

News in brief

◆ **A suicide bomber killed** nine police officers and wounded 16 others yesterday in an attack on their truck in southwestern Pakistan, officials said. Security forces have been battling a years-long insurgency by militants in Balochistan demanding a bigger share of the province's wealth, as well as attacks by the Pakistan Taliban (TTP). "The suicide bomber was riding a motorbike and hit the truck from behind," senior police official Abdul Hai Aamir told AFP. The incident took place near Dhadar, the main town of Kachhi district, about 120 kilometres (75 miles) southeast of Quetta in Balochistan. Photos of the aftermath showed the police truck upside down on the road with its windows shattered. Mehmood Notezai, police chief for Kachhi district, told AFP the officers were returning from a week-long cattle show where they had been providing security.



Pakistan suicide bomber kills nine police officers

◆ **Male students trickled** back to their classes Monday after Afghan universities reopened following a winter break but women remain barred by Taliban authorities. The university ban is one of several restrictions imposed on

Afghan universities reopen but women still barred



women since the Taliban stormed back to power in August 2021 and has sparked global outrage -- including across the Muslim world. "It's heartbreaking to see boys going to the university while we have to stay at home," said Rahela, 22, from the central province of Ghor. "This is gender discrimination against girls because Islam allows us to pursue higher education. Nobody should stop us from learning." The Taliban government imposed the ban after accusing women students of ignoring a strict dress code and a requirement to be accompanied by a male relative to and from campus.

◆ **A Lebanese judge** has summoned central bank governor Riad Salameh for questioning next week, a judicial official said yesterday, as the crisis-hit country advances an embezzlement probe parallel to European investigations. Salameh's brother Raja and former assistant Marianne Hoayek have also been summoned in the domestic probe launched in 2021, the official told AFP on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to discuss the matter with the media. They were charged in Lebanon last month with embezzlement and money laundering, illicit enrichment and tax evasion, which the Salameh brothers have denied. The official said judge Charbel Abu Samra "has set the date of March 15 to question" the three suspects.

Lebanon to quiz embattled central bank chief

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

EX-UK leader Boris Johnson nominates father for knighthood - report



Boris Johnson attends a press conference

London | United Kingdom

Former UK prime minister Boris Johnson has put his father Stanley forward for a knighthood, according to a report yesterday slammed by the Labour opposition as "outrageous".

The Times newspaper reported that the former Conservative leader, who left office last September, had nominated Stanley as part of his resignation honours list.

The list reportedly includes the nominations of several allies for membership of the House of Lords, where Boris Johnson appointed his younger brother Jo in 2020.

"The idea that Boris Johnson is nominating his dad for a knighthood -- you only need to say it to realise just how ridiculous it is," Labour leader Keir Starmer said on LBC Radio.

"It's classic of a man like Johnson. I mean, I think the

public will just think this is absolutely outrageous," he said, also querying what Stanley Johnson had done to deserve a knighthood.

The reported list poses a political headache for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who must sign off on his predecessor's controversial choices and is trying to keep Johnson loyalists on side.

Sunak's spokesman said the report was "speculative", while stressing: "Longstanding rules guard the honours process and there are no plans to change that."

Asked if she would have a problem with the appointment, senior minister Michelle Donelan told LBC: "I think there are bigger fish to fry, to be honest."

Stanley Johnson would be a controversial pick also because of accusations of sexual harassment against two women, and domestic abuse against his former wife -- Boris's mother.

Imran Khan banned from airwaves by Pakistan media watchdog



Supporters of Imran Khan during a protest
AFP | Islamabad

Pakistan TV stations have been banned from broadcasting speeches by former prime minister Imran Khan, the state media watchdog said, the latest hurdle facing the politician as he campaigns for early elections.

Khan was routed from office in a no-confidence motion last year and has been pressuring the fragile coalition which replaced him with daily speeches, regular rallies and allegations of corruption.

Meanwhile the 70-year-old former cricketer superstar has been tangled in a slew of elaborate legal cases, a frequent fixture in Pakistan's mudslinging politics.

Late Sunday, as police attempted to arrest Khan in con-

nection with a corruption case, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) banned his live speeches and reruns with immediate effect.

The order came after Khan addressed hundreds of supporters outside his house. "I am being summoned in fake cases and the nation should know about them," he said.

"It will be a bad omen for the country if the nation does not stand against the corrupt rulers."

PEMRA said he was "levelling baseless allegations and spreading hate speech... against state institutions and officers" which are "likely to disturb public peace".

Hours after the notice, PEMRA also suspended private TV station ARY News, which backs Khan.

Gender gap at work far worse than expected: UN

AFP | Geneva

Women have a harder time accessing work globally than previously thought, while the gender gap in working conditions and pay has barely budged in two decades, the United Nations said yesterday.

The UN's International Labour Organization said it had developed a new indicator that does a better job than official unemployment rates at capturing all people without employment that are interested in finding work.

"It paints a much bleaker picture of the situation of women in the world of work than the more commonly-used unemployment rate," the ILO said in a statement, two days before International Women's Day.

"The new data shows that women still have a much harder time finding a job than men."

According to new ILO data, 15 percent of working-age women globally would like to work, but do not have a job, compared to 10.5 percent of men.

"This gender gap has remained almost unchanged for two decades," it said.

By contrast, official unemployment rates for women and men are very similar.

This, ILO said, is because the criteria used to determine if someone should officially be considered unemployed tend to disproportionately exclude women.

It pointed out that person-

al and family responsibilities, including unpaid care work, disproportionately affects women.

Such activities, it said, not only often prevent women from working, but also from actively searching for employment or being available to work on short notice, which are criteria for being considered unemployed.

The UN labour organisation found that the jobs gap was particularly severe in low-income countries, where nearly a quarter of women were unable to find a job.

For men, the corresponding rate was below 17 percent, ILO said. Access to employment is not the only problem.

ILO highlighted that women tend to be overrepresented in certain types of vulnerable jobs, including helping out in relatives' businesses rather than being in own-account work.

BETTER YOU KNOW

In 2022, women earned an average of 82% of what men earned, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis of median hourly earnings of both full- and part-time workers. These results are similar to where the pay gap stood in 2002, when women earned 80% as much as men.

Britain to present new

AFP | London

Britain's Conservative government is expected to present today a new bill providing for the detention and swift deportation of asylum seekers who illegally enter the country via small boats, according to media reports.

Despite Brexit-related promises to tighten control of its borders, Britain has seen a considerable uptick in such arrivals, logging a record 45,000 last year, and



Rishi Sunak

Indonesia lands 15, dozens feared

50 people were missing

Jakarta, Indonesia

At least 15 people were killed and dozens feared missing after torrential rains and landslides battered one of Indonesia's outermost islands bordering the South China Sea, disaster officials said yesterday.

Pictures provided by the national disaster mitigation agency (BNPB) showed mud and debris from the landslides had inundated houses near a cliff on the remote Serasan island.

Bits of metal torn off roofs and fallen trees were visible.

The remoteness of the village



A boy looks at the site of a landslide caused by Bogor

where the landslide struck in the Natuna region of Riau province, combined with poor weather and downed communication lines, complicated rescue efforts, ac-

Biden hails 'breakthrough' S.

Around 780,000 Koreans were conscripted into forced labour by Japan during the 35-year occupation

Washington, United States

The United States applauded plans announced by South Korea to compensate victims of Japan's forced wartime labor, as President Joe Biden yesterday hailed the agreement as a "historic breakthrough" between two American allies.

Seoul has looked to forge closer ties with Tokyo as a way to counter nuclear-armed North Korea, and the United States has described its trilateral relations



South Korean protesters hold a rally again to compensate victims of Japan's forced w

with South Korea and Japan as central to Indo-Pacific regional stability.

"Two of our closest allies, Japan and the Republic of Korea, have

Ex-UK policeman, j

London, United Kingdom

A former UK policeman jailed for life for murder was sentenced to an additional 19 months in prison yesterday for indecent exposure, raising questions about whether he could have been stopped sooner.

Wayne Couzens, 50, is already serving a rare whole-life sentence for the kidnap, rape and murder

of London woman Sarah Everard after he snatched her off the streets in March 2021.

He admitted to indecently exposing himself to other women, in November 2020 and February 2021, and betrayed no emotion as he appeared for his sentencing in London's Old Bailey criminal court via video-link from jail.

"Four months after you exposed yourself to me, you raped