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No respite for south Punjab as 'high flood' returns to Sutlej

• Water levels rise at Harike and Ferozepur after India releases more water • Jalalpur Pirwala, Alipur and Rahim Yar Khan at risk amid rising river levels • Over 4.2m affected, 2.19m relocated as floods hit 4,400 Punjab villages • Guddu Barrage fluctuates between medium and high flood • Five dead, hundreds rescued in Karachi after Lyari and Malir rivers swell

By Imran Gabol and
Mohammad Hussain Khan

LAHORE/GUDDU: With South Punjab still in the throes of a devastating flood crisis, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has confirmed a high-level flood situation, particularly in the Sutlej River, after India released more water on Wednesday.

All barrages in south Punjab on the Sutlej, Chenab and Ravi rivers are flowing at extremely dangerous levels, submerging vast swathes of low-lying areas and

Fresh alert dashes hopes for Sutlej flood victims: Page 2

Punjab gets drones to airlift those trapped in floodwaters: Page 3

Rains halt Karachi's industrial activities: Page 9

posing a severe threat to urban centres, such as Jalalpur, Alipur and Rahim Yar Khan tehsils.

Flood conditions in Jalalpur Pirwala, one of the most badly affected areas, intensified again after the Sutlej started rising and

increased pressure on a major embankment.

On Wednesday, a rescue boat carrying 19 people overturned in the area, leading to the death of a child. All others were safely rescued, officials said.

Seven villages in Liaquatpur have been submerged due to the floods. In Alipur, a child died and five people went missing after a boat capsized.

The situation has worsened further due to the breach of the Azmatpur embankment in the Alipur tehsil of Muzaffargarh district.

The ancient city of Seetpur is now at severe risk from floodwaters. Dozens of settlements, including Khairpur Sadat, Khan Garh Doma, Azmatpur, Kundarala and Sultampur, have been inundated.

Water flow

According to Flood Forecasting Data released at 11pm on Wednesday, the water flow at Ganda Singh Wala headworks on the Sutlej River was 182,188 cusecs (steady trend) and was classified as "very high flood".

Downstream, the flow was steady at 121,698 cusecs (high flood) at Sulemanki headworks

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MUZAFFARGARH: Flood-affected villagers gather their belongings as they wait to be rescued.—APP

Federal cabinet declares climate, agriculture emergency

• PM forms committee to formulate post-flood strategy, seeks roadmap to tackle climate change • Apex moot of all CMs soon; climate minister asked to submit report in 15 days • Minister admits failure to protect forestland, prevent encroachments on waterways • Cabinet lifts ban on new gas connections

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: The federal government imposed a climate and agriculture emergency on Wednesday in the wake of floods that devastated dozens of districts across the country, particularly in Punjab, giving rise to fears of food inflation.

The decision was made during a meeting of the federal cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The cabinet also announced the formation of a special committee led by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal to recommend measures to mitigate the impacts of the deluge on the economy. The terms of reference (TORs) of the special committee will be devised soon, the source added.

In a post-meeting press conference, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, flanked by Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik, said the PM had directed the immediate enforcement of a climate emergency.

Pakistan 'better off' than last floods, but fiscally bound: Page 3

Climate change, one of the most debated subjects globally, has been severely affecting Pakistan due to the shifting weather patterns, the minister said.

"Unfortunately, in past decades, we failed to protect our forests and trees, while encroachments narrowed natural waterways — rivers, streams, and chan-

nels that once allowed easy passage of rainwater. This has worsened the flooding situation we see today," he said.

He said the climate minister, Musadik Malik, had been tasked with submitting a comprehensive report to the prime minister within 15 days. The cabinet would then deliberate on the report to determine how Pakistan could cope with climate change and prepare effective strategies to protect the nation from such devastating losses in the future.

"Since 2022, we have witnessed the devastation caused by floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Punjab. Now, this water is flowing into Sindh from the five-river basin, and our prayers and efforts are focused on

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Imran's nephew moves Lahore High Court against his military trial

Warrants for KP CM's arrest out in liquor case

By Wajih Ahmed Sheikh

LAHORE: Barrister Hassaan Khan Niazi, a nephew of incarcerated PTI founding chairman Imran Khan, has approached the Lahore High Court (LHC) against his hand-over to the army and subsequent trial proceedings in connection with the May 9 riots.

A petition filed through his counsel contended that following his arrest in the Jinnah House attack case, Mr Niazi was never produced before an anti-terrorism court or any other civilian court. Instead, the Sarwar Road police allegedly handed him over to the military without any lawful authority.

The petition alleged that the petitioner was selectively targeted among hundreds of individuals named in the same FIR and unlawfully transferred to military custody.

It urges the court to declare that the transfer of the petitioner's custody from Sarwar Road police sta-

tion to the 54 EME battalion commander, without any judicial proceedings or court order, was unlawful and of no legal effect.

The petition also asked the court to declare the letter demanding the petitioner's custody as being without jurisdiction, along with all subsequent judgments, orders, proceedings, or actions, including court-martial proceedings, as void.

Furthermore, the petition requested the court to direct the

PTI slams 'terrorism' charges against Aleema: Page 3

authorities either to release the petitioner or to produce him before an anti-terrorism court in Lahore, in connection with FIR (96 of 2023) related to Jinnah House attack, for further proceedings in accordance with the law.

A two-judge bench is scheduled to hear the petition on Thursday (today) as an "objection case", as objections were raised by the registrar's office regarding its maintainability.

Mr Niazi was handed over to the military for trial in 2023 and was sentenced to ten years' imprison-

ment later in December.

The military, through its respective commanding officers, had sought the custody of hundreds of suspects for trial under the Pakistan Army Act, 1952, in connection with attacks on military installations, including the residence of the Lahore corps commander.

The suspects' custody was sought from the respective ATCs under Section 549 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The federal government had approved their trials by military courts for their alleged involvement in the attacks.

The ATCs were informed in writing that initial investigations found the suspects involved in offenses under the Official Secrets Act, 1923, read with Section 2(1)(d) and Section 59(4) of the Pakistan Army Act, 1952.

An application submitted by the commanding officer stated that, by committing these offenses, the suspects became subject to the Pakistan Army Act and were therefore exclusively liable to be inquired into, investigated, and tried by military authorities in a

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Judges should be cautious when sharing grievances publicly: Tarar

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar issued a word of caution on Wednesday, urging Supreme Court judges to raise internal grievances within private forums — such as tea rooms, the Chief Justice's chambers, or committee rooms — instead of expressing them publicly through letters.

"In view of the sensitivities attached to the highest institution like the judiciary, it is my humble request to all honourable judges that the best forums for expressing grievances are their tea rooms, the chambers of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi, or the committee rooms," he said.

This marked the minister's first response to a recent series of letters written by several Supreme Court judges — a development he termed "unfortunate" and part of a troubling trend that has emerged in recent months.

Speaking informally to the media after attending a ceremony outside the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Islamabad, the law minister recalled that even during the New Judicial

Year ceremony earlier in the week, apex legal bodies such as the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) and the Supreme Court Bar Association had advised judges to resolve such issues privately rather than through public correspondence.

"This is not in the interest of the judiciary, as such tendencies erode the dignity and reputation of the top court," he remarked.

He added that if the concerns raised in these letters were genuinely reflective of the internal situation, it was all the more reason to resolve them within institutional boundaries. "Bar councils have always been at the forefront when it comes to safeguarding the judiciary," he noted, suggesting that lawyers' bodies remain the appropriate avenue for internal accountability.

The minister's comments come in the wake of a recent letter by senior puisne judge Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, along with Justices Munib Akhtar, Ayesha A. Malik, and Athar Minallah, criticizing the convening of Monday's full court meeting to approve the new Supreme Court Rules 2025 as a mere "cosmetic exercise."

"The convening of the full court at

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Qatar threatens to end Gaza mediation role

• World rallies around Doha as Trump rebukes Netanyahu, distances himself from attack on Hamas • Pakistan, Algeria and Somalia request emergency Security Council session • MBS, UAE ruler also back Qatar; Canada says will 'evaluate' ties with Israel

DOHA / ISLAMABAD / JERUSALEM: As the world rallied around Qatar after Israel's reckless targeting of Hamas leaders on its soil, its leader declared that Benjamin Netanyahu had been wasting their time with the mediation process.

Doha and Egypt have been instrumental in US-backed attempts to hammer out a ceasefire in Gaza, and have been working tirelessly to help secure a deal that would see prisoners being freed on both sides.

But despite their best efforts, and great flexibility demonstrated by Hamas, Israel has repeatedly moved the goalpost, and 'ghosted' negotiators after the Palestinian group agreed to the last draft, already vetted by the US.

Speaking to CNN on Wednesday, Qatari PM Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said the Israeli PM was leading the Middle East towards chaos, adding that today, the entire Gulf region was at risk.

He also revealed that in the wake of



UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan walks alongside Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at Doha International Airport.—Reuters

the Israeli aggression, Qatar was reassessing everything about its mediating role in the Gaza conflict — as well as Hamas' future on its territory.

The Qatari PM's remarks came as the world bristled over Israel's unprovoked attack, which claimed the lives of at least five members of

Hamas' negotiating team.

Even its most staunch ally, the United States, seemed to waver, with President Donald Trump giving Netanyahu a rare slap on the wrist while denying any role in the attack.

Trump said he was not notified in advance of the Israeli attack on the

Widening war: Editorial on Page 6

Israeli strikes on Houthis in Yemen claim 35 lives: Page 11

Gulf state, and said he wasn't "thrilled about the whole situation". Qatar, in addition to its role in the Gaza negotiations, is home to a huge US airbase, and also recently gave Trump a luxury Boeing 747-8 jet to use as his presidential plane.

"This was a decision made by Prime Minister Netanyahu, it was not a decision made by me," Trump said in a post on social media, insist-

ing that he viewed Qatar as a strong ally and friend.

Trump also focused on the possible damage to his efforts to end the war in Gaza, saying that unilaterally bombing Qatar does not advance Israel or America's goals.

The US president added that he had assured Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in a phone call that "such a thing will not happen again on their soil."

Israel, however, doubled down, insisting that it would strike its enemies anywhere in the world.

"There is no place where they can hide," Defence Minister Israel Katz wrote on X, while Israeli ambassador to the US Yechiel Leiter told Fox News that even if they failed to kill Hamas leaders in Tuesday's airstrike, the would "succeed next time".

World rallies around Doha

Pakistan on Wednesday joined

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ATA tweaked again to better protect judges, witnesses

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Amid criticism by the opposition, the Balochistan Assembly passed more amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 focused on the protection of judges and prosecution in a bid to "provide a flexible and secure legal framework for the state to respond to evolving security challenges".

The Anti-Terrorism Balochistan (Amendment) Bill 2025 was tabled by Parliamentary Secretary Mir Zareen Khan Magsi on behalf of the provincial home department, whose minister in-charge is Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti.

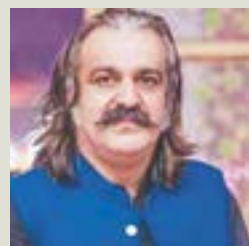
The bill said it aimed to strengthen the counter-terrorism framework in accordance with international standards. "In light of the evolving security challenges and the sensitive nature of terrorism related cases, the bill seeks to empower the government to implement additional protective measures for the safety and security of judges, public prosecutors, defence counsels, witnesses, and other individuals involved in such proceedings," it said.

The bill introduces a procedure for handling "sensitive terrorism-related cases through a confidentially appointed BS-21 officer". This officer, who will remain anonymous, would determine whether a case required extraordinary protection under this new iteration of the anti-terrorism measures.

"If so, the chief justice concerned constitutes a panel of five judges and forwards it to the designated authority, who then

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ON OTHER PAGES



Gandapur 'can't travel to Afghanistan'

A day after he was instructed to travel to Kabul by PTI founder Imran Khan, KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur said he was unable to do so as his passport was blocked. He told reporters that when he tried to renew his passport, he was told that it had been blocked after the events of May 9, 2023. However, he conceded that it was beyond his mandate to hold national-level talks. **Page 8**



Govt wants to set SBP, SECP brass salaries

Senators have sought the abolition of clauses in the laws regulating the State Bank and Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, which allow their top brass to set their own pay, without government approval. At a Senate committee meeting, Senator Anusha Rehman termed this arrangement a "serious conflict of interest" and called for restoring the arrangement whereby the government had authority to set their wages. **Page 9**