

Opposition goes ahead with 2nd day of Islamabad grand moot despite hurdles

Islamabad (News Desk) The opposition alliance Tehreek-i-Tahaffuz-i-Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) on Thursday went ahead with the second and final day of its grand conference in Islamabad despite facing hurdles in securing a venue.

The moot kicked off at Islamabad's Legend Hotel yesterday, with the TTAP accusing the government of pressuring the hotel administration to revoke permission for the event's second day. However, Rana Sanaulah, the prime minister's aide on political affairs, had rebuffed those claims.

The opposition parties

have gathered to discuss issues related to constitutional breaches, human rights violations, freedom of speech and political instability in the country. "We have begun our seminar inside the [hotel's] lobby, everyone is delivering their speeches and the seminar is underway," TTAP Information Secretary Shaista Khosa told. "We said [holding a gathering] is our right ... we can go inside the lobby and sit there," she said, wondering how a hall could be shut when it had already been booked for that period. "The [hotel] administration appears to be totally helpless. They

are saying they do not have anything in their control," the TTAP leader claimed. Khosa further alleged that there were some Frontier Constabulary personnel stationed outside the hotel and that "some media persons were told to return." Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub, ex-premier and Awaam Pakistan President Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party's (PkMAP's) Mahmood Khan Achakzai, and Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) Sahibzada Hamid Raza, among others, had reached the venue, Khosa

said. Besides Ayub, Abbasi and Achakzai, leaders from various political parties attended today's conference — including Awaam Pakistan leader and former finance minister Miftah Ismail, former PPP senator Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) leader Liaquat Baloch, as well as JUI-F's MNA Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri and Senator Kamran Murtaza. In a post on X, the PTI's UK chapter shared clips of security personnel, alleging: "Entrance to Legend Hotel blocked by troops this morning. Participants prevented from entering."



Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti meets with Netherlands Ambassador to Pakistan Henny de Vries in Quetta on Feb 26, 2025.

'Operation Swift Retort': Armed forces reaffirm pledge to defend motherland on 6th anniversary

Islamabad (News Desk) Pakistan's armed forces reaffirmed their pledge to defend the country and contribute to regional peace on the sixth anniversary of the 2019 'Operation Swift Retort' on Thursday. On February 27, 2019, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) had shot down two Indian planes that had violated Pakistani airspace. One of the Indian pilots was captured by Pakistan, but was later handed over as a gesture of peace. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Sahir Shamsahad Mirza and the services chiefs "reiterated their steadfast commitment to ensuring Pakistan's national security and stability while continuing efforts to foster regional peace," said a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) today. The CJCS and services chiefs reaffirmed that Pakistan's armed forces "remain ever-vigilant and fully prepared."

3 sisters crushed to death by speeding SUV in Gilgit, 1 girl critically injured



Gilgit (News Desk) Three girls were crushed to death while one was left critically injured by a speeding vehicle on their way to school in Gilgit's Baseen area on Thursday morning, officials said.

Gilgit Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Zahoor Ahmed told Dawn.com that a Prado, which was also transporting schoolgirls, ran over four schoolgirls who were walking to school on the Gilgit-Ghizer Highway. Residents and passersby rushed to the scene and immediately transported the injured girls to Provincial Headquarter Hospital, Gilgit, for urgent medical treatment.

"The four girls were brought to the hospital in critical condition," according to the hospital's officer-in-charge, Raja Amaldar Hussain. "Three girls — all sisters — succumbed to their injuries, while their friend was critically injured and is receiving treatment."

The three deceased were daughters of a resident, Abdul Jalil, who lived close to the school.

Hussain said the bodies of the deceased had been handed over to the family. Locals took to the streets and protested at the site of the accident, which eyewitnesses say was allegedly a result of reckless driving.

Bodies of 6 Pakistani victims in Libya boat capsized repatriated to Islamabad

Islamabad (News Desk) The remains of six Pakistani nationals out of 16 who lost their lives in a boat incident off Libya's coast earlier this month arrived in Islamabad on Thursday.

Sixteen Pakistanis had been confirmed dead as a vessel carrying approximately 70 passengers, including reportedly 63 Pakistanis, capsized off the coast of Libya's Zawiyah city. While the Foreign Office had said 37 survivors were identified, at least 10 Pakistanis had remained missing.

Most of the deceased individuals belonged to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district, which has been marred with violence and had faced food shortages due to road blockades.

The remains of the six Pakistanis — five of whom hailed from Kurram and one from KP's Orakzai district — reached Islamabad at 7:25am today via Qatar Airways Flight QR614.

Those from Kurram were namely Musawir Hussain, son of Sher Mehdi; Shoaib Ali, son of Muhammad

Ali; Abid Hussain, son of Muhammad Hassan; Musab Hussain, son of Jamil Hussain; and Shoaib Hussain, son of Noor Ali. The sixth body was of Muhammad Ali Shah, son of Abdullah Shah, who hailed from Orakzai.

Minister for Housing and Works Riaz Hussain Pirzada was present to receive the bodies, ensuring that all necessary arrangements were in place for their onward transfer to their hometowns.

The repatriation was facilitated by the government after formalities were

completed by the Pakistani Mission in Tripoli, Libya. Facilitation desks were set up at the airport for the grieving families, who were handed over their relatives' bodies. Ambulances were arranged to transport the remains to Peshawar. The Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF), in coordination with relevant authorities, arranged onward transportation of the bodies to their hometowns via road. A standby medical team was also deployed to assist bereaved families during the process.



This photo combo shows (from L to R) Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) leader Liaquat Baloch, and Rabita Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (RJUI) leader Maulana Gul Naseeb Khan speaking at a national conference in Islamabad on Feb 27, 2025

Four outlaws killed in encounter with police in Punjab

Lahore (News Desk) Four outlaws were killed during an encounter with the police in Punjab's Hazro, officials said on Thursday.

The police spokesman said that the police team was transferring suspect Wali Khan, who was accused of killing a constable Qadeer Khan, when five people riding on two motorbikes

intercepted them and opened indiscriminate fire on the team to release the suspect from police custody.

On Feb 8, constables Qadeer Khan and Nusrat Khan, deputes at a checkpoint in Hattain, were on patrolling duty when they intercepted three suspicious persons riding on a

motorcycle.

As soon as they disembarked from the motorcycle, the suspects opened indiscriminate firing at the policemen, killing Qadeer on the spot and injuring Nusrat critically.

Police said the assailants were able to escape from the scene successfully. Soon after the incident,

officials from law enforcement agencies reached the crime scene and cordoned off the area as the police launched a manhunt to trace the attackers. The official said that Hazro's station house officer (SHO), with additional police enforcement, chased the assailants, who opened fire again in Pirzai.

Punjab govt to revisit Cholistan land transfer, LHC told

BAHAWALPUR: (News Desk) The Punjab government has held in abeyance two agreements — made by the caretaker government — transferring vast swathes of land in Cholistan to two entities associated with the Pakistan Army, officials told the Lahore High Court on Wednesday. According to an order issued by Justice Asim Hafeez of the LHC's Bahawalpur bench on Wednesday, Punjab government officials informed the court that the provincial cabinet had initiated a fresh review of the land transfer agreements and subsequent notifications, issued by the Board of Revenue under the caretaker set-up. The order came after the bench disposed of a petition, filed by over 100 residents of Chak No.176/DB — a remote settlement in Cholistan — who claimed they were being forced to hand over their land to make way for a state-sponsored project.

Amid decline in civil liberties, law minister defends rights situation

KARACHI: (News Desk) As Pakistan declined three points in conditions for political rights and civil liberties in a global ranking, Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar defended the country's unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights.

According to Freedom House, a Washington-based think tank that tracks democracy and threats to freedom around the world, Pakistan was ranked "partly free" while global freedom also declined for the 19th consecutive year in 2024, Dawn.com reported.

People experienced deterioration in their political rights and civil liberties in 60 countries, and secured improvements in only 34 countries, the Freedom House report pointed out.

"In settings where conditions worsened, key factors driving the degradation in rights and liberties included violence and the repression of political opponents during elections, ongoing armed conflicts, and the spread of authoritarian practices," it said. Freedom House report classifies Pakistan as 'partly free'; says authoritarians tightening their grip across the globe. Pakistan was ranked "partly free" and declined three points from the year prior. The points reflected conditions for political and civil liberties in a country.

SHO booked for harassing British woman of Kashmir origin

MUZAFFARABAD: (News Desk) A station house officer (SHO) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was suspended from service and booked in a criminal case for allegedly harassing a British-Kashmiri woman in Mirpur.

The woman had been advised by the divisional commissioner of Mirpur to approach Thothal police station for redress in a property possession case.

However, when she contacted SHO Chaudhry Imran Ahmed, he told her that he would pick her up from her residence himself. During the ride in the SHO's vehicle, the woman repeatedly faced and resisted attempts by the SHO to exploit the situation for personal gratification. Sources said that in an audio clip secretly recorded by the victim on her mobile phone, the allegedly intoxicated SHO was heard pressuring her to move to the front seat, remove her abaya, befriend him, and visit his home, while repeatedly making other obscene demands. The recording, also obtained by Dawn, was reportedly brought to the attention of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Rana Abdul Jabbar on February 21. Taking serious notice, the IGP immediately summoned the SHO to headquarters and directed SSP Mirpur Khawar Shaikat Ali to conduct a preliminary inquiry. A police department spokesperson said in a statement on Tuesday that the inquiry had confirmed the harassment allegations, leading to the registration of a criminal case against the SHO.

'Legal procedures must be followed in military trials'

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Proper legal procedures must be followed before transferring the accused to military authorities even if the May 9 attacks on army installations were considered serious offences, Advocate Faisal Siddiqui argued before the Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench on Wednesday.

The counsel argued that the transfer of civilians accused in connection with the May 9 events to military authorities violated Section 549 of the Criminal Procedure Code

(CrPC), read with Section 59(4) of the Pakistan Army Act (PAA) 1952, as well as Sections 29, 30 and 32 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) 1997.

Mr Siddiqui contended that this transfer contravened Articles 9 and 10A of the Constitution, which guarantee the right to a fair trial. He stressed that the dispute was limited to determining the correct forum for such criminal trials.

His arguments came during the hearing of in-camera appeals (ICAs) against the Supreme

Court's five-judge order of Oct 23, 2023, which nullified the trial of civilians by military courts for involvement in the May 9 violence. The hearing by the apex court's seven-judge Constitutional Bench was headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan.

The counsel argued that civilian accused persons must be charged first to inform them of the specific offences they face before their custody is transferred for court-martial. He contended that the failure to charge the accused before transferring

them to military courts rendered the transfer illegal.

He further argued that the Constitutional Bench could declare the military trials illegal without necessarily nullifying Sections 2(1d)(i) and (ii) of the PAA. He added that the discretionary power granted to commanding officers under Section 94 of the PAA to hand over accused persons was not legally valid.

The application for the transfer of the trial to the court-martial should come before a magistrate



frames the charge to the accused, after which the magistrate could transfer the custody to the military authorities, the counsel said. At this, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail observed that if the acc

used was charged for the offences, the right to appeal must be given to contest the charges before the high court. The counsel contended that the accused could challenge the transfer of his custody.