

## Army chief cites TTP presence, cross-border attacks as only points of contention with Afghanistan

Islamabad (News Desk) Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir has said that the only points of contention between Pakistan and Afghanistan are the presence of the banned militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan outfit in the latter and cross-border attacks. The remarks attributed to the army chief were carried by state broadcaster PTV News and were uttered during his Peshawar meeting a day ago with politicians from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been strained due to frequent border skirmishes and Islamabad repeatedly demanding Kabul take action against the TTP for using Afghan soil to launch attacks in Pakistan. Kabul denies the allegations. Last month, at least eight people were killed and 13, including civilians, were injured on the Afghan side during clashes. The two sides were exchanging fire since Pakistani fighter jets bombed alleged TTP camps in Afghanistan's eastern Paktika province. One Frontier Corps soldier was martyred, while 11 others

were injured in the clashes, which began after a failed bid by militants on the Afghan side to infiltrate Pakistan. Addressing the issue in his talks with politicians, the army chief said Afghanistan was a "brotherly neighbour [and] an Islamic country" with which Pakistan "has always wanted" better relations. "The only difference with Afghanistan is the presence of Fitna al-Khawarij in Afghanistan and the spread of terrorism in Pakistan from across the border, and it will remain so until they remove this issue," the army chief was

quoted as saying. In July, the government, through an official notification, designated the TTP as Fitna al-Khawarij, while mandating all institutions to use the term khariji (outcast) when referring to the perpetrators of terrorist attacks on Pakistan. The army chief further said: "Our policy is only Pakistan." COAS Munir said that no large-scale operation was being carried out in KP and nor was the TTP active in any area of Pakistan, adding that only targeted operations were carried out based on intelligence.



PESHAWAR: Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir addresses a meeting of political leaders, on Monday. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi are also present.

## Faith in the law has been lost: Bushra

Islamabad (News Desk) Bushra Bibi, the wife of former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan, said during a court hearing on Tuesday that her "faith in the law has been lost". She made the remarks while appearing at an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad for a hearing related to the Rangers accident case. The case revolves around the death of four personnel of Rangers in an alleged hit-and-run incident on Srinagar Highway during the PTI's Nov 26 protests, with contesting claims made by the government and the party. Last month, the court had directed the police to produce the suspects on Dec 26. Imran, Bushra, Ali Amin Gandapur, Omar Ayub Khan, Sheikh Waqas Akram, Salman Akram Raja, Murad Saeed, Zulfi Bukhari, Hammad Azhar, Raof Hassan and other PTI leaders have been nominated in the first information report (FIR). "After what happened to the PTI founder Imran Khan and me, my faith in the law has been lost," she said while addressing Judge Tahir Abbas Supra, who presided over the hearing. The case was registered at the Ramna police station under Section 302 (murder), Section 324 (murder attempt) Section 120B (punishment of criminal conspiracy), Section 114 (abetter present when offence is committed), and other sections of the Pakistan Penal Code, Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act, besides terrorism charges. The FIR alleged that Imran repeatedly issued instructions to the party leadership, his spouse Bushra, Gandapur and his sister Aleema Khan for making all out efforts to get him released from jail and they could "set anything on fire or kill anyone for this purpose".

## 8 terrorists killed in separate KP operations: ISPR



Peshawar (News Desk) Security forces killed eight terrorists during two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military's media wing said on Tuesday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), "On 12-13 January 2025, eight kharij were sent to hell in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province." The security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in the Tank District. "After the troops effectively engaged the terrorists at their location, six kharij were sent to hell," the statement said. Another encounter took place in the general area of Tirah valley, Khyber District, where the forces "successfully neutralised two terrorists."

## May 9 riots: Planners, masterminds to face trial in military court, defence ministry

Islamabad (News Desk) The defence ministry's lawyer, Khawaja Haris, on Tuesday informed the Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench that the alleged masterminds and conspirators of the May 9 "conspiracy" would be tried in military courts. The bench, including Justices Aminuddin Khan, Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Musarrat Hilali, and Shahid Bilal Hassan, is hearing a case pertaining to the military trials — and recent sentencing — of civilians

for their role in attacks on army installations during the riots that followed ex-premier Imran Khan's arrest on May 9, 2023. In recent hearings, SC judges have questioned why the accused were "specifically" tried in military courts instead of anti-terrorism courts, with Justice Mandokhail observing that "the executive cannot play the role of judiciary". A day ago, Justice Hilali wondered whether the Pakistan Army Act (PAA), 1952, outlined any punishment for officers who suspend the Constitution.

During today's hearing, Advocate Haris, who appeared as the defence ministry's lawyer, in response to a question, said that trials of the conspirators and masterminds would also be held in the military courts. While continuing his arguments from yesterday, the defence ministry lawyer presented Sheikh Liaquat Hussain's case as an example of a civilian being tried in military court. Justice Rizvi asked whether an army officer was tried for their involvement in the events on May 9. "How did the people reach the corps command-

er's house without any weapons," he asked, terming the intrusion a "security failure". In his response, the lawyer said that the charge on the people was for damaging property, adding that no military personnel was tried in the events that unfolded in 2023. However, Justice Mandokhail said that the court wanted to see the circumstances under which a civilian was tried in the Army Act, questioning its jurisdiction. "The extent to which you are expanding the scope of the Army Act, [means] anyone can be tried under it," he said.



Accompanied by CM Murad Ali Shah, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is briefed during a visit to the telemedicine satellite centre control room of the ChildLife Foundation, at Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi.

## PM Shehbaz vows to maintain peace in district as 25 vehicles of second convoy reach Kurram

Kurram (News Desk) Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the situation in Kurram was "returning to normal" as 25 vehicles of a second convoy carrying essentials reached the district. Clashes stemming from decades-old land disputes have claimed at least 130 lives since November, with food and medicine

shortages reported due to weeks-long road blockades. Following a peace agreement between the warring sides in Kurram district, security forces and the district administration began demolishing bunkers in Lower Kurram using explosives, while the residents of Parachinar observed a shutter-down

strike on Monday to protest the prolonged closure of roads. During a federal cabinet meeting today, PM Shehbaz stated, "All stakeholders will maintain peace," adding that such incidents will never happen again. He further said, "Bunkers, which were once established, have been demolished," adding that food

and other supplies were being delivered to the residents of the district. Separately, a convoy of 45 vehicles carrying food and other necessities was dispatched to the district, according to Kurram Deputy Commissioner Ashfaq Ahmed. He said that various steps were underway to provide relief to the people, including the reopening

## Bilawal touts Sindh's efforts to combat infant mortality

KARACHI: (News Desk) Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Monday took great pride in the Sindh government's public-private partnership initiatives especially in healthcare sector and lauded its significant achievements in reducing the child mortality rate in the province. The PPP chief was speaking at a ceremony to mark the release of a report by the Pediatric Acute Lung Injury and Sepsis Investigators (PALISI) network, a US-based health institute, highlighting a significant reduction in child mortality rate at Sindh's public hospitals. The event was organised by Dow University of Health Sciences at the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi. While Mr Bhutto-Zardari did not speak much on the report during his speech, he took to social media later and shared its key findings. He recalled that the public-private partnership model was first envisioned by former prime minister Benazir Bhutto in the party's 1993 election manifesto, which was now yielding results.

## Tempers flare during year's first sitting of parliament

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Even though talks between the PTI and government to bring down political temperatures are set to enter their third round, there was no let-up in the acrimony between opposition and government lawmakers in the lower house of parliament on Monday.

As the National Assembly met for the first time this calendar year, the session was marred by noisy protests by PTI lawmakers soon after Opposition Leader Omar Ayub finished speaking. At the outset of proceedings, Mr Ayub demanded an independent inquiry commission on the alleged psychological and physical torture of civilians during their trials by military courts. It may be noted that last month, scores of PTI supporters were convicted by military courts for their involvement in the May 9 violence. Mr Ayub also chided government functionaries for their comments on the possible outcome of the Al-Qadir Trust case and claimed that following a deal between the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA) and a private businessman, the money landed in the Supreme Court's account before being transferred to the national treasury. "What have Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi got to do with it?" he questioned. The PTI also raised alarm over the alleged 'disappearance' of its activists on Nov 26 and sought their immediate recovery.

## CM Murad appoints 12 more special assistants, eight spokespersons

KARACHI: (News Desk) Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday appointed 12 more special assistants, taking their number to 22. The new special assistants were Pir Fazal Shah Jeelani, Liaqat Askani, Tanzila Umme Habiba, Ameer Hamza Rais, Raza Haroon, Khair Muhammad Sheikh, Amanullah Mahsood, Kulsoom Chandio, Muhammad Ali Rashid, Muhammad Ali Bhutto, Hussain Aslam, and Veerji Kolhi. A CM House spokesman said that the newly inducted special assistants would be allocated portfolios shortly by the chief minister. He said that the provincial cabinet was not expanded as the special assistants were not cabinet members. On July 2, 2024, Lal Chand Ukrani, Sardar Faraz Rajar, Qasim Naveed Qamar, Waqar Mehdi, Rajveer Singh, Mansoor Shahani, Usman Hignoro, Abdul Jabbar Khan, Junaid Baloch, and Muhammad Saleem Baloch had been appointed as special assistants to the chief minister. Besides, the provincial government also named eight new spokespersons — Nadir Nabeel Gabol, Sukhdev Asardas, Buland Khan Junejo, Simita Afzal, Tahseen Abidi, Heer Soho, Aqraba Fatima, and Mustafa Abdullah. Now, there are 16 spokespersons for the provincial government as earlier Barrister Mur-taza Wahab, Ghanwar Isran Ali, Sukkur Mayor Barrister Arsalan Islam Shaikh, Sarmad Palijo, Abdul Wahid Halepoto, Makhdoom Fakhar Zaman, Muhammad Ali Rashid and Sadia Javed were appointed as spokespersons.

## PTI's Ejaz Chaudhry absent from Senate despite production order

Islamabad (News Desk) PTI Senator Ejaz Chaudhry failed to appear in Tuesday's Senate session despite production orders issued by Chairman Yousaf Raza Gillani a day earlier. This was not the first production order issued for the senator, who is imprisoned at Lahore's Kot Lakhpat Jail. In March last year, he was due to be produced in the Senate but was unable to attend the session.

In November of last year, Chaudhry was among 21 other PTI figures formally indicted by a Lahore Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in cases related to the countrywide riots on May 9, 2023, registered at the Racecourse and Sarwar Road police stations. "We are greatly saddened as colleagues of a senator of this house who has been incarcerated for the last 1.5 years in a Lahore jail," Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Shibli

Faraz, said. Opposition lawmakers could be seen carrying placards with pictures of the missing senator during the senate proceedings. Faraz thanked the speaker for issuing the production order for Chaudhry adding, "Despite that, he is not among us because the government of Punjab does not want him to come here and talk." The PTI leader said that it was Chaudhry's legal,

constitutional, and democratic right to attend the Senate session, terming the Punjab government's explanation of security issues obstructing his production in the Senate as "regrettable". He said that the house belonged to everyone, adding that "our custodian's letter was not given importance." He called upon his fellow senators to "stand as one" to protest the "lack of respect shown to the parliament."

