

COAS rubbishes Indian military's 'hollow statements', vows full throttle response to any 'misadventure'

Islamabad (News Desk) Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir on Tuesday rubbished recent "hollow statements" from the Indian military and vowed a befitting to any "misadventure" against Pakistan. Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi claimed last month that "60 per cent of the terrorists eliminated" in Indian-occupied Kashmir (IoK) in 2024 were allegedly of Pakistani origin. General Dwivedi further alleged that "80pc of the remaining fighters in IoK were of Pakistani origin". The remarks had elicited

a strong response from the Pakistan Army. A press release from the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) today said COAS Munir presided over the 267th Corps Commanders' Conference at the General Headquarters where the comments from the Indian side came under discussion. The ISPR said the high-level moot took "serious note of the recent reckless and provocative statements" from the Indian military leadership and termed them as being "irresponsible and detrimental" to regional stability. The ISPR quoted the

COAS as saying on the matter while addressing the military brass meeting: "Pakistan Army remains fully prepared to defend the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. These hollow statements from Indian military are indicative of their growing frustration and serve only to divert the attention of their masses and international community from their multiple internal fissures and blatant violations of human rights. Any misadventure against Pakistan will be responded with full and resolute force of the state." The meeting's participants

also discussed the prevailing situation along the Line of Control (LoC) and the Working Boundary near Sialkot. The ISPR said that expressing solidarity with the "resilient people" of IoK on the eve of Kashmir Solidarity Day, the forum's members strongly condemned the "continued blatant human rights violations" in IoK, recognising them as a "grave threat to regional peace and stability". The army brass reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the "legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right."



A second meeting of the Research Advisory Group (RAG) was convened at the PIE Auditorium in Islamabad on Tuesday.

7 injured in Pishin gas leak explosion: official

Pishin (News Desk) Seven people were injured in an explosion caused by a gas leak at the Darman Hospital in Balochistan's Pishin district, an official said on Tuesday. District administration spokesperson Sami Tareen said, "A gas explosion occurred in a room of a private hospital, injuring seven people and damaging the interior of the building."

The walls and windows of the hospital suffered damage, he added.

An injured person being treated by medical officers after gas explosion at hospital in Pishin, on Feb 4, 2025. — photo via author

"Four of the injured have been shifted to Quetta, with one of them in serious condition," he said, adding that three others were discharged after medical treatment. Incidents of explosions caused by gas leakage occur frequently across the country.

Last week, nine people were hospitalised with burn injuries they sustained due to a gas leak explosion in a food outlet in Rawalpindi's New Town area. Another person lost his life after sustaining fatal injuries in a similar incident that took place in a house in the city's Faisal Colony. Earlier this month, at least six people died and 38 others were injured when a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanker exploded in Punjab's Multan.

Flurry of changes at IHC after new judges' arrival



ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, who was senior puisne judge at the Islamabad High Court before Justice Sarfaraz Dogar's transfer, has been removed from the top decision-making committee days after five judges opposed the latter's transfer to the capital. According to a notification on Monday, the IHC administration reconstituted the Administrative Committee and Departmental Promotion Committee. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq remains the chairman, with Justice Sarfaraz Dogar and Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro inducted as members. Previously, Justice Kayani and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb were part of this committee. Furthermore, the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) has also been modified; it now comprises Justice Sarfaraz Dogar and Justice Azam Khan. Earlier, the DPC comprised Justice Kayani and Justice Aurangzeb. The changes were formalised through a notification issued by Additional Registrar Ijaz Ahmed following the approval of CJ Farooq. The letter said since the 18th Amendment, no permanent high court transfers had taken place, reinforcing the autonomy of each high court.

LHC seeks reply from DC over PTI's plea for Feb 8 gathering

Lahore (News Desk) The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday sought a reply from the city's deputy commissioner on a PTI plea seeking permission to hold a public rally at Minar-i-Pakistan on February 8. The opposition PTI has decided to observe a "black day" on February 8 (Saturday) to protest against its "stolen mandate" in last year's general elections, which were dominated by independent candidates that the party fielded. Malik, the PTI's newly appointed Punjab chief organiser, had submitted an application to Lahore DC Syed Musa Raza on January 29,

seeking permission for the gathering. However, upon receiving no response, she then approached the LHC yesterday for the rally's approval. Presiding over the hearing today, Justice Farooq Haider directed DC Raza to appear in person on February 6 (Thursday) and submit a response on the petition filed by Malik, also a former PTI MNA. The judge also sought responses from other respondents named in the plea — namely the Punjab government; the Lahore commissioner, DC and additional DC; and the state. Speaking to the media in Lahore today, Malik said

February 8 was "not the PTI's day but Pakistan's". Asserting that her party's leaders and workers had been facing "oppression" for the past two years, Malik urged people to attend Saturday's protest rally. "No segment [of the society] was spared from dacoity on Feb 8, 2024," she said, referring to the elections in which the PTI says its mandate was "stolen". Stressing that ex-premier Imran Khan and his wife were in jail, Malik said the PTI founders' sisters were appearing before courts in various cases. "Peaceful protest is our right," the PTI leader said, asserting that

the government "would not be able to stop" the protest on February 8. Speaking to the media yesterday, Malik had said that in case of denial of permission for the Minar-i-Pakistan protest, the party would disclose its "plan B". The PTI has also announced a protest rally on February 8 in the Swabi district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the PTI is in power. To mark the occasion, the party would distribute Rs50 million in development funds among the village councils, as well as Rs200,000 each to PTI workers convicted by military courts recently over the May 9, 2023 riots.

SC Constitutional Bench urged to speak for rule of law

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Senior counsel Khwaja Ahmad Hosain on Monday urged the Constitutional Bench (CB) to speak for the Constitution and rule of law, reminding the bench that past decisions had let the nation down and caused suffering.

Closing arguments on behalf of former CJP Jawwad S. Khawaja, the counsel said Pakistan was founded by a brilliant lawyer with a firm belief in the constitution and the rule of law.

The seven-judge CB had taken up a set of intra-court appeals (ICAs) against the Oct 23, 2023, five-judge order that had nullified the trial of civilians by military courts in the May 9 violence case.

The counsel said that for the sake of the country's future the bench should stand by the brave decision of their colleagues (Oct 23 judgement) by dismissing the appeals instituted by the ministries of defence, interior and the federal government.

Legal fraternity split over judges' transfer issue

LAHORE: (News Desk) A clear division is visible within the legal fraternity on the transfer of judges from three provincial high courts to the Islamabad High Court (IHC), as two major groups in the bar have yet again come up with opposing stances. A few days ago, three judges from as many different high courts were transferred to the IHC under Article 200 by the president, despite strong opposition by five out of 10 IHC judges and some lawyer bodies, who termed the move an attack on judiciary's independence. Bodies dominated by Senator Hamid Khan-led Professional group rejected the government's move, while those represented by Ahsan Bhoon-led Independents, famously known as the Asma Jahangir group, supported the decision. The Professional group is widely supported by the Insaf Lawyers' Forum, the PTI legal wing, whereas the lawyers' forums of the PPP, PML-N and PML-Q back the Asma Jahangir group. The stance of both groups on the government's decision related to the judiciary in particular is usually predetermined due to their political alignments. "The Punjab Bar Council has fully endorsed President Asif Ali Zardari's constitutional authority and procedure regarding the transfer of judges in the Islamabad High Court," said a statement issued by PBBC Vice Chairman Irfan Tarar and Chairman Executive Committee Farooq Dogar.

PIE and DARE-RC collaborate on data-driven studies to tackle key education challenges

Islamabad (News Desk) Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) and Data and Research in Education (DARE-RC) on Tuesday decided to collaborate on conducting studies that "effectively utilise data to address key education challenges". A second meeting of the Research Advisory Group (RAG) was convened at the PIE Auditorium in Islamabad between PIE and DARE-RC — a project funded by UK International Development — bringing together policymakers, researchers, and development partners to discuss key education research priorities and enhance the role of data-driven policymaking, a press release issued by the organisations said. PIE Director General Dr Shahid Soroya — while speaking at the event — emphasised the need for a "collective working model to facilitate evidence-based policy". "PIE provides a platform where academia, government, and the development sector can work together to shape education policy through research," the press release quoted him as saying. He acknowledged the contributions of key partners and his team, stating, "I appreciate the role of DARE-RC in collaborating with us in organising this meeting. I would also like to acknowledge and appreciate my team at PIE, who are contributing to this important work." The press release said that UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Development and Policy Adviser Salim Salamah highlighted the "importance of a structured research agenda aligned with national priorities".



Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir addressing the 267th Corps Commanders' Conference at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.

FO confirms identities of 13 Pakistanis who died in Moroccan boat tragedy

Islamabad (News Desk) The Foreign Office (FO) said on Tuesday confirmed the identities of 13 Pakistanis who died in last month's Mauritania-Morocco boat tragedy. The FO said on January 16 that the boat, carrying 80 passengers, capsized near Morocco, with over 40 Pakistanis reportedly among the dead. Migrant

rights group Walking Borders said as many as 50 migrants may have drowned in the latest deadly wreck involving people trying to make the crossing from West Africa to Spain's Canary Islands. Over 40 Pakistanis were reportedly murdered by African human traffickers on the boat with only 22 out of around 66 Pakistanis on-

board surviving the tragedy. The repatriation of the survivors was completed with the arrival of the last batch of eight survivors at Islamabad airport on Saturday. In a statement issued today, the FO said: "After a process of extensive verification, bodies of 13 Pakistani nationals have been identified. Mortal remains of four Pakistani nationals

are scheduled to arrive in Islamabad on February 5" via a Saudi Airlines flight. It said the four were Hamid Shabbir, Muhammad Arslan Khan, Qaisar Iqbal and Sajjad Ali. According to the initial investigation, the Pakistani nationals paid between Rs1.6-Rs2.5 million per person to human agents for air trips to Spain.

Justice Aminuddin wonders how trial for same offence by army, civilian can be held in different courts

Islamabad (News Desk) Justice Aminuddin Khan — while hearing the case on the military trials of civilians on Tuesday — wondered how a trial for the same offence committed by a civilian and army personnel could be held in different courts. On December 13 last year, the Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench conditionally allowed military courts to pronounce reserved verdicts of 85 civilians who were still in custody for their alleged

involvement in the May 9 riots. On Dec 21, military courts sentenced 25 civilians to prison terms ranging from two to 10 years for their involvement in the riots. A week later, another 60 civilians were handed jail terms ranging from two to 10 years for their involvement in the riots. The Constitutional Bench resumed hearing intra-court appeals (ICAs) challenging an October 23, 2023 ruling by a five-judge bench that had

unanimously declared that trying the accused civilians in military courts violated the Constitution. The seven-judge bench was headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan and included Justices Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Musarrat Hilal, Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Shahid Bilal Hassan and Hasan Azhar Rizvi. The bench has questioned in recent hearings why the accused were "specifically" tried in military courts instead of

antiterrorism courts. During the hearing today, Justice Mandokhail inquired whether anyone could be tried in a military court for a serious offence like terrorism. Salman Akram Raja, the counsel for Arzam Junaid — sentenced to six years in jail in the May 9 Jinnah House attack case — claimed that a civilian couldn't be tried in a military court "under any circumstances". In response, Justice Khan said a law could not be



declared null and void because it was being misused, citing the misuse of the blasphemy act. If a soldier commits one crime and a common man

commits the same crime, how can the trial be held in a separate place?" wondered Justice Khan. Lawyer Raja said that people who gave up their fundamental rights.