

PM reaffirms pledge to eliminate terrorism after 7 passengers in Punjab-bound bus shot dead in Barkhan

Islamabad (News Desk) Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's pledge to eradicate terrorism after seven Punjab-bound passengers were offloaded from a bus and shot dead in Barkhan district last night. Pakistan has recently witnessed an uptick in terror activities, especially in KP and Balochistan. Terror attacks have increased since the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the government in 2022. The premier's remarks follow last night's incident when armed men "offloaded seven passen-

gers from a coach after checking their identity cards and killed them", according to Barkhan Deputy Commissioner (DC) Waqar Khurshid Alam. In a statement today, PM Shehbaz asserted, "Those who harm innocent and defenceless people will have to pay a very heavy price." The prime minister reaffirmed the commitment to completely eliminate terrorism from the country, state-run Radio Pakistan reported. Expressing grief over the killing of the bus passengers, he conveyed his sympathies to the bereaved families and prayed for the departed

souls. PM Shehbaz directed that the perpetrators be brought to justice at the earliest, the report added. "The sacrifices of innocent civilians will never go in vain." DC Alam had said, "All seven who were travelling in the coach belonged to Punjab, and were on their way to Lahore." After disembarking them from the coach, the gunmen opened fire, killing them on the spot, he said, adding that the attackers managed to escape. The Barkhan DC also said security forces had cordoned off the area after the incident. The bodies of the seven slain men

were later shifted to the district headquarters hospital. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack so far. Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Safaraz Bugti also vowed the government's "concrete response" to terrorism and condemned the "brutal killing of seven innocent passengers". "The cowardly attack by enemies of peace is intolerable and a concrete response will be given," CM Bugti vowed. Noting that terrorists were "targeting innocent and defenceless people", he said: "We will service justice to terrorists who have martyred Pakistanis."



Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir awarded guard of honour at the historic Royal Horse Guards Parade Ground in UK.

IHC refuses to register Al-Qadir Trust as charity

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Acting Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Sardar Mohammad Sarfraz Dogar on Tuesday turned down a request to register the Al-Qadir Trust under the Charity Act, observing that the petition has become infructuous after the judgement in the £190m corruption reference. Accountability Court Judge Nasir Javed Rana had sentenced ex-PM Imran Khan and his spouse, Bushra Bibi, in the graft case to 14 and seven years imprisonment. As per the verdict, the "property of the sham... Al-Qadir University Project Trust" is forfeited to the government. The other accused namely Bahria Town owner Malik Riaz Hussain, his son Ahmed Ali Riaz Malik, former accountability czar Mirza Shahzad Akbar, former PM's aide Zulfiqar Bukhari, Farhat Shahzadi and Ziaul Mustafa Nasim have already been declared proclaimed offenders. Perpetual warrants for their arrest and orders for the confiscation of their properties have been issued. The petition seeking the registration of the trust was filed by Imran Khan and had been pending since October 2023.

Pakistan no longer isolated on world stage, says Ishaq Dar



WASHINGTON: (News Desk) On his first visit to the US after the Trump administration took office, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar boasted that Pakistan had broken its diplomatic isolation through active diplomacy, and called for sweeping global reforms and strengthening the UN to create a more inclusive international order.

In remarks made on separate occasions, Mr Dar said Pakistan was no longer isolated in the global community, adding that the country's economy was set to take off as a result of his government's hard work.

Addressing a high-level UN Security Council debate hosted by China, Mr Dar underscored the urgent need for restructuring both the UN and global financial institutions.

The existing frameworks have "failed to resolve long-standing conflicts and economic disparities". He pointed to unresolved crises — the war in the Middle East and Jammu and Kashmir dispute — and criticised the UN's inability to enforce its resolutions and uphold its core principles. He stressed the need for a system that is "more democratic, representative, and accountable," one that truly serves the interests of all nations rather than a privileged few.

Army chief Gen Asim Munir awarded guard of honour during UK visit

London (News Desk) Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir was awarded a ceremonial guard of honour during his visit to the United Kingdom, according to a statement by the military's media wing. The army chief is set to participate in the seventh Regional Stabilisation Conference at the esteemed Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where he will deliver the keynote address on "The Emerging World Order and Pakistan's Future Outlook", the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in the statement.

The annual conference serves as a platform for military dialogue between Pakistan and the UK to foster collaboration, bringing together policymakers, both civilian and military, as well as members of prominent think tanks from both countries. "The COAS will engage with key members of the UK's civil and military leadership to discuss matters of mutual interest," the statement said, adding that he will hold meetings with Chief of Defence Staff UK Adm Toney Radikon, Chief of the General Staff of the British

Army General Sir Roland Walker and UK National Security Advisor Jonathan Nicholas Powell. The army chief will also meet Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to discuss shared challenges and foster deeper collaboration. Pakistan and the UK share a long-standing relationship rooted in strong diplomatic, economic, and security ties. Over the years, the two countries' militaries have maintained robust cooperation, particularly in the domains of counter-terrorism and professional training, the statement noted. Gen Munir will

also visit prominent units of the British Army, including the Land Warfare Centre and the 1st Strike Brigade, where he will receive briefings on the UK Army's modernisation initiatives and operational strategies. The visit underscores the enduring partnership between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, reaffirming their shared commitment to regional stability and global peace. The army chief met his British counterpart General Sir Patrick Sanders in May last year where both sides discussed measures to further elevate bilateral defence relations.



Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar meets with UN chief Antonio Guterres in New York. —

Dar seeks UN support in countering 'cross-border terrorism from Afghanistan'

New York (News Desk) Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar sought the United Nations' support for counter-terrorism efforts in Pakistan during a meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in New York on Tuesday. The meeting comes a day after Dar addressed a high-level UN Security Council debate calling for

a unified, non-discriminatory approach to combat terrorism and rejecting "double standards" in dealing with extremist threats. According to today's statement by the Foreign Office, Dar highlighted "cross-border terrorism from Afghanistan" and called for support against "terrorism within and from Afghanistan." He re-

iterated Pakistan's desire to provide humanitarian support to the millions of impoverished Afghans and to promote its economic development, including implementing connectivity projects between Central Asia and Pakistan through Afghanistan. Islamabad has consistently voiced concerns that the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban

Pakistan (TTP) uses Afghan soil to launch attacks in Pakistan, asking the Afghanistan government to rein in the group. Kabul denies the allegations. A UN report on Saturday revealed that the Afghan Taliban's continued support for the banned TTP, despite Islamabad's increasing pressure to cease backing the outfit.

IOM reports uptick in repatriation of Afghan refugees from capital

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Over 18,000 Afghan nationals returned to their country from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad in January this year, with repatriations in the second fortnight of the month slightly higher than the first fortnight. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the pace of deportation of Afghan nationals from the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and Rawalpindi has increased. Between January 16 and 31, 291 heads of households were interviewed through a flow monitoring registry (FMR) form, while 9,846 Afghan returnees were identified through border crossing points of Torkham, Chaman, Ghulam Khan, Badini, and Bahramcha. Since September 15, 2023, at least 824,568 individuals have returned to Afghanistan while two per cent (18,577) of this total has returned since January 2025.

President reaffirms commitment to regional connectivity

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhancing regional connectivity, highlighting the country's strategic role in fostering economic integration. Speaking at the 'International Conference on Regional Connectivity & Pakistan: Emerging Opportunities', organised by the Pakistan-China Institute, he outlined a three-pronged vision for the nation's involvement in regional connectivity: linking Central Asian states through Gwadar, positioning Pakistan as a trade bridge between East and West, and leveraging deep-sea ports of Gwadar and Karachi and Port Qasim to boost maritime trade. Gwadar is no longer a promise, it is a reality, and the port city is set to become the beating heart of regional trade, investment, and logistics, he said. Balochistan CM Sarfraz Bugti emphasised Gwadar's growing importance as a trade and logistics hub, stressing its role in driving regional connectivity and economic growth. He called on international stakeholders to invest in Gwadar's logistics, energy, and industrial sectors. "CPEC is not just an economic corridor; it is a lifeline for Balochistan," he said. Says Gwadar now transformed into regional trade hub Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute.

PM inaugurates Recep Tayyip Erdogan Interchange at Jinnah Avenue

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday inaugurated the Recep Tayyip Erdogan Interchange at Jinnah Avenue. The project worth Rs4.1 billion has two components — a flyover and an underpass at the junction of Jinnah Avenue and 9th Avenue.

While inaugurating the project, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Mohammad Ali Randhawa for completing the project in record 84 days.

He also praised the contractor for what he said was quality work. Road to cater to all types of vehicles, help in reducing traffic congestion.

The prime minister said with the completion of this project as well as protected U-turns, traffic will move smoothly. Besides parliamentarians and government officials, the inauguration ceremony was also attended by the Turkish ambassador to Pakistan. The project had been named after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during his recent visit to Pakistan. The prime minister also directed the interior minister to share a detailed presentation about upcoming and required projects to make the city more beautiful. "I am impressed by Mohsin Naqvi's speed," the prime minister said while referring to the speedy completion of Serena Interchange project.

SC constitutional bench urged to strike down Army Act provisions under Article 10A

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) The Supreme Court's constitutional bench (CB) hearing a set of intra-court appeals was requested on Tuesday to strike down Sections 2(1)(d)(i) and (ii) of the Pakistan Army Act (PAA) on the basis of Article 10A of the Constitution that guarantees the right to a fair trial. Unlike elsewhere in the world where civilians cannot be dragged into courts that are not independent, Section 2(1)(d)(ii) of PAA

permits citizens' trial by military courts in Pakistan, argued senior counsel Salman Akram Raja representing Arzam Junaid, who was sentenced to six years by a military court in connection with the May 9 violence. Headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, the seven-judge CB was hearing a set of intra-court appeals against the October 2023 order of the five-judge bench that nullified civilians' trial by the military courts in the May 9

case. While Salman Akram Raja, who is also PTI secretary general, completed his arguments, Uzair Bhandari, representing PTI's founding chairman Imran Khan, will commence his arguments on Wednesday. Imran's lawyer to initiate arguments today after Salman Akram Raja concludes his side. Mr Raja also cited the detailed reasons of Justice Ayesha A. Malik in the October 2023 decision.

According to Justice Malik, Article 10A is a categorical, unqualified, and fundamental right that guarantees a fair trial and due process to individuals facing trial. This right is not merely an ethical notion or philosophical concept, but a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution that must be upheld. Consequently, Justice Malik ruled that fundamental rights cannot be compromised simply because it is deemed expedient.



Thus, Article 10A is a very powerful and standalone provision of the Constitution, and if the CB decides the present appeals based solely on Article 10A, it

would be entirely sufficient and satisfactory, the counsel emphasised. As an independent court, rather than a military court, is an essential requirement.