

## Government could have resolved missing persons issue: SC

Islamabad (News Desk) The Supreme Court of Pakistan has expressed frustration over the prolonged issue of missing persons, with Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail asserting that the government could have resolved the problem had it desired to do so. The court was hearing a case related to missing persons when additional attorney general informed the court about the government's decision to appoint Justice (retired) Faqir Muhammad Khokhar as the new head of the commission on missing persons, re-

placing Justice (retired) Javed Iqbal, Express News reported. The attorney general also mentioned that the government intends to establish a tribunal for missing persons through new legislation. In response, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked that such legislation would be necessary to set up the tribunal. The attorney general indicated that the cabinet committee was working on the legislative process and was asking for a timeline to complete it. Justice Mandokhail, however, pointed out that the

law already exists, stating that making someone disappear is a criminal act. He emphasized that if a crime had been committed, a trial should be held, and if no crime had been committed, the person should be released. The court was told that the government wanted to address the issue of missing persons systematically, but Justice Mandokhail responded, saying that if the government truly wanted to resolve the matter, it would have already been addressed. Further, Justice Hassan Rizvi questioned how

many missing persons had been recovered by the commission and whether the individuals who had been found were disclosing their whereabouts. The registrar of the missing persons commission explained that those recovered do not reveal where they had been. Justice Masarat Hilali called for new legislation to be enacted specifically for missing persons, and Justice Mandokhail concluded by saying, "We can only hope that the government will resolve the issue. We cannot tell Parliament to legislate on this matter."



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets MNAs on the floor of the National Assembly in Parliament House.

## 'Jurisdiction' becomes bone of contention at apex court

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Contempt proceedings, initiated by the Supreme Court against Additional Registrar (Judicial) Nazar Abbasi over a jurisdictional matter, have evolved into a debate on the primacy of judicial orders versus administrative decisions.

Taking up the contempt case on Tuesday, a two-member regular bench comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi asked why a case regarding the regular benches' jurisdiction was transferred to the constitutional bench.

The bench sought assistance from the attorney general on ramifications for ignoring a judicial order and appointed senior lawyers Munir A. Malik and Hamid Khan as amici curiae. The issue involves 'mismanagement' in the fixing of certain cases that were required to be heard by the constitutional bench, but were 'mistakenly' fixed before the regular bench. Consequently, it led to wastage of time, resources of the institution as well as the parties, according to a Supreme Court announcement. Those cases were fixed before a regular bench comprising Justice Shah, Justice Ayesha A. Malik and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan. The cases were heard on Jan 13, where, in addition to the merits of the case, the constitutionality of a section of the Customs Act were challenged.

## May 9 riots: Faisalabad ATC issues non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI's Ayub, Shibli, and others



Islamabad (News Desk) An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Faisalabad on Wednesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI leaders Omar Ayub Khan, Shibli Faraz, Kanwal Shouzeb, and former member Fawad Chaudhry in the case of their alleged involvement in the May 9 riots.

The case was registered against PTI leaders and activists for allegedly burning a police van outside the State Bank of Pakistan in the Civil Lines police station area following the brief arrest of PTI founder Imran Khan on May 9, 2023. Earlier this month, the judge had summoned the four leaders for the hearing of the May 9 case, which was registered at Faisalabad's Civil Lines Police Station. However, the leaders had filed a plea, asking for an exemption from the hearing.

## Latest Peca changes draft lowers jail term to 3 years, fines remain at Rs2m

Islamabad (News Desk) The latest draft of the proposed changes to the country's cybercrime laws has lowered the prison term in case of violations to three years from seven years while fines remain the same at Rs2 million, it emerged on Wednesday.

Last month, Dawn reported that the government was planning 'wholesale' changes to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (Peca), which would see the formation of a new authority with powers to block online content and

access to social media, as well as prosecute those propagating 'fake news'. State minister for IT and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja had confirmed the plan to "address concerns regarding misinformation", saying that the amendments were under review. As per Dawn's report, the draft amendments proposed to add a new provision, Section 26(A), to Peca, so as to penalise perpetrators of "fake news" online. It stated that any person who "intentionally" posts any information "which he knows or has

reason to believe to be false or fake and likely to cause or create a sense of fear, panic or disorder or unrest" shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to five years or with a fine which may extend to Rs1m or with both. A later draft proposed a hike to seven years while the fine was raised to Rs2m. The latest draft, seen by Dawn.com today, said: "Whoever intentionally disseminates, publicly exhibits, or transmits any information through any information system, that he knows or has

reason to believe to be false or fake and likely to cause or create a sense of fear, panic or disorder or unrest in general public or society shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend upto three years or with fine which may extend to Rs2m or with both." It also proposed the establishment of the Social Media Protection and Regulatory Authority which would perform a range of functions related to social media such as education, awareness, training, regulation, enlistment, blocking and more.



Islamabad: Parliamentary Secretary for Industries & Production, Mr. Shahid Usman, Visits NPO for a Comprehensive Briefing on Enhancing National Productivity on January 22, 2025.

## PM Shehbaz's presence fails to quell noisy protest in NA

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Opposition members from the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) continued their noisy protest in the National Assembly on Tuesday during the rare presence of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as the session saw the lower house passing a bill to establish a health university in the federal capital amid intense sloganeering. Speaker Ayaz

Sadiq, in a departure from past practices, ignored the opposition's protest and managed to hurriedly conduct more than 60 per cent of the 51-point agenda on the private members' day. The session lasted nearly an hour. The opposition intensified their protests as soon as the prime minister entered the assembly hall following the playing of the national anthem. PTI

members chanted slogans and thumped desks, demanding the release of the party's founding chairman, Imran Khan, and the formation of judicial comto investigate the events of May 9 and Nov 26. PTI members have been protesting on the floor of the house since the beginning of the current session. Mr Sharif remained in the house throughout the session and remained

surrounded by treasury members most of the time. At times, he was seen exchanging pleasantries with the members and receiving applications while totally ignoring the opposition's protest. At one point, when the opposition members targeted the premier by calling him a "thief", some treasury members responded by calling him a "lion".

## Govt told not to 'play with fire' on water issue

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) The government's plan to divert water from the Indus River for corporate farming sparked heated debate in the Senate on Tuesday, with lawmakers from both sides of the aisle urging the matter to be resolved at the Council of Common Interests (CCI).

PPP Vice President and Senate parliamentary leader Sherry Rehman criticised the proposal to construct six new canals without consulting relevant stakeholders. Speaking on an adjournment motion, she wondered why the government was tight-lipped over controversial projects.

"If the caretakers could not understand the meaning of green Pakistan, at least we should understand it," she said, demanding assurance that "half of Pakistan will not be made water-deficient for corporate farming". She asked the government to share with Sindh if there were some compulsions. "Let's be very clear. This has to be sorted out. There are constitutional forums to sort this out," she remarked and regretted that the CCI has not met for 11 months.

## 1 dead, 11 injured in traffic accident near Nooriabad: police

Nooriabad (News Desk) At least one person died and 11 others were injured early on Wednesday after a fatal accident occurred near Nooriabad on the M-9 Karachi-Hyderabad motorway, according to the police.

Fatal road accidents on highways occur frequently in Pakistan, mainly due to overspeeding, hazardous overtaking and disregard for traffic rules.

Nooriabad police station house officer (SHO) Nadeem Solangi said that a Karachi-bound bus rammed into a stationary trailer near a cement factory. "The driver of the coach died on the spot," Solangi said, adding that the injured were shifted to the Liaquat University Hospital in Hyderabad.

In a statement, the Edhi rescue service's information centre in Karachi said that the deceased was identified as 50-year-old Mushtaq Shah and his dead body was shifted to the Nooriabad Police Station.

Earlier, a fatal collision between two cars near Dhabeji on the Karachi-Thatta section of the National Highway claimed four lives, among them a newly-wed man and his mother, and left six injured when the vehicles caught fire following the accident.

## Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad's stray dogs centre struggles to make ends meet

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) A centre set up by the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) to neuter and vaccinate stray dogs is struggling to carry out its daily operations due to a lack of funds and staff, hindering its ability to control the population of stray dogs that has increased significantly.

The Stray Dog Population Centre (SDPC) was established in Tarlai in November 2022 by the MCI in the direction of the Islamabad High Court to control the population of stray dogs through the 'trap, neuter, vaccinate and release' (TNVR) method.

The centre was supposed to neuter and release at least 800 dogs per month. People used to call the helpline and the trained staff were supposed to trap dogs from the said area and shift them to the centre. Initially, this centre performed well, as surgeries were conducted followed by the release of the dogs. However, the performance gradually declined before the completion of its contract on December 7, 2024. Since then, the centre has had no staff or other facilities, including food, for the dogs kept in cages. Similarly, the helpline 1819 set up for citizens to contact the centre for picking up stray dogs is also out of order. "If it is imperative, services of this doctor should be used for neutering the dogs before releasing them," the official said.

## Malik Riaz and son should face courts, present their defence: info minister

Lahore (News Desk) Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday that Malik Riaz and his son should "face the courts and present their defence," a day after the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) said the government was reaching out to the United Arab Emirates to seek the business tycoon's extradition in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Meanwhile, Riaz termed the NAB's action against him a "new demand for blackmail" and asserted

that he would not testify, without specifying in what case. The development comes on the heels of ex-premier Imran Khan and his spouse's conviction last week in the Al-Qadir Trust case, in which Riaz and his son are also co-accused and proclaimed offenders. As PTI and legal experts pointed to the need for accountability for all those involved, Tarar had said that consultation was ongoing on how to bring the other absconders back.

A day ago, the NAB, saying it was to seek Riaz's extradition, stated it was conducting inquiries and investigations against him and his associates for "fraud, deceptive practices and cheating the public at large." In a televised address today, Tarar recalled the NAB's press release, quoting the accountability watchdog as saying it had concrete evidence in those inquiries. Noting that Riaz and his son had been declared absconders, Tarar stressed

that if they both could have defended themselves before the courts, they would have done so in the Al-Qadir Trust case and other inquiries. "They (Riaz and his son) should face the courts, and present their defence, which they have failed to do so far." He said: "NAB's press release and it saying that more cases are underway on this ... One of these is Takht-Pari, a locality in Rawalpindi, in which there is a case of illegal takeover and illegal hous-



ing society and accumulating billions from the public." The minister added, "Not standing before the court, escaping its proceedings, and not presenting any proof or evidence in your defence

there [...]. Property has been seized previously as well and more will be done, according to the NAB's press release." The minister said further legal action should be completed in cases against the property tycoon.