



CRIME Three detained for bribery

LAHORE Three citizens were arrested for allegedly attempting to bribe police and traffic officials. All Akram allegedly offered Rs.50,000 to an official at Samanabad police station to get a driving licence. The official, however, refused. Drivers Hanif and Mubashir Ali allegedly offered Rs.10,000 each to a warden to get traffic diversions removed. (ANJUM CHAUDHARY)



CRACKDOWN Suspected drug peddler held

SARGODHA Tarkhanwala police arrested an alleged drug peddler and seized 600 grams of hashish from his possession. The police said on Sunday that a case has been registered against the arrested suspect. Akram, under relevant provisions of the law relating to drug trafficking. (AF)



‘19k new schools needed by 2040’

10m children in Punjab out of school, reveals fact sheet

LAHORE Punjab will need around 19,000 additional public sector primary schools by 2040 to cater to its growing population, while nearly 10 million children aged five to 18 years are currently out of school. The estimates shared in a fact sheet released by a non-governmental organisation, the Population Council, expose a widening gap facing the province's education infrastructure amid moves for outsourcing and public-private partnership of government schools.

The council has estimated that 38,000 additional schools will be required across the country by 2040, including around 19,000 in Punjab. The fact sheet has also highlighted the need to create millions of jobs and additional housing.

Earlier findings put Punjab's government school population at around 3.5 million institutions for a network of 10 million. They include primary, middle, high and higher secondary institutions, but short of 100 buildings, classrooms and basic facilities remain major barriers to enrolment.

The council has linked the shortage of educational facilities and infrastructure with the large number of children remaining outside the school system.

The fact sheet projected that Punjab would require 59m new jobs to absorb its youth. The warning comes against the backdrop of an education system already struggling to retain students beyond school level. A recent report showed a major gap in enrolment in government higher secondary schools after matriculation. Only around 56,000 students were reportedly enrolled in Grade 11 in government higher secondary schools this year, compared with more than 600,000 studying in Grade 10. More than 600,000 students reportedly enrolled in colleges.

The figure raises questions about the capacity and attractiveness of government higher secondary institutions.

At the secondary level, the recent Grade 9 results of the Lahore Board, showed a success rate of only 45.51 per cent. The Rawalpindi Board recorded a success rate of 35.58%.

The need for new public sector schools has been highlighted at a time when authorities in the province are moving in the opposite direction by outsourcing existing institutions.

Teachers have argued that transferring government schools to private operators can weaken affordable access for children from low-income families and increase the dropout rate among disadvantaged students.

The government should expand and strengthen the public school network instead of handing over institutions to private management. Now international organisations are demanding the construction of new schools but the government is not understanding the actual issues," said Punjab Teachers Union Secretary General Rana Usagi Ali.

Population Council Senior Director Dr Ali Mir has urged policymakers to recognise the connection between public sector growth and public service pressures, stressing in a recent meeting that health and education funding were essential investments in future.

Provincial authorities have announced that uncovered trolleys loaded with sand will be impounded from September 30, while commercial kitchens and event halls operating without sanction hoods will be sealed from October 10.

The decision came as the relevant departments continued actions to curb pollution, dust, crop residue burning, industrial emissions and traffic diversions ahead of the annual smog season.

Water worth Rs2,500 was used for burning waste, types, rubber and plastic. A crackdown was also launched on illegal activities causing traffic obstructions.

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Uncovered sand trolleys to be impounded

Parts of metropolis record unhealthy air for sensitive groups

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2,400 police personnel were deployed at churches for Sunday prayers.

15 die in road crashes

LAHORE At least 15 people died, whereas 1,421 were injured in 1,214 road traffic crashes (RTCs) in Punjab during the last 24 hours. Of them, 783 people were shifted to hospitals, while 488 others with minor injuries were treated at the incident sites by Rescue Medical Teams. About four-fifths of the road accidents involved motorcycles. Rescue data showed that 519 adult and 174 underage drivers, 124 pedestrians and 555 passengers were among the victims. The statistics showed the 28 RTCs were reported in Lahore, which affected 32 persons, placing provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 95 in Multan with 112 victims and 94 in Faisalabad. Of the victims, 1,399 were male and 390 female, while 325 were under 18 years of age, 867 between 18 and 40 years and 414 above 40 years. (ANJUM CHAUDHARY)

Woman lured online, assaulted

LAHORE A woman was allegedly sexually assaulted after being invited to a house in Kot Lakhpat following a friendship developed through social media. According to police, Shahryar, a resident of Kot Lakhpat, befriended the woman and invited her to his house in Madina Town after calling her to Multan City. He left the house after the woman arrived. She was allegedly assaulted and tortured. Kot Lakhpat police arrested Shahryar and handed him over to the Gender Cell for investigation. Police teams were striving to arrest Bahi, while investigation was under way. (ANJUM CHAUDHARY)

Murder case suspects held

LAHORE Badami Bhai police arrested two suspects in the killing of 23-year-old Farman and injuring his friend, Badahad. According to police, motorcycle-borne suspects opened fire on Farman and his friend. A case was registered on the complaint of the victim's brother and an investigation led to the arrest of two suspects. Preliminary investigation suggested that the attack had stemmed from a marriage dispute. Police teams were trying to arrest other suspects nominated in the case. The arrested men were handed over to the investigation police for questioning. (ANJUM CHAUDHARY)

Two pickpockets arrested

LAHORE Akhtar Gate police arrested two men allegedly involved in pickpocketing and winding people by staging fights as a distraction. The suspects, Irfan alias Kaka and Asif, were traced through surveillance cameras and arrested. The police said the suspects operated at various locations, particularly in the Walled City and around Lorry Aids. A motorcycle and illegal weapons were seized from their possession and cases were registered against them. (ANJUM CHAUDHARY)

Two corpses found

LAHORE A 60-year-old man, Nizamuddin Petrus, was found dead in a house near Bibi Pak Daman Darbar. Police said the body appeared to be three to four days old. In another incident, the body of a man unidentified 45-year-old man was found along a road near Attari Darbar in Nishit Colony. Police shifted both bodies to a morgue and initiated legal proceedings. (ANJUM CHAUDHARY)

Man booked for wife's murder

CHENAI The corpse of a woman was found in a drain in Lunawala. According to police, the victim's father, Munstar, lodged a complaint that she had been murdered by her husband Nadeem and brother-in-law Ishaqshah. The FIR alleged that after killing his 38-year-old wife, Nadeem, the suspect had dumped the body in the drain. The police took the body into custody and sent it for post-mortem to determine the cause of death. A case was registered and investigation launched. (AF)

Snake encounters rise as urban sprawl squeezes natural habitats

Rapid development has forced wildlife into closer contact with growing communities

LAHORE Lahore and other major cities across Punjab are witnessing increasing encounters between people and snakes, with 1,070 snakebite-related emergency cases reported across the province during the first eight months of 2026.

Experts believe monsoon rains, urban expansion, and the shrinking of natural habitats are bringing snakes and people into closer contact.

Punjab Emergency Services data shows that 1,070 snakebite-related emergency cases were reported between January 1 and August 31, involving 1,060 people. The victims included 614 men and 446 women. Rescue officials provided first aid to 61 people at the scene, while 90 were shifted to hospitals for further treatment. Six people died during the period.

Dera Ghazi Khan recorded the highest number of cases, with 184 incidents involving 180 people and one death. Rajanpur reported 100

cases, followed by Bahawalpur with 90, Multan 85, Taunsa Sharif 37, and Jhang and Bhakkar with 35 each. One death each was reported in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Dera Ghazi Khan, Khairabad and Sahiwal.

Badar Munir, a member of the Punjab Wildlife Management Committee and a wildlife expert, said at least as many snake bites had been recorded in Punjab, including 1,070 venomous and 36 non-venomous species.

Venomous species include the cobra, common krait and Russell's viper. He said the number varies slightly across different regions.

Fahad Malik, founder of the Mission Awareness Foundation and a wildlife expert, said urban expansion and the increasing use of pesticides and fertilisers in agricultural areas were affecting the food supply of snakes, including cobras.

He noted, however, that the population of snake-borne common krait appeared to be increasing.

According to Malik, cobras are generally active during the day and spread their hoods when confronted by humans, while sandgopher are active at night and their bites can be particularly dangerous.

Abid Latif Sandhu, an environmental expert at the Ravi Urban Development

Authority, said last year's major flooding of the Ravi had brought water into areas that had remained dry for a long time, forcing large numbers of snakes out of their burrows.

He said the use of pesticides in agricultural areas had also affected populations of insects and small birds, reducing the availability of food and disrupting the natural balance on which snake populations depend.

The growing presence of snakes around populated areas highlights the broader impact of changes to natural habitats. Experts say the issue is not simply about controlling snakes but also about managing the conditions that bring them into closer contact with people.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that between 4.5 million and 5.4 million people are bitten by snakes globally each year.

Of these, between 1.8 million and 2.3 million suffer venomous effects, while between 80,000 and 130,000 die.

Pakistan is estimated to record around 40,000 snakebites annually, although the actual figure may be higher because of under-reporting.

According to Lahore General Hospital, 10 people were brought to the facility after snakebites in August. The first month of the monsoon rains.

The patients were from areas around Lahore as well as Kasur and Okara. All were provided anti-snake venom in time.

Punjab recorded 1,070 snakebite emergency cases in the first eight months of 2026, with six deaths reported

Although Pakistan produces anti-snake venom locally through the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Islamabad, since 1997, its production does not fully meet demand, so imported anti-venom is also used.

As snake encounters increase near settlements, experts stress prevention alongside treatment. Protecting habitats, reducing harmful agricultural chemical use, raising public awareness and ensuring reliable anti-venom supplies could help.

For Punjab, the challenge is managing growing contact between wildlife and expanding human settlements.

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