

Imran supporters, police clash in Pakistan

1 policeman killed, five in critical condition, 70 injured as they tried to stop protesters from reaching Islamabad

LAHORE

A policeman was killed and 70 injured when former prime minister Imran Khan's supporters clashed with security personnel deployed to prevent the protesters from reaching Islamabad, the Punjab government said on Monday.

Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari at a press conference here said many policemen were taken "hostage" after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters clashed with the police on the way to Islamabad.

The 72-year-old former premier issued a "final call" on November 13 for nationwide protests on November 24, denouncing what he termed as the stolen mandate, the unjust arrests of people and the passage of the 26th amendment, which he said has strengthened a 'dictatorial regime'.

His supporters resumed march towards Islamabad on Monday after an overnight stop on the way amid stiff resistance by the authorities to foil their attempt to enter the



Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party workers burn bushes to reduce the impact of tear gas shells fired by police to disperse them during a rally demanding Imran Khan's release, at a motorway in Ghazi in Attock district on Sunday | AP

national capital and stage a sit-in at the D-Chowk, located close to several important government buildings: the Presidency, the PM Office, the Parliament, and the Supreme Court.

At least 70 policemen have been injured and one killed in

clashes, she said. Bokhari said the condition of five personnel was critical.

"Constable Mubashir lost his life in a clash with the PTI workers at Kati Pahari en route to Islamabad. To those who call them a political par-

ty, I ask them if they will say it after this. Imran Khan's supporters taking police officers hostage... is this politics," the minister asked. Bokhari said Khan's wife Bushra Bibi was setting this country on fire. "Bushra is inciting the Pashtuns (Pathans) to get her

husband released."

Khan has been implicated in dozens of cases since his government was dismissed through a no-confidence motion in 2022. He has been in Adiala Jail at Rawalpindi since last year facing over 200 cases.

Bokhari said Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz instructed police officers to remain unarmed.

However, the PTI came armed from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to wreak havoc and instigate violence, she said.

Bokhari said KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's province was burning yet he was trying to set Punjab on fire. "The PTI wants dead bodies to achieve its objectives. However, the State will act with patience and restraint," she said and added that Pakistan could never prosper with Imran Khan in charge. The PTI, on the other hand, said over 3,500 party leaders and workers were arrested by police in Punjab and Islamabad. PTI

EXPRESS READ

Leftist leader wins Uruguay prez poll

Montevideo: Uruguay's leftist opposition candidate, Yamandu Orsi, became the country's new president in a tight runoff on Sunday, ousting the conservative governing coalition and making the South American nation the latest to rebuke the incumbent party in a year of landmark elections worldwide. Even as the vote count continued, Alvaro Delgado, the presidential candidate for the center-right ruling coalition, conceded defeat to his challenger.

Pro-Russia candidate leads in Romanian polls

Bucharest: A far-right, pro-Russia candidate took a surprise lead on Monday in Romania's presidential election. Clain Georgescu was in pole position with 23% after the first round of voting on Sunday, a political earthquake in the country of 19 million people that has so far resisted nationalist appeals that have gained traction in neighbouring countries. Experts say the far right's surprise success could profoundly affect the parliamentary elections later.

ASIA MATTERS

MALAYSIA

LGBTQ-THEME WATCHES TO BE RETURNED

A Malaysian court ruled on Monday the government must return dozens of watches seized in a crackdown on LGBTQ-themed Swatch timepieces last year, a federal counsel said. The 172 watches, collectively worth around \$14,000, were seized in raids of Swatch stores across Malaysia in May 2023. At the time, an official said the watches were taken because they bore the "LGBTQ" acronym and depicted the six colours globally synonymous with the rainbow Pride flag. The government banned the watches, warning that owners or sellers could face three years in prison.



SINGAPORE

CIVIL SERVANTS TO GET YEAR-END BONUS

Civil servants will get 1.05 months of year-end bonus. The Straits Times reported. Junior officers as well as those in the Operations Support Scheme will also receive an additional one-time payment of \$600. Together with the mid-year bonus of 0.45 month, civil servants will receive a total of 1.5 months of bonus in 2024.

THAILAND

INTERPOL HELP SOUGHT TO HUNT TYCOON

Police are seeking an Interpol arrest warrant for a tycoon they believe has fled to China following an alleged \$200 million investment scam, the force told local media on Monday. Boon Vanasin, 86, the former chairman of Thonburi Healthcare Group is believed to have fled the country in Sept, Bangkok police deputy commissioner Nopasin Poolsawat said. Since last year around 250 people have filed complaints against Boon and his group, alleging they lost a total of \$219 million after investing in medical projects in Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, Nopasin said. AFP



Rescuers on Monday search for missing people after a landslide that killed a number of people in Karo, North Sumatra, over the weekend | AP

16 dead, six missing after flash floods in Indonesian island

RESCUERS in Indonesia recovered 16 bodies under tonnes of mud and rocks or that were swept away in flash floods that hit mountain-side villages on Sumatra Island, officials said on Monday. Six people are still missing, officials said. Mud, rocks and trees tumbled down a mountain after torrential rains over the weekend and rivers burst their banks, tearing through four hilly districts in North Sumatra province, washing away houses and destroying farms. Police, soldiers and rescue workers used excavators, farm equipment and their bare hands to sift through the rubble looking for the dead and missing in Semangat Gunung, a resort area in Karo district, said Juspri M Nadeak, who heads the local disaster management agency. Rescuers recovered six bodies after a landslide hit two houses and a cottage late Sunday, he said. Nine injured people managed to escape, he said. Rescuers on Monday were still searching for four missing people, including two children. Rescuers on Sunday pulled two bodies from a river after flash floods swept away at least 10 houses and damaged about 150 houses and buildings in villages in South Tapanuli district, said Puput Mashuri, who heads the local disaster management agency. Dozens of people were injured by the flash floods, which also destroyed more than 130 hectares (321 acres) of agricultural land and plantations. Flash floods on Sunday left four people dead in Deli Serdang district and rescue workers and rescue workers were searching for two people who were swept away by flash floods and are still missing. A landslide hit several houses in Harang Julu, a mountainside village in Padang Lawas district, said Mustari, the chief of the local search and rescue agency, who like many Indonesians goes by a single name. Rescuers late Saturday pulled out the bodies of a four-member family, including two children, and rescued at least three injured people from the devastated village, he said. AP

Ceasefire deal to end fighting with Hezbollah soon, says Israeli diplomat

JERUSALEM

THE Israeli ambassador to Washington says that a ceasefire deal to end fighting between Israel and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah could be reached "within days."

Ambassador Mike Herzog told Israeli Army Radio on Monday that there remained "points to finalise" and that any deal required agreement from the government.

But he said "we are close to a deal" and that "it can happen within days."

Among the issues that remain is an Israeli demand to reserve the right to act should Hezbollah violate its obligations under the emerging deal. The deal seeks to push Hezbollah and Israeli troops out of southern Lebanon.

Israel accuses Hezbollah of not adhering to a UN resolution that ended the 2006 war between the sides that made similar provisions, and Israel has concerns that Hezbollah could stage a Hamas-style cross-border



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der attack from southern Lebanon if it maintains a heavy presence there. Lebanon says Israel also violated the 2006 resolution. Lebanon complains

UN chief, Pope want use of land mines stopped

PHNOM PENH

THE UN head, Pope Francis and others called on Monday for nations to end the production and use of land mines, even as their deployment globally grows.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a message to delegates at the fifth review of the International Mine Ban Treaty, also known as the Ottawa Convention, that 25 years after it went into force some parties had re-



A file photo of Cambodia Mine Action Center staff members work to demine a minefield in Preytotoeung village, Battambang province | AP

newed the use of antipersonnel mines and some are falling behind in their commitments to destroy the weapons. "I call on states parties to meet their obligations and ensure compliance to the convention, while addressing humanitarian and developmental impacts through financial and technical support," Guterres said at the opening of the conference in Cambodia. "I also encourage all states that have not yet acceded to

the convention to join the 164 that have done so. A world without anti-personnel mines is not just possible. It is within reach."

In a statement read on behalf of Pope Francis, his deputy Cardinal Pietro Parolin said that antipersonnel land mines and victim-activated explosive devices continue to be used. Even after many years of hostilities, "these treacherous devices continue to cause terrible suffering to civilians, especially children." AP

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