

## IHC restores Imran's jail meetings twice a week

Islamabad (News Desk) The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday restored incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan's visitation rights twice a week. The IHC administration had constituted a three-member larger bench — headed by newly appointed Acting Chief Justice Sardar Sarfraz Dogar — to hear all 26 petitions related to the visitation rights and jail conditions of Imran. The bench, led by Justice Dogar and including Justices Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Muhammad Azam Khan, heard the petition. All 26 petitions — includ-

ing the contempt of court applications against Adiala Jail Superintendent Abdul Ghafoor Anjum — were transferred to the larger bench on the Adiala Jail official's request, which cited logistical challenges in appearing before multiple benches. The hearing During today's hearing, Imran's counsel Zaheer Abbas said that the PTI founder was scheduled to meet his family and lawyers on Tuesday and his friends on Thursday. "As per SOPs [standard operating procedures], our meeting was not held on March 20," Abbas said. Justice Dogar observed

that this was a small matter, which had been settled in the intra-court appeal. "As per SOPs, our meeting on Thursday is not being held," PTI Secretary General Barrister Salman Akram Raja reiterated. "The SOPs for Tuesday and Thursday meetings were fixed in the appeal," Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir noted. During the hearing, Advocate Naveed Malik representing the jail superintendent argued that the meetings were being held twice a week until December up to Imran and Bushra Bibi's conviction in January. "The status of the founder

of PTI has changed after being convicted in jail," he said. He further said that the two meetings were held on Tuesday instead of two days because of security threats. "According to the jail rules, the superintendent of Adiala Jail has the authority [to schedule the meetings accordingly]," he added. Lawyer Naveed Malik alleged that the PTI leaders misused the privilege of the meetings and made political statements outside Adiala jail. "After the meeting, they come outside the jail and make political statements — this is a violation," he



PM Shehbaz Sharif chairs a revive meeting on Power Division in Islamabad, March 23.

## Police want unusual raise in fines, annual tax on vehicles in Lahore

LAHORE: (News Desk) The police want amendments to existing rules and laws to increase fines for traffic violations by up to ten times compared to the standard fines depending on the type of vehicle while proposing a 100pc hike in annual tax on personal vehicles.

Inspector General of Police Dr Usman Anwar has moved a summary to the provincial government for amendments to the rules to introduce, for the first time, the Scaling Traffic Fines System (STFS) and Traffic Violation Point System (TVPS) with the objective of 'punishing hard' the repeat violators using luxury vehicles in the province.

It has proposed that if an individual accumulates more than 29 demerit points for traffic violations within one year, the licensing authority shall issue an order, disqualifying them from holding or obtaining a driving license for one year.

## Police-lawyers clash leaves several injured in Lahore



LAHORE: (News Desk) Tension gripped Kahna area when a physical clash broke out between police and lawyers on Sunday night during the ongoing anti-encroachment drive, leaving several men from both sides injured.

Following the brawl, dozens of lawyers and a heavy contingent of police force from nearby police stations rushed to the scene. Later, the police took into custody some lawyers.

On being informed of the incident, senior police officers, including Lahore Operations SSP and Model Town Division SP also reached there, besides some senior lawyers, including members of Punjab Bar Council and some office-bearers of the district bar. Initial reports suggested that some suspects had attacked the district government officials during an anti-encroachment operation launched at the Chaddu village of Kahna to retrieve illegally-occupied land. The police arrested seven locals and took them to the police station for registering cases against them. Meanwhile, some lawyers also reached there to support the arrested suspects, a police official said, adding that following heated arguments the lawyers attacked and injured Industrial Area police post in charge. Given emergency situation, a heavy contingent of the police was immediately called on the spot. The situation worsened when men from both sides again scuffled. Police high-ups and senior lawyers were present in Kahna area to hold negotiations with no breakthrough in sight so far.

## IMF shoots down plan to cut power tariffs, for now

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) A substantial reduction in electricity tariffs, promised by the government, could not get past the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which is currently holding back a staff-level agreement (SLA) on the first biannual review of the \$7bn Extended Fund Facility (EFF). It was widely reported in the media through official leaks that the prime minister would announce a Rs8 per unit reduction in electricity rates in his speech to the nation on March 23. The prime minister, however, did not announce any such relief package in his Pakistan Day speech.

Instead, he presided over a meeting on the power sector in light of the last-minute hiccup. The meeting, also attended by Awais Leghari, Ahad Cheema, and Muhammad Ali — the ministers for power, economic affairs, and privatisation, respectively — PM's special assistant Tauqeer Shah, and other officials reviewed the power sector issues, a statement issued after the meeting said. The PM Office announced on March 15 that the PM had decided to maintain the petroleum prices at the existing level against up to Rs13 per litre cut worked out by the oil regulator and the petroleum

division. It was promised to transfer its financial impact to electricity consumers. "A package is being prepared with a comprehensive and effective strategy for power tariff cut," the PMO had announced, adding that "a big relief package is ready for the consumers through the cushion arising out of changes in international oil prices and other measures". However, the tariff package had to be screened by the IMF, which is currently in the process of reviewing Pakistan's economic performance in the first six months of the ongoing fiscal year and outlook for the period ending June 30, 2025, and

beyond. "The purported numbers did not work out in the apolitical software of the IMF," an official. During the course of the March 4-14 review talks, a plan was shared with the IMF staff mission for around Rs2 per unit tariff reduction on account of some savings through the renegotiation of contracts with the Independent Power Producers. As an afterthought, the authorities were tempted to increase the petroleum levy on petrol and diesel by Rs10 to a maximum of Rs70 permissible under the Finance Act 2025 to divert the revenues towards maximising relief in power tariffs.



Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Pakistan's Permanent Representative-designate to the UN, presents a gift to Ambassador Munir Akram on behalf of the entire Mission as a token of gratitude at the ceremony on March 23

## Mahrang, other BYC leaders face terror charges

QUETTA: (News Desk) Police have registered an FIR against Dr Mahrang Baloch, chief organiser of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC), along with 150 others, on charges of forcibly taking away bodies from a morgue, incitement to violence and other alleged offences. The case relates to an incident at Civil

Hospital Quetta, where BYC members allegedly stormed the morgue and took away the bodies of five 'militants' killed in an operation against train hijackers earlier this month. The FIR, registered at Sariab Police Station on March 22, includes charges under different sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA)

and the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). The charges cover offences like terrorism, murder and attempted murder, incitement to violence and rebellion, creating disorder and promoting racial hatred, and property damage. The FIR also names several other key BYC leaders, including Beebow Baloch, Gul-

zadi Satakzai, Dr Sabiha Baloch, Sabatullah Baloch, Gulzar Dost, Riaz Gashkori and Dr Shali Baloch. Authorities arrested Dr Mahrang Baloch and 17 others on Saturday morning, placing them in Quetta district jail under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance.

## FIA arrests four with fake passports, visas at Sialkot airport

GUJRAT: (News Desk) The immigration authorities of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested four people for possessing fake German passports and fake Canadian visas after they were offloaded from different flights at Sialkot International Airport.

An FIA official said that during immigration clearance of flight G9-553, Waqar Ahmad of Khushab, Sana Ullah of Sargodha and Javed Iqbal of Sargodha were caught before they could depart for Doha. During scrutiny and profiling, they were caught carrying eight fake German passports and eight fake Schengen visas.

They revealed that they had dealt with agents - Adnan of Sahiwal and Ali of Sialkot - for Rs3 million and Rs5 million. Similarly, during immigration clearance of flight FZ-338, Rashid Ali of Sialkot was departing for Baku. A fake Canadian visa sticker was found removed from his passport.

## Karachi, Dhaka to receive 5.4m climate migrants by 2050: UN

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Karachi and Dhaka will be the only two cities in Asia-Pacific region among the 10 cities of the Global South that will receive eight million climate migrants by 2050 if the world warms by more than 1.5 centigrade above pre-industrial levels, a UN study finds.

Of those 10 cities, Karachi and Dhaka, projected to receive the most extreme influx of climate-induced migration: 3.07 million additional people in Dhaka and 2.4 million additional people in Karachi, according to the "Urban Transformation in Asia and the Pacific: From Growth to Resilience" report, published by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP).

The report is part of the agenda of the 81st annual session of the UN-ESCAP, opening in Bangkok next month.

It analyses both challenges and opportunities facing cities and towns across the region, which is home to the full spectrum of human settlements, from the world's largest metropolises to ancient villages and every size of city and town in between. Karachi suffers greatly from fragmented jurisdiction.

## Poliovirus detected in sewage samples from 18 districts

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Environmental samples collected from 18 districts have been found positive for poliovirus, indicating the presence of the virus in these areas.

An official of the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health said environmental (sewage) samples were collected from 22 districts.

The wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) has been detected in sewage samples of Chaman; Islamabad; South Waziristan Lower; South Waziristan Upper; Lahore; D.G. Khan; Badin; Dadu; Hyderabad; Jacobabad; Kambar; Karachi East, Central, Keamari and West; Shaheed Benazirabad; Sujawal and Sukkur.

Meanwhile, samples from Zhob, Sialkot, Multan and Rahim Yar Khan tested negative for the virus.

A sewage sample from an area is the basic parameter used to identify the presence of the virus in an area. It determines if polio vaccination campaigns were resulting in the desired immunity among children.

The official said the Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme has expanded its environmental surveillance sites from 65 in 2021 to 127 in 2025. Its efficiency in detecting poliovirus in sewage and cases ensures no transmission goes unnoticed, even in remote areas. The programme is also implementing rigorous vaccination campaigns to protect children from paralytic polio and interrupt virus transmission. The next nationwide campaign is scheduled from April 21 to 27, aiming to vaccinate 45.4 million children under the age of five across the country, the official said.

## Ambassador Munir Akram honoured at farewell reception hosted by Pakistan's UN Mission

Islamabad (News Desk) The Pakistan Mission to the United Nations (UN) hosted a reception on Saturday to bid farewell to Ambassador Munir Akram, who is leaving his post at the end of this month, terming him as a "distinguished figure in multilateral diplomacy", the Associated Press of Pakistan reported. Then prime minister Imran Khan reappointed Ambassador Akram as Permanent Representative

of Pakistan to the United Nations headquarters in New York in place of Dr Maleeha Lodhi in September 2019. He will be replaced by Permanent Representative designate Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad. Akram had served as Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN previously as well, holding the office for six years between 2002 and 2008. "In his remarks, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ah-

mad paid glowing tributes to his predecessor, acknowledging his decades of 'outstanding service' to Pakistan," APP said. He described Ambassador Akram as a "mentor, a brilliant strategist, and a distinguished figure in multilateral diplomacy one who has served Pakistan with great distinction and unwavering dedication, according to APP. Ambassador Ahmad also said that Ambassador Akram's remarkable lega-

cy in public service would continue to inspire generations of Pakistani diplomats. On his part, Ambassador Munir Akram called his journey "long and challenging, yet deeply rewarding," according to the report. Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Pakistan's Permanent Representative-designate to the UN, presents a gift to Ambassador Munir Akram on behalf of the entire Mis-



sion as a token of gratitude at the ceremony on March 23. — X/Pakistan\_UN\_NY Attending the event were Ambassador

Ahmad, Consul General of Pakistan in New York Aamer Ahmed Atozai, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN.