

The PTI again moved to the Supreme Court and the PHC and challenged the decision of the ECP.

However, the PTI withdrew its plea from the SC earlier on Wednesday pleading that the matter was already being heard by the PHC bench which later in the evening announced the verdict in favour of the PTI.