

## IMF seeks details of programme implementation, property rights in meeting with CJP

Islamabad (News Desk) The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) technical team, currently in Pakistan to review the judicial and regulatory framework under the \$7 billion bailout deal, met Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi on Tuesday to discuss programme implementation and property rights.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar clarified that such meetings were considered part of the IMF and World Bank's usual scope of work. The IMF team is visiting the country for a week-long scrutiny of the judicial and regulatory system as part of the ongoing

\$7bn Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to address governance and corruption vulnerabilities. It will examine six key governance-related sectors and institutions, according to a statement from the Ministry of Finance.

According to a press release by the Supreme Court, the CJP provided an overview of "the ongoing efforts to enhance judicial performance." He further informed the mission that the "judiciary in Pakistan is independent, and being head of the institution, it is his responsibility to protect the independence," the statement read, adding

that CJP Afridi also highlighted that the judiciary was not used to direct interactions with missions. CJP Afridi also stated he would be "quite guarded" when it came to his comments and views. According to the statement, he also "highlighted key constitutional developments with respect to the Judicial Commission of Pakistan and reforms, including senior-level judicial appointments, judicial accountability, and the restructuring of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP)." He went on to elaborate on the "merits of integrating the judiciary and the parliamentary committee

to ensure a more transparent and efficient judicial selection process." CJP Yahya also informed the delegation that the Supreme Court was in the "process of finalising a critical agenda for the upcoming NJPMC meeting expected in the last week of February." Discussions during the meeting also centered on judicial accountability and the mechanisms for addressing complaints against judges," the report said, adding that the country's chief justice also underscored on "the importance of a robust and fair accountability process" for the integrity and independence of the judiciary.



CJP Yahya Afridi presents IMF delegation with a souvenir at the Supreme Court

## Fear, shock shroud Tirah after killing of abducted traders

KHYBER: (News Desk) The killing of abducted Tirah traders' leader Haji Sher Mohammad and his colleague on February 4 by proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has largely dampened the spirits of locals with most of them remaining in a state of constant fear and shock since the occurrence of the gruesome incident. Local sources told this scribe that although markets in Tirah were open, people preferred to remain indoors. They said that markets gave a deserted look as trading activities were badly affected by the incident, which left most of the local traders and shopkeepers in an uncertain situation. They said that attendance at weekly Thursday and Friday fairs, which had been held regularly for decades at Lar Bagh-Markez of Malakinkhel, was thin and trading activities came to almost a halt during the current week. "Local traders and ordinary residents have lost faith in the security arrangements and they now feel highly insecure with the tragic loss of their popular leader and a colleague in an act of terrorism," a local trader told Dawn while requesting anonymity.

## 9 terrorists killed in Karak, North Waziristan



NORTH WAZIRISTAN/LAKKI MARWAT: (News Desk) Four terrorists, including three Afghans, were killed and three others injured in a strike by security forces in North Waziristan, while police said five terrorists associated with the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were killed in an encounter in Karak district on Monday.

There was no official word from the Inter-Services Public Relations, the military's media wing, regarding the operation till late on Monday evening. Sources said security forces received intelligence reports that about seven to 10 terrorists, some among them Afghans, were present at a specific location in the Tappi village of Miramshah tehsil, after which the hideout was targeted. Sources said the strike on the terrorists' hideout left dead four militants, who were later identified as Riaz alias Muhajir, Zazar Afghan, Naqeebullah Afghan, and Sarkash Afghan. Three others were said to be injured. The dead and injured terrorists were shifted to an unknown location after the operation, sources said. Local sources reported that after the strike, a fire broke out at the hideout and some bodies were so mutilated that they were rendered unrecognisable. Security forces have cordoned off the area and initiated a search operation.

## IHC seeks AGP's assistance on journalists' plea against Peca law changes

Islamabad (News Desk) The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday sought the assistance of Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan on a petition filed by journalists' bodies challenging recent changes to the country's cybercrime laws.

New provisions enacted last month through the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act (Peca), 2025 introduce harsher penalties for what the government considers "fake news", the expansion of state oversight of digital platforms, and the creation of new regulatory

bodies to monitor social media. Journalists have assailed the legislation as an "attack on freedom of expression", while the opposition PTI has also vociferously protested the legislation's rushed passage in the parliament. Concerns have also been raised by Amnesty International, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, digital rights activists as well as the European Union. Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas took up a petition today filed last week by a faction of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ). Advocate Im-

ran Shafique appeared on behalf of the journalists' union while IHC Bar Association (IHCB) President Riasat Ali Azad was also present. In its petition, the PFUJ argued that the Peca amendments violated fundamental constitutional rights, particularly freedom of expression, press freedom and due process. The petitioner contended that several provisions of the amended law were overly broad, vague and prone to arbitrary enforcement, posing a threat to civil liberties. Key objections included the ambiguous definition of "social media platforms", which

could be applied to various online services, and provisions regulating "unlawful and offensive" content, which are considered subjective and open to misuse. Renowned television anchors also approached the IHC on Friday against the changes to Peca laws, seeking to have it declared null and void. Their petition also echoed the concerns raised by the PFUJ in its plea, including violation of fundamental rights. It contended that the amendments granted excessive powers to authorities, potentially leading to censorship and suppression of journalistic independence.

## Man in Karachi sentenced to life in prison for smuggling 1.9 tonnes of drugs

KARACHI: (News Desk) A special court for the Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) has sentenced an "international smuggler" to life in prison for attempting to traffic over 1,900 kilograms, or 1.9 tonnes, of charas to Belgium. Special CNS Court Judge Rajesh Chander Rajput found international smuggler Shahzad Akram, alias Mubashir and his accomplice Hasnain Hanif guilty of attempting to smuggle 1,960kg of charas in a container exporting bed sheets to Belgium. "[The] prosecution has been successful in proving the charge upon Shahzad Akram of trying to export seized charas and facilitating role upon accused Hasnain Hanif beyond any shadow of doubt," the court noted. The court also sentenced Hanif — who appeared in court on bail — to five years in prison for providing his export licence (Form E) for the shipment.

## Imran petitions for open hearing of cases

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) As Imran Khan on Monday sought hearing of his cases in the open court, his sister told the media that the jailed opposition leader would write another letter to the army chief next week. The former prime minister has filed a petition before the Islamabad High Court, saying multiple 'false' cases had been instituted against him and he was being tried in the 'controlled' environment of Adiala Jail.

The petition contended that Mr Khan's trial inside the Adiala Jail was being conducted in violation of law and the Constitution. It also claimed that his lawyers were being harassed.

The petition pointed out that since his incarceration on Aug 5, 2023, Mr Khan has never been produced before an open court. His trials in various cases were conducted in makeshift courts inside the prison. Claims he is being tried in 'controlled environment' at Adiala jail.

According to the petition, the jail administration did not allow international media to cover the trial proceedings and only a handful of reporters are allowed to witness the proceedings.

It said the media cannot even pronounce the ex-PM's name and used the term 'PTI founder' for him instead. The petition requested the court to issue direction for Mr Khan's open trial in order to ensure fair trial as enshrined in the constitution.

## Erdogan due in Pakistan this week

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday met his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is due to arrive in Pakistan later this week. The meeting took place during a brief stopover at Istanbul airport, while the president was en route to Portugal, where both countries agreed to boost counter-terrorism cooperation in a separate meeting in Islamabad. In their meeting, Presidents Zardari and Erdogan discussed bilateral ties and exchanged courtesies, a press release issued by the Presidency said. Later, President Zardari arrived in Lisbon and offered condolences to Prince Rahim Al-Hussaini following the death of his father, Prince Karim Aga Khan. He expressed his heartfelt sympathies on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan, saying that the nation mourned the loss of a "true friend" and "great philanthropist". The president said he had deeply been touched by the passing of the Aga Khan, with whom he had personal relations. He lauded the late Aga Khan's contributions to Pakistan's social and economic development, particularly in health care, education, community development, and poverty alleviation. Separately, Pakistan and Türkiye agreed to strengthen cooperation in countering terrorism financing, preventing radicalisation, and curbing the misuse of the internet for terrorism, the Foreign Office said. The understanding was reached during the second round of Pakistan-Türkiye Counter-Terrorism Consultations, held in Islamabad after a six-year hiatus despite robust counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries.



President Asif Ali Zardari meet with Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul, on Feb 10, 2025

## Pakistan's ranking on corruption perception index slides 2 spots: Transparency International

Islamabad (News Desk) Pakistan's ranking on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2024 has dropped by 2 spots from 133 in 2023 to 135 in 2024 out of 180 countries, according to a report released by Transparency International on Tuesday. The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of

public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). The CPI report is released annually by Transparency International Berlin. Transparency International Pakistan (TIP) has no role either in the collection of data or the calculation of the country's score, TIP explains.

The score for Pakistan also reduced by two points from 29 in CPI 2023 to 27 in CPI 2024. According to a Transparency International document listing Pakistan's CPI ranking and scores from 1996 to 2024, which was seen by Dawn.com, the country's score in the past 10 years has ranged between 27 and 33 points (a higher score in-

dicating less corruption). Since 2012, when the index changed to a scoring scale of 100 from 10, Pakistan's score rose from 27 to 33 in 2018 but declined consecutively back to 27 last year. Statistics from the past show that in 1996, Pakistan ranked only second-last out of 54 countries part of the index back then, with a score of 1/10.

## Deputy PM Dar meets Etisalat CEO, invites company to invest more in Pakistan's telecom sector

Islamabad (News Desk) Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday met the chief executive of United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s e&g group, formerly known as Etisalat, and invited the company to invest more in the country's telecom sector. PTCL's management is with 'e&g', which has 26 per cent of the shares. The largest shareholding of 62pc is with the Government of Pakistan and the remaining 12pc has been

floated through the PSX. According to a press release by the deputy PM's office, the minister held a meeting with Chief Executive Khalifa Al Shamsi and Chief Operations Officer Khaled Hegazy along with other Pakistani officials. "Highlighting Pakistan's conducive investment policies, the deputy prime minister invited e&g to make further investment in the country's telecom sector," the statement read.

Khalifa Al Shamsi "acknowledged the country's importance as a growing market in the region", expressing his appreciation towards the country's efforts to nurture a business-friendly climate. Dar is part of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's delegation, which is on a two-day visit to the UAE at the invitation of President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to participate in the World Governments Summit (WGS) in Dubai.

A press release issued by the Foreign Office (FO) said that this would be the premier's second visit to the UAE since assuming office in March 2024. Last month, the UAE expressed keen interest in collaboration with Pakistan in the minerals and agriculture sectors during a meeting between PM Shehbaz and UAE President Sheikh Al Nahyan in Rahim Yar Khan on Jan 5. Pakistan and the UAE share close diplomatic, economic, and cultural



ties, strengthened by historical connections and a large Pakistani expatriate community in the Emirates. The UAE is one of Pakistan's largest trading

partners and a key source of remittances, with thousands of Pakistanis working in various sectors. Both countries collaborate on defence.