

## Govt settles seminary spat with legal sleight of hand

ISLAMABAD: (news desk) After more than a month of controversy surrounding the law pertaining to the registration of seminaries, President Asif Ali Zardari — who had initially withheld his assent — finally signed the Societies Registration (Amendment) Act 2024 into law, swiftly followed by the promulgation of the Societies Registration (Amendment) Ordinance that amended the act of parliament. On Sunday, the National Assembly Secretariat issued a gazette notification, which said that the president gave his assent to the Societies Registration (Amendment) Act 2024 on Dec 27, which “shall come into force at once”. On the same day, a notification dated Dec 28 was issued by the president’s office about an amendment to the abovementioned societies act. “The Prime Minister’s advice at para 6 of the summary is approved. The Societies Registration (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024, is signed and promulgated,” the notification read. The ordinance relates to the addition of a new clause ‘21-C’ in the bill. The new section gives the seminaries the option to register either with the Directorate General of Religious Education (DGRE) or at the relevant deputy commissioner’s office. The ordinance was issued because about 18,600 seminaries had been registered with the education ministry under the decision of the federal cabinet without any legal backing, sources said, adding that the ordinance was promulgated to give legal cover to that cabinet decision. The ordinance also limits the societies act to Islamabad since education is a provincial subject under the 18th Amendment. The two laws promulgated by the government pacified both groups of clerics, as the traditional five

madressah boards in the country aligned with the JUI-F wanted seminaries to be autonomous through registration under the relevant DC office, whereas the new boards formed after 2019 wanted to remain under the education ministry’s DGRE. Initially, the Societies Registration (Amendment) 2024, which allows the seminaries to register with the local administration — was approved in a joint session of parliament that also saw the passage of the 26th Amendment. But the president refused to sign the legislation, citing potential backlash by international stakeholders.



Violence-stricken Kurram awaits truce as jirga extends talks, One group seeks three more days to consult elders ,KP govt committed to resolving long-standing dispute, says CM’s adviser Barrister Saif

## FIA detains ‘most wanted’ human trafficker in Islamabad

RAWALPINDI: (news desk) The Federal Investigation Agency’s (FIA) immigration staff detained a human trafficker who had been on the red book for most wanted criminals for last 17 years. A spokesman for the FIA said that the arrest of Amjad Ali took place upon his arrival at Islamabad International Airport by a Qatar Airways flight QR632. His name was placed on the stop list of passengers. He said Amjad Ali is allegedly involved in the human trafficking and visa fraud. A case was registered against the suspect, who belongs to Gujjar Khan, by the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle, Rawalpindi, in 2007. The suspect’s name was included in the Red Book’s most wanted human traffickers after he fled abroad by committing visa fraud. Earlier, the FIA Cyber Crime Circle, Rawalpindi, arrested two suspects, including an important member of a gang involved in online financial fraud. Adil Noman and Abdul Qadir were arrested in different areas of Rawalpindi, the FIA spokesman said. Abdul Qadir was part of an organised gang, the spokesman claimed. The suspect and his gang used spoofing calls software to make calls to innocent citizens. Adil Noman is suspected to be involved in online banking fraud. He allegedly embezzled Rs1.7 million from a citizen’s account by gaining access to his confidential information.

## Four security men injured in D.I. Khan suicide attack



DERA ISMAIL KHAN: (news desk) Four security personnel were injured in a suicide attack on a joint post of police and security forces on Dera-Tank road, on Saturday night. Sources said the suicide bomber in a vehicle targeted the Kanori post in tehsil Kulachi, leaving four security personnel injured and causing a significant damage to the security post. Armed gunmen, who were following the suicide bomber in a rickshaw, opened fire on the security post, they said. However, security personnel effectively retaliated, they said, adding that the terrorists managed to flee. Sources said the vehicle used by the suicide bomber originally belonged to the communication and works department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. They said terrorists had snatched the govern-

## New year likely to start with hike in diesel prices

ISLAMABAD: (news desk) Owing to impact of oil prices in international market, the prices of high-speed diesel (HSD), kerosene and light diesel oil (LDO) are estimated to increase by about Rs4 to Rs5 per litre on New Year’s Eve, for the first fortnight of 2025. However, informed sources said, the ex-depot price of petrol was estimated to be range-bound, swinging either way with a Re1 per litre change, depending on final calculation on Dec 31. In the mid of December,

the ex-depot price of HSD was reduced by Rs3.05 (1.18pc) to Rs255.38 per litre, while the petrol price remained unchanged. Sources said the average prices of HSD and LDO have slightly increased in the international market during the last fortnight while ex-refinery cost of kerosene oil was also slightly on the higher side. Import premium on both petrol and diesel remained unchanged while exchange rate on average remained stable. Due to these factors, the latest calculation as of Dec

28 showed around Rs4 per litre increase in HSD, Rs5 per litre in kerosene and LDO. An official of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) said the price difference for petrol was very small, which could be adjusted within the inland freight equalisation margin — a mechanism actually meant for uniform prices across the country. The ex-depot petrol price currently stands at Rs252.10 per litre while that of HSD is Rs255.38 per litre. Petrol is mostly used in private transport, small

## KP govt has done nothing, but corruption, says Tarar

LAHORE: (news desk) The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has done nothing for the people except corruption and it has ignored the plight of the KP masses as public money is being misused to promote PTI propaganda. This was stated by Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar while sharing a ‘White Paper’ on the performance of the PTI government in KP at a press conference here on Sunday. Mr Tarar said that the masses had given mandate to different parties in different provinces keeping in view the promises made by these parties in their manifestos. The PTI has been in power in the KP for almost 11 years and during this entire period, the people have witnessed only bad governance and corruption. The federal minister claimed that financial irregularities in the KP government are estimated to be around Rs152 billion.

## Inadequate labour protections leave millions at risk

ISLAMABAD: (news desk) The country’s occupational safety and health (OSH) profile for its large workforce is alarmingly inadequate, requiring urgent reforms at both federal and provincial levels to ensure safe working conditions. This has been found in a first-of-its-kind report, Pakistan National Profile on Occupational Safety and Health, concluded by the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development with the technical and financial support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the European Union. “In conclusion, while a national OSH system partially exists in Pakistan, it is neither complete nor fully functioning,” the report said, identifying the most prominent issues in this regard as significant gaps in existing legislation and its limited coverage, poor compliance even with existing legal requirements in many sectors, particularly informal and small-scale industries. The report pointed out inadequate infrastructure for OSH implementation, including inspection mechanisms, regulatory bodies and training institutions besides insufficient human, technical and human resources. “Furthermore, OSH awareness and training are inadequate, and there are inadequate mechanisms for notification and recording of occupational disease and injuries. Worker participation and representation are also limited,” it said. While the report called for a multi-faceted approach involving legislative reforms, capacity-building, awareness campaigns, investment in infrastructure.

## PPP’s power-sharing issues with ruling party persist

KARACHI: (news desk) Two key leaders of the PPP — one of the federal government’s key allies — have voiced concerns with the way both the PML-N and PTI have been approaching ongoing negotiations, and ignoring their concerns over power-sharing, especially in Punjab, Dawn.com reported. In separate interviews with DawnNewsTV, PPP MNA Syed Naveed Qamar and Punjab leader Hassan Murtaza voiced discontentment with the ruling party over policy-making issues, with the latter saying that if the PML-N did not change its ways, “it could jeopardise the alliance.” “If the PML-N continues along this path, then this alliance will not survive. I do not believe the PML-N will change, because they gave a lot of space to the opposition. They think that if they give space to the PPP, they will be left with nothing,” Mr Murtaza added. He added that this final option would be taken after the Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting. Speaking about the party’s reservations regarding Punjab, Mr Murtaza said that the party is “loyal to the PML-N, not [Punjab Chief Minister] Maryam Nawaz.” “The PPP’s stance is to be taken onboard any policy-making process. We want a good environment for democracy and politics.” The PTI has held several protests over the last year, most of which escalated into violence after facing state repression.



Ahsan Iqbal urges civil servants to play role in shaping country’s future

## Violence-stricken Kurram awaits truce as jirga extends talks

KOHAT: (news desk) Efforts to finalise a peace agreement between two warring groups in Kurram district faced a delay on Saturday, as one group requested three more days to consult its elders. The negotiations follow a series of official jirga sessions aimed at ending the violence that erupted after a passenger convoy was attacked on the Kohat-Parachinar highway

on Nov 21. The incident triggered clashes that left over 130 people, including women and children, dead. The highway has remained closed since then. A grand jirga convened in Kohat late on Saturday night, including local officials, former lawmakers and tribal elders, held multiple sessions but deferred the agreement. Despite initial resistance from Kurram tribal elders, who

had staged a sit-in and refused to participate, they later joined the jirga after their preconditions were accepted. These included a state-led operation to disarm the warring groups and destroy bunkers, as well as reopening the Kohat-Parachinar highway. The jirga was attended, by former MNAs Khayal Khan (from Kurram) and Pir Haider Ali Shah (from Hangu), tribal leaders Ma-

lik Noorjaf and Haji Ezzat Gul, Kohat Division Commissioner Motasim Billah and Regional Police Officer Abbas Majeed Marwat. During the negotiations, one group voiced concerns to Pir Shah Nawaz, chairman of Kohat division’s Ulema committee, about the risk of renewed clashes. They demanded compensation for losses, including burnt shops and homes in the Bagan area.

## ‘Imran never cut a deal with foreign powers for freedom’

ISLAMABAD: (news desk) PTI’s central information secretary, Sheikh Waqas Akram, on Sunday claimed the party’s founder, Imran Khan, never relied on foreign intervention to secure deals, like his political rivals. Mr Akram named President Asif Zardari and PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif, who he claimed had “negotiated deals” in the past to leave the country to avoid imprisonment. The PTI leader was responding to the allegations levelled by PML-N leader Khawaja Asif and

PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. The former had claimed the PTI founder was an “asset” for Israel, while the latter said foreign powers were targeting Pakistan’s nuclear and missile programmes under the guise of supporting Mr Khan. In a statement on Sunday, Mr Akram said the two leaders were targeting the PTI founder “to garner public attention and media coverage.” He said Mr Khan consistently opposed foreign conspiracies and interventions. He reminded Mr Asif that

he used to call the PTI founder “Taliban Khan” and then started labelling him an “Israeli asset”. PML-N used to call Mr Khan “a project of the army”, Mr Akram said, and asked: “By calling Khan an Israeli asset, are you trying to accuse the Pakistan Army of supporting the PTI at the behest of Israel?” He claimed Mr Asif’s repeatedly made statements that “embarrassed Pakistan on the international stage” despite him holding key position as defence minister.

Mr Akram called the PPP chairman an “angry political child” and warned him to refrain from censoring Imran Khan, who is a “leader of international stature”. “[President] Zardari has a history of exploiting his politically immature young son as a tool to pressure PML-N into making concessions by unleashing him to target Sharifs to gain leverage in negotiations,” Mr Akram claimed. Mr Akram also claimed that the PTI founder’s rivals privately acknowl-



edged that he sacrificed his comfort for Pakistan’s “greater good” and admitted the bitter truth that only “he was a political reality”. Mr Khan is a leader of “international stature”, while his critics were “mere pawns unleashed by their masters to unnecessarily criticise him,” Mr Akram said, adding the political decline of Sharif and Zardari families was imminent.