

PAKISTAN JUDICIARY

Take notice of allegations of interference

Over 300 lawyers call on Supreme Court

DAWN ONLINE

Over 300 lawyers yesterday urged the Pakistan Supreme Court (SC) to take notice of allegations of interference in the judiciary by the intelligence apparatus under Article 184(3) of the Constitution, adding that any government-led commission "would be bereft of necessary independence and powers" to probe the claims.

Article 184(3) of the Constitution sets out the SC's original jurisdiction and enables it to assume jurisdiction in matters involving a question of "public importance" with reference to the "enforcement of any of the fundamental rights" of Pakistan's citizens.

On Tuesday, six Islamabad High Court

PM Sharif and CJP Isa decided to form a commission to probe concerns of interference in judicial affairs.

judges — out of a total strength of eight — wrote a startling letter to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) members, regarding attempts to pressure judges through abduction and torture of their relatives as well as secret surveillance inside their homes.

A day later, calls emerged from various quarters for a probe into the investigation, amid which Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa summoned a full court meeting of the SC judges.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met CJP Isa, where the two decided to form a commission to investigate the concerns of interference in judicial affairs following the cabinet's approval.

On Saturday, the federal cabinet approved the constitution of an inquiry commission headed by former CJP Tassaduq Hussain Jilani to probe the allegations and decide whether these are true or otherwise.



Members of a Palestinian family leave Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip with personal belongings yesterday. The United States has warned Israel against expanding its military operation into Rafah, where over a million Palestinians are sheltering, without a plan to protect civilians. PHOTO: AFP

Gaza children fly kites to escape horrors of offensive

AFP, Rafah

Metres away from the concrete and steel fence separating the Gaza Strip from Egypt, 11-year-old Malak Ayad flies a paper kite high in the sky — a welcome distraction from the horrors of Israeli offensive.

"Every day I play with my brothers and cousins with kites next to the Egyptian border," said the Palestinian girl, displaced from Gaza City with her family to the southern city of Rafah.

"When I do, I feel free and safe," she added, gently manoeuvring her kite, which she calls "Butterfly", back and forth across the border with a white string.

Her cousins and friends run along the

fence trying, in vain, to get their kites to take flight, but a loud explosion in the distance makes them stop in their tracks. "Quickly, the (Israeli) bombardment is getting closer," said Malak's uncle Mohammed Ayad, 24, urging the children to leave the area.

Malak quickly obeys, reeling in her kite and folding it, then rushes back to a tent where her family is taking shelter in the nearby Khir area.

"Playtime is over. When air strikes begin we run back home," Malak said, trembling with fear.

Israel's campaign to destroy Hamas has killed at least 32,782 people, mostly women and children, according to the Gaza health ministry.

Malak Ayad and her family are among 1.5 million people, most of them displaced by the offensive, now living in Rafah, where Israel has vowed to carry a ground offensive as it pursues its campaign against Hamas.

Despite the offensive and the fear that grips her, Malak seems to be happy to fly her kite and dreams of life as it was before the offensive broke out on October 7. "My kite flies to Egypt everyday while we are here trapped in Gaza," said Malak, who wears a bracelet featuring the Palestinian flag.

"I don't know when we will be able to return home," she said, adding that her mother told her that her school has been hit by the Israeli army and "destroyed".

Russia hits energy, gas infrastructure in Ukraine

France to send armoured vehicles, missiles to Kyiv

REUTERS, Moscow

The Russian air force has conducted a massive strike on objects of energy infrastructure and the gas industry in Ukraine, Russian defence ministry said yesterday.

The ministry said that it used "high-precision long-range air-bred weapons" and drones.

"As a result of this strike, the operation of defence industry enterprises involved in the manufacture and repair of weapons, equipment and ammunition has been disrupted. All the goals of the strike have been achieved. The assigned objects were hit," the ministry said.

Meanwhile, France will deliver hundreds of old armoured vehicles and new surface-to-air missiles to Ukraine in its war against Russia, French Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu said.

In an interview with La Tribune Dimanche, Lecornu said that President Emmanuel Macron, following talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, had asked him to prepare a new aid package, which will include old but still functional French equipment.

"The Ukrainian army needs to defend a very long front line, which requires armoured vehicles; this is absolutely crucial for troop mobility and is part of the Ukrainian requests," he said.

He said France was looking at providing hundreds of VAB (Vehicule de l'Avant Blindé) troop carriers in 2024 and early 2025.



PHOTO: AFP

Christian devotees carry a partly damaged statue of Jesus salvaged from rubble after the 2019 Easter Sunday bombing, during an Easter procession to mark the fifth anniversary of the attack, at St Sebastian's Church in Sri Lanka yesterday.

Resist 'logic of weapons'

Pope pleads for peace in Easter message

AFP, Vatican City

Pope Francis urged the world to resist "the logic of weapons" in his Easter message at the Vatican yesterday, easing growing health fears as he greeted thousands of Catholics.

The 87-year-old's "Urbi et Orbi" (To the City and the World) blessing came after he led Easter Mass in front of 60,000 worshippers at Saint Peter's Square while appearing in good spirits.

In his traditional speech broadcast worldwide, Francis condemned war as "always an absurdity and a defeat", raising conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza,

Sudan, Myanmar and beyond.

He renewed appeals for a ceasefire in Gaza. The civilian population is "now at the limit of its endurance", he said, lamenting the impact on children especially.

"Let us not allow the strengthening winds of war to blow on Europe and the Mediterranean. Let us not yield to the logic of weapons and rearming," he added.

The Pope proposed a "general exchange of all prisoners between Russia and Ukraine" as the war between the two countries grinds through its third year.

CYBER FRAUD SCHEMES

India rescuing citizens forced into work in Cambodia

REUTERS, New Delhi

The Indian government said it was rescuing its citizens who were lured into employment in Cambodia and were being forced to participate in cyber fraud schemes. The Indian embassy in Cambodia is working with Cambodian authorities and has rescued and repatriated about 250 Indians, including 75 in the last three months, India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement on Saturday. Jaiswal was responding to Indian news reports that stated more than 5,000 Indians are trapped in Cambodia and being forced to carry out cyber frauds on people back home. "We are also working with Cambodian authorities and with agencies in India to crack down on those responsible for these fraudulent schemes," Jaiswal said. The Indian government and its embassy in Cambodia have issued several advisories informing them about such scams, the spokesperson said. The Cambodian embassy in India did not respond immediately to a request for comment yesterday.

8 killed, 23 hurt in car blast in Syrian town

AFP, Azaz

A bomb exploded in a shopping area in a northern Syrian city held by pro-Turkish forces yesterday, killing eight people and wounding more than 20, a war monitor said. The blast in Azaz, Aleppo province, occurred not long after midnight as crowds were out shopping late during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan, an AFP correspondent said. The group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that "eight people were killed and 23 others wounded" when "a car bomb exploded in the middle of a popular market". The Britain-based Observatory, which has a network of sources inside Syria, said the blast caused "significant damage" and sparked a fire. Bombings and other security incidents are common in areas held by pro-Turkish forces in northern Syria.

SOUTH LEBANON

Three UN observers, translator hurt in blast

REUTERS, Beirut

Three United Nations observers and a translator were hurt on Saturday when a shell exploded near them as they were carrying out a foot patrol in south Lebanon, the UN peacekeeping mission said, adding it was still investigating the origin of blast.

The UN peacekeeping mission known as UNIFIL, as well as unarmed technical observers known as UNTSO, are stationed in southern Lebanon to monitor hostilities along the demarcation line between Lebanon and Israel, known as the Blue Line.

Lebanese armed group Hezbollah has been trading fire with the Israeli military across the Blue Line since October.

UNIFIL said in a statement that the targeting of peacekeepers is "unacceptable" and that the wounded staff had been evacuated for treatment.

Two security sources had earlier told Reuters the observers were wounded in an Israeli strike outside the border town of Rmeish.

(Replaced with same date)
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
SASEC- Integrated Trade Facilitation
Sector Development Project: NBR Part
Alamin Millennium Tower (13th & 14th Floor)
75-76, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000

Memo no: 08.01.0000.003.18.001.23/254 Date: 31 March 2024

Invitation for Bids (National)

Date: 31 March 2024
Loan/Grant No. and Title: ADB Loan No. 4178-BAN, South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Integrated Trade Facilitation Sector Development Program
Contract No. and Title: NBR/CW-01, Improvement of land customs stations at Akhaura, Sonamasjid, and Tamabil Border Crossing Points (BCPs)
Deadline for Submission of Bids: 14 May 2024 at 14:00 hrs (Bangladesh Standard Time).

- The Government of Bangladesh has received financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of 'South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Integrated Trade Facilitation Sector Development Program (SDP)'. Part of this financing will be used for payments under the Contract named above. Bidding is open to Bidders from eligible source countries of ADB.
- The National Board of Revenue ("the Employer") invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for the construction and completion of "Improvement of land customs stations at Akhaura, Sonamasjid, and Tamabil Border Crossing Points (BCPs)" ("the Works").
- Open competitive bidding will be conducted in accordance with ADB's Single-Stage: Two-Envelope bidding procedure and is open to all Bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Document.
- Only eligible Bidders with the following key qualifications defined in the Bidding Document may participate in this bidding:
 - The bidder shall have minimum Average Annual Construction Turnover of USD 7.00 (Seven) million for the contract calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress or completed within the last five years.
 - Participated as a contractor, Joint Venture partner, or Subcontractor, in at least one contract that has been satisfactorily and substantially completed within the last 07 years and that is similar to the proposed works, where the value of the Bidder's participation exceeds USD 7.00 (Seven) million. The similarity of the Bidder's participation shall be based on the physical size, nature of works, complexity, methods, technology or other characteristics as described in Section 6, Works' Requirements. The complete eligibility and qualification requirements are stipulated in Section 3: Evaluation and Qualification Criteria.
 - The Bidder must demonstrate that its financial resources less its financial obligations for its current contract commitments meet or exceed the total requirement for the Subject Contract of USD 0.90 (Zero point nine) million.

Detailed Evaluation and Qualification Criteria are mentioned in 'Section 3: Evaluation and Qualification Criteria' of Bidding document.

- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents, during normal office hours (from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM) on all working days (Sunday to Thursday) at the address given below:

Project Director
SASEC- Integrated Trade Facilitation Sector Development Project: NBR Part
Alamin Millennium Tower (13th & 14th Floor)
75-76, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000
E-mail: pdsasec.ifsdp22@gmail.com

- A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested eligible bidders upon cash or electronic payment of non-refundable fees of BDT 10,000 up to the day before the submission deadline.

- For purchasing with cash payment, the bidder has to make a written application to the address above during normal office hours on all working days.
- For purchasing with electronic payment, the bidder has to e-mail to the undersigned expressing interest to purchase the bidding document and then credentials will be shared with the bidder to transfer the amount of fees. Upon receiving the fees, PDF version of bidding documents will be shared with the bidder.

- A Pre-Bid meeting will be held at the address mentioned above on the date and time as mentioned in Section 2: Bid Data Sheet of Bidding document.

- Bids must be delivered to the address above on or before the bid submission deadline i.e. 14 May 2024 at 14:00 hrs. (Bangladesh Standard Time). All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the amount as stated in the bidding document (Bid Data Sheet). Late Bids shall be rejected.

- The Technical Proposal of the Bids will be opened at the address above at 14:15 hrs. (Bangladesh Standard Time) on 14 May 2024 in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend. The price proposal of responsive Bids will be opened in presence of the Bidder's authorized representative who choose to attend at the time, date and address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the Technical Bid Evaluation Report by the Employer with no objection from ADB.

- The NBR will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.
- The Employer reserves all the rights to accept any bid or to reject any or all bids as per ITB Clause 40.1.
- The invitation for bids (IFB) is available in the National Board of Revenue (NBR), Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) websites at www.nbr.gov.bd, www.bppa.gov.bd and www.adb.org respectively.

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Election of BCSA Office-Bearers 2024-2026

Bangladesh Container Shipping Association (BCSA), a trade body representing major container shipping agents in the country, is pleased to announce the outcomes of recent maiden meeting of its newly elected Executive Committee for the term 2024-2026.

The individuals elected to various positions are :

Chairman : Mr. Fayyaz Khundker, Managing Director, Ocean Network Express (Bangladesh) Ltd	General Secretary : Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Executive Director, GBX Logistics Ltd
Vice Chairman : Mr. Nikhil Vincent D'Lima, Managing Director, Maersk Bangladesh Ltd	Member : Engr. Harun-Ur-Rashid, CEO & Country Head, MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company Bd Ltd
Vice Chairman : Mr. Faruber Anwar, Managing Director, Trident Shipping Lines Ltd	Member : Mr. Ikram Ghazali, Managing Director, APL (Bangladesh) Pvt Ltd
Treasurer : Capt. A S Chowdhury, Executive Director, Sea Consortium Bangladesh Ltd	

Mr. Fayyaz Khundker Chairman, Mr. Nikhil Vincent D'Lima Vice Chairman, Mr. Faruber Anwar Vice Chairman, Capt. A S Chowdhury Treasurer, Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed Chowdhury General Secretary, Engr. Harun-Ur-Rashid Member, Mr. Ikram Ghazali Member

bcsa Bangladesh Container Shipping Association