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PTI yet to make up its mind on 28th Amendment, says Barrister Gohar

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said on Wednesday that the party's stance on the 28th Amendment was still not clear,

Speaking to reporters in Islamabad, he said that the PTI wanted that any legislation should be reflective of aspirations of the masses and not controversial. He said that the party wanted immediate lifting of the governor's rule and emergency in KP.



ECP orders local government elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued an order on holding local government elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, directing that an election schedule be announced for the province.

A five-member ECP bench headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja announced the reserved verdict on the matter.

The commission ordered local government elections in the province and instructed the relevant wing to submit a schedule for the polls.



Court issues arrest warrants for ex-KP CM Sohail Afridi

SPECIAL REPORTER

PESHAWAR

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Peshawar has issued arrest warrants for five suspects including former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Sohail Afridi in the case releated to May 9 attack on Radio Pakistan.The case was taken up again by the anti-terrorism court, where proceedings were conducted by Judge Wali Muhammad.

During the hearing, the public prosecutor submitted the police challan before the court.

Following the proceedings, the court issued arrest warrants for former chief minister Sohail Afridi, Kamran Bangash, Taimur Saleem Jhagra, Irfan Saleem and Amir Chamkani in connection with the case.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review progress on application of AI and digitiazation of economy in governance and ongoing collaboration with AliBaba group, Islamabad on 28 October 2026.

Secret to national development lies in AI and digitisation: PM Shehbaz

- Says leveraging partnership with Alibaba Group to provide SMEs access to global markets among govt's top priorities

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday that the secret to national development lay in artificial intelligence (AI) and digitisation, stressing the need to accelerate their adoption across key sectors, including agriculture, trade, healthcare and governance.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that a review meeting on the progress of AI, digitisation in the economy and governance, and cooperation with Alibaba was chaired by the premier in Islamabad.

During the meeting, PM Shehbaz stated that the "secret to national development lay in AI and digitisation", further adding that the effective use of digitalisation, AI, and modern technology played an important role in improving trade, exports, agricultural production, business facilitation, and the quality of government services in Pakistan, the PMO said.The premier further said that during his visit to China, a memorandum of understanding was signed with them at the Alibaba headquarters in Hangzhou.

He underlined that leveraging the strategic partnership between Alibaba Group and the government to provide small and medium enterprises (SMEs) access to global markets and create new opportunities for technology-driven development was among the government's top priorities.

The premier noted that modernising the agricultural sector was essential for national development, and he welcomed Alibaba's cooperation on automation in agriculture and exporting Pakistani agricultural commodities to Chinese markets. PM Shehbaz also stressed the need to translate cooperation with Alibaba into tangible results by ensuring that all projects were implemented with clear targets, timelines and

(Continued on Page-5)

Trump threatens post-election military campaign against Iran



WEB DESK

WASHNGATION

The United States President Donald Trump has refused to rule out further attacks on Iran after the US midterm elections, while reports suggest Washington and Israel are preparing for another round of major military operations.

According to The Wall Street Journal (WSJ), the US has warned several Gulf Arab countries to prepare for a possible short, intense campaign aimed at weakening Iran and pushing it towards negotiations.

The potential escalation comes as diplomatic efforts to end the conflict remain stalled, the Strait of Hormuz continues to be a central point of contention, and Washington maintains that preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons remains a priority.Speaking at a campaign rally in Lubbock, Texas, Trump said he could not confirm whether the United States would launch further attacks on Iran after the November 3 midterm elections.

"Anything is possible, including further military action against Iran," Trump said, describing the United States as being in an "extremely strong position" regarding Tehran.



Pakistan, Saudi Arabia Reaffirm Commitment to Stronger Defence

- Islamabad Meeting Focuses on Strategic Partnership, Bilateral Relations and Cooperation in Areas of Mutual Interest

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral defence cooperation, deepening their strategic partnership and expanding collaboration in areas of mutual interest. The two brotherly countries reiterated their resolve to build upon their longstanding relations, which are rooted in mutual trust, respect and shared interests.Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Rajeh Tami Al-Baqami called on Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif at his office in Islamabad. During the meeting, the two sides held discussions on matters of mutual interest, bilateral defence relations and ways to further enhance cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.The meeting provided an opportunity for both sides to exchange views on strengthening existing defence ties and exploring avenues for closer collaboration. Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and the Saudi ambassador discussed the importance of maintaining close coordination and continued engagement to further consolidate relations between the two countries.Both sides emphasised the significance of bilateral defence cooperation as an important component of the longstanding partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani steps down As LHC judge

- Lahore High Court Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani has resigned. He was 10th on the court's seniority list and was due to retire on February 11, 2032.

COURT REPORTER

LAHORE



Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani resigned as a Lahore High Court judge on Wednesday, citing health concerns and "reasons of conscience" as well as reservations over the 26th and 27th Amendments' impact on judicial independence.

He said his years of judicial service had been among the most meaningful and fulfilling of his life. During his tenure, he had disposed of more than 23,000 cases of various categories, seeking to uphold the Constitution, safeguard fundamental rights and administer justice without fear or favour.

However, Justice Kayani said that, in his considered view, the changes introduced through the 26th and 27th Constitutional Amendments had compromised the independence and institutional integrity of the high courts.He said he had witnessed what he regarded as growing executive control over judicial institutions, including the appointment and transfer of judges. According to him, such interference had seriously eroded public confidence in judicial independence and the fairness of the judicial process.

Nine terrorists killed in two intelligence-based operations in Balochistan: ISPR

- President Zardari, PM Shehbaz praise security forces, reaffirm nation's support in fight against terrorism



STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Security forces have killed nine Indian-sponsored terrorists in two separate intelligence-based operations in Balochistan.

Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said an operation was conducted in Kachhi district. During the conduct of operation terrorists hideout was busted by security forces and after an intense fire exchange seven Indian sponsored terrorists were eliminated.

In another IBO in district Wadh, security forces tracked and intercepted terrorist movement and after an intense fire exchange, two Indian sponsored terrorist were killed.

Weapons and ammunition was also recovered during the operations, the military's media wing.

Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist found in the area.

One million farmers benefit from Punjab's Kisan Card scheme: Maryam Nawaz



STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that Rs400 billion has been provided to farmers through the Kisan Card scheme over the past two years, benefiting around one million farmers across the province.

Addressing a delegation of farmers, the chief minister said the provincial government was continuing its efforts to facilitate the agricultural community and address farmers' concerns. She said around one million farmers were linked to the government through the Kisan Card programme and were benefiting from the initiative.

Maryam Nawaz said that black marketing of fertilisers and other agricultural inputs had been eliminated following the incumbent government's assumption of power. She said reducing farmers' difficulties and ensuring the availability of essential agricultural supplies remained among the government's key priorities.

The chief minister further said that 25,000 tractors had been provided to farmers in Punjab to support agricultural activities.

: IGP Islamabad Reviews Safe City Security Systems, Development Projects and Public Service Delivery

■ Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry Directs Modernization of Surveillance Systems, Timely Completion of Police Lines Projects, and Prompt Resolution of Citizens' Complaints

News Desk

ISLAMABAD



: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry held an important meeting with Director General Safe City Islamabad Mustansar Feroz, DIG Islamabad Ali Wasim, and the Assistant Director of Development to review the modern monitoring system at Safe City, the effective use of technology in policing, the provision of improved public services, and ongoing development projects.During the meeting, the IGP directed officers to further strengthen security and surveillance systems through modern technology, adopt a coordinated strategy to improve police services, and ensure that all development projects are completed according to the prescribed standards and timelines. He emphasized that the effective use of modern technology plays a vital role in crime prevention, the timely identification of suspicious activities, and the provision of prompt police assistance to citizens.Furthermore, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry chaired an important meeting with Managing Director of the National Police Foundation Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi and senior Islamabad Police officers to review ongoing construction projects.During the meeting, the MD National Police Foundation briefed the IGP on the progress of construction work at various sites, the current status of development projects, and their different stages of completion. The IGP reviewed the progress and held discussions on maintaining construction standards, ensuring the effective use of available resources, and completing all projects within the stipulated timelines. He directed the concerned officers to closely monitor progress and ensure that construction quality is not compromised at any stage.Later, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, accompanied by MD National Police Foundation Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, visited the ongoing development projects at Police Lines Headquarters. During the visit, they inspected the construction work and directed the concerned officers to ensure timely completion, maintain the required construction standards, and strictly adhere to the approved timelines. The IGP emphasized that projects aimed at improving facilities for police officers and personnel must be completed through effective supervision and proper planning.Meanwhile, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry also personally heard the complaints and concerns of citizens and police officers who visited the Central Police Office. He issued appropriate directions to the relevant officers for the resolution of their issues. He instructed officers to address citizens' complaints in accordance with the law, on merit, and within the prescribed timeframe. He also emphasized that the legitimate concerns of police officers and personnel should be addressed on a priority basis.IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry reaffirmed his commitment to promoting modern technology in policing, enhancing professional capabilities.

NCCIA Exposes International Child Exploitation Network, Arrests Key Suspect In Harassment Case

■ Shoaib Khan Briefs Media on Two Major Cybercrime Cases; Suspect Arrested Within 13 Hours in Karachi Girl Harassment Case

News Desk

ISLAMABAD



Spokesperson, National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) mportant press conference by Additional Director NCCIA Islamabad Circle, Shoaib Khan; detailed briefing provided on two major cases.Major operation by NCCIA: International child pornography network exposed, spokesman.For the first time in Pakistan's history, a father was found involved in a heinous crime against his own innocent children, NCCIA spokesperson.The accused was involved in making and selling inappropriate videos of his 4 to 5-year-old children. Buying and selling of videos via cryptocurrency was ongoing in secret Telegram groups, spokesperson.Investigation revealed that the videos also contained shocking scenes of animal abuse, Spokesperson National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency.The ringleader of the gang belongs to Skardu and was arrested with the assistance of international agencies, Spokesperson National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency.During the investigation, key links and evidence were recovered from Islamabad, Multan, and Southern Punjab. Raids have been conducted to arrest other facilitators of the network, spokesperson.Elements involved in such heinous crimes will be brought to justice, Additional Director Islamabad Circle Muhammad Shoaib Khan.In the second case, a tragic incident occurred where a young girl residing in Karachi attempted suicide after being distressed by harassment, spokesperson.The girl is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital. The NCCIA team, acting swiftly with the assistance of the victim's family, arrested the main accused from Islamabad, spokesperson.NCCIA traced and arrested the suspect within just 13 hours. The accused had been continuously harassing and blackmailing the victim for the past 2 to 3 years, spokesperson. Providing justice to victimized familie s is our top priority. Strict implementation of the zero-tolerance policy against those harassing women and children continues, Additional Director.?Social media users should be careful; think before uploading any inappropriate content, Additional Director Islamabad Circle.The law is in motion; those uploading wrong content will not escape the law under any circumstances, Muhammad Shoaib Khan.If you are a victim of cybercrime, do not remain silent; NCCIA stands with you, Additional Director. To file a complaint, call the 1799 helpline; 24-hour service is available, Additional Director Islamabad Circle Muhammad Shoaib Khan.Do not share your One-Time Password (OTP), bank account.



Islamabad Police Holds Open Courts to Ensure Prompt Justice and Public Grievance Redressal

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Police continues to hold open courts to ensure prompt justice, timely resolution of citizens' problems, and immediate redressal of public complaints.According to details, in line with the special directives and vision of the Federal Interior Minister and the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza and SSP Investigation Salman Zafar held open courts at their respective offices. A large number of citizens attended and presented their concerns and complaints.Both officers listened to the citizens' complaints in detail and issued necessary on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for their prompt resolution and timely redressal. They directed the officers to address public complaints on a priority basis, strictly in accordance with the law and on merit, and to ensure that no unnecessary delays occur.The purpose of these open courts is to provide citizens with timely and effective relief, strengthen direct communication between police officers and the public, and ensure the prompt resolution of public grievances.Islamabad Police is utilizing all available resources to ensure timely justice, resolve citizens' problems, and promote public-friendly policing. Open courts will continue to be held to provide citizens with an effective platform to present their complaints and seek their resolution.

Islamabad SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza Oversees Training Seminar on PSRMS System

News Desk

ISLAMABAD



Under the supervision of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza, a training seminar on the Police Station Record Management System (PSRMS) was organized for Front Desk Officers (FDOs) at police stations and the readers of Zonal SPs and Sub-Divisional Police Officers (SDPOs).During the training session, participants received detailed guidance on the effective use of the PSRMS system, the accurate and timely completion of police records, and the proper handling of related administrative matters. The importance of maintaining records in accordance with modern requirements, entering information accurately, and ensuring transparency in official procedures was also emphasized.The seminar aimed to strengthen the administrative and clerical system of Islamabad Police, improve record accuracy, and enhance professional performance through the effective use of modern technology.SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza reaffirmed his commitment to further improving the administrative and official functioning of the police through the effective use of modern technology, continuous training, and the enhancement of professional capabilities.



Federal Minister Inaugurates Regenerative Agriculture Demonstration Block at NARC

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain inaugurated a 10-acre Regenerative-Organic Agriculture Demonstration Block at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), Islamabad, during his visit to review Kharif 2026 progress and the Rabi 2026–27 plans. The initiative, led by Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) Dr. Syed Murtaza Hassan Andrabi and Director General NARC Dr. Muhammad Mansoor, aims to demonstrate climate-smart, resource-efficient and low-cost farming technologies to improve agricultural productivity and farmers' profitability.Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain appreciated the performance and dedication of PARC scientists and emphasized the importance of promoting innovative.



Former Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani welcomes baby boy after 21 years

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Former Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani has welcomed a baby boy after 21 years, with relatives and well-wishers from across Pakistan extending their congratulations on the happy occasion.

The 48-year-old politician served as chairman of the Senate from March 2018 to March 2024. He was the first politician from Balochistan to lead the upper house of Parliament.

Sanjrani was elected Senate chairman at the age of 39, making him the youngest person to hold the position.

Originally from Nok Kundi in Balochistan's Nushki district, Sanjrani also served as a coordinator for former prime minister Nawaz Sharif"s team in 1998 and 1999.



Pakistan plans stricter cryptocurrency regulations to meet FATF

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The government has decided to tighten cryptocurrency regulations to ensure compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) guidelines,Sources said proposals include mandatory reporting of suspicious cryptocurrency transactions and thorough screening of individuals involved in cryptocurrency businesses.

The proposals also call for enforcing anti-money laundering laws on cryptocurrency transactions and taking action against banned organisations found violating cryptocurrency regulations.

Sources said the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority may be empowered to conduct customer due diligence and included in the list of oversight regulatory bodies.

PDA Conducts Field Research in Bhera to Advance Digital Agriculture Services

■ Citizen Experience Team Engages Farmers to Improve Mera Kissan and e-Zarkhaiz Portals; Research to Continue in Gujranwala and Other Districts

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Pakistan Digital Authority's (PDA) Citizen Experience (CX) team conducted field research in Bhera, Sargodha district, to explore use cases identified for the agriculture sector, working directly with the farmers who stand to benefit most from its digitisation.Citizen experience is a central part of PDA's mandate under the Digital Nation Pakistan Act, 2025. Along with leading Pakistan's digital transformation and building the National Digital Masterplan, PDA is working towards reinventing government services and making them citizen-centric. Public services should be designed around the needs of the people, which is why PDA has reached out to farmers to learn how digital agricultural services would be used in practice, so they can be structured to deliver the most value. The CX team spoke to farmers to understand the challenges behind each identified agriculture use case and observed them using the Mera Kissan and e-Zarkhaiz portals, to see from the user's perspective where each process works and where it stalls. These conversations brought up practical problems that desk research could not have captured. The team travels next to Gujranwala to repeat the exercise with farming communities there.Field research is how PDA puts citizen centricity into practice. Rather than designing digital services centrally and handing them to citizens to adjust later, PDA will build feedback from farmers directly into the agriculture component of the masterplan. PDA's citizen-focused research will help design services that are more likely to be adopted. Findings from Bhera, Gujranwala and the districts that follow will be documented and used to refine the agriculture use cases and the services built on them.

Punjab holds first child protection technical working group meeting

■ **The meeting was chaired by Bureau Chairperson Sarah Ahmed and focused on safeguarding children's rights, preventing violence, exploitation, and developing an integrated child protection system.**

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Child Protection and Welfare Bureau Punjab has held the inaugural meeting of the Child Protection Technical Working Group to discuss the implementation of the provincial Child Protection Policy approved by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, The meeting was chaired by Bureau Chairperson Sarah Ahmed and focused on safeguarding children's rights, preventing violence, exploitation, and developing an integrated child protection system.

Sarah Ahmed focused on the need for effective coordination among government departments, non-governmental organisations and relevant institutions to strengthen child protection services.

Participants discussed defining departmental responsibilities, improving institutional accountability, strengthening monitoring of child protection organizations and setting standards for alternative care institutions.

The meeting also reviewed complaint redressal mechanisms, case management and referral systems, along with the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to improve child protection services.

Chairperson Sarah Ahmed said clear responsibilities for relevant departments and stronger institutional collaboration were essential to building an effective child protection system.

The participants underscored coordinated efforts to implement the provincial policy and protect children from violence, exploitation and neglect.

The meeting was attended by Home Department Special Secretary Zainab Khan, representatives of UNICEF, government departments and NGOs.

Islamabad orders release of PTI MNA Sanaullah Masti Khel

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD



The Islamabad district administration has withdrawn all three detention orders against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and Member of the National Assembly Sanaullah Masti Khel and directed Adiala Jail authorities to release him after more than 30 days in detention.

According to an official order issued by the Islamabad district magistrate on October 28, the detention orders issued against Sanaullah Khan Masti Khel on September 20, October 3 and October 18, 2026, have been withdrawn with immediate effect in the public interest.

The orders had been issued under Section 3(1) of the West Pakistan Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, 1960.

The district administration has directed the superintendent of Central Jail Adiala, Rawalpindi, to release the PTI lawmaker immediately unless his detention is required in connection with another case.

CCRA, PMAS Arid Agriculture University Sign MoU to Promote Cannabis Research and Regulation

■ **Partnership to Strengthen Scientific Testing, Laboratory Capacity and Evidence-Based Regulatory Oversight in Pakistan's Emerging Cannabis Sector**

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority (CCRA) and Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote scientific research, technical cooperation and regulatory oversight in Pakistan's emerging cannabis sector.The MoU was signed by Professor Dr Abida Raza on behalf of PMAS Arid Agriculture University and Director Asif Haroon on behalf of CCRA. Director General CCRA Major General (Retd) Zafarullah Khan, HI(M), and Vice Chancellor PMAS Arid Agriculture University Professor Dr Qamar-uz-Zaman were also present on the occasion.The partnership aims to establish an effective link between scientific research and the regulatory framework, enabling CCRA to make informed regulatory decisions based on credible scientific evidence and reliable research findings. Both institutions will share expertise, resources and technical knowledge to promote quality testing, responsible research and enhanced scientific and technical capacity.Under the agreement, the two institutions will collaborate on the identification and quantification of cannabinoids, development and validation of analytical methods, chemical analysis, and research into cannabis biology, genetics, biotechnology and bioactive compounds.Director General CCRA Major General (Retd) Zafarullah Khan described the MoU as an important milestone in establishing a science-based regulatory framework for the emerging industrial sector. He emphasized that credible scientific evidence, standardized testing and strong institutional capacity were essential for effective regulatory oversight.Key areas of cooperation include joint research in cannabis biology and biotechnology, testing and analysis of plants, extracts and other derivatives, development and validation of analytical procedures, identification and quantification of cannabinoids, scientific support for regulatory decision-making, and technical training to strengthen the capacity of CCRA laboratories.



NCCIA Arrests 89 Suspects in Crackdown on Four Illegal Call and Scam Centres

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has arrested 89 suspects during operations against four illegal call and scam centres in Lahore and Karachi for allegedly defrauding foreign nationals under the pretext of telecom packages, mobile upgrades and fraudulent banking activities.The operations were conducted by the NCCIA Lahore and Karachi circles under the vision of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and the directives of NCCIA Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi.According to the agency, the suspects allegedly deceived foreign nationals into transferring money by offering fake telecom packages and mobile upgrades. Some of the suspects were also allegedly involved in networks that obtained banking information through fraudulent means and used it to defraud victims.

Journalists Pay Tribute to Agha Shorish Kashmiri at Condolence Reference in Islamabad

■ **PFUJ and RIUJ (Dastoor) Organize Event at National Press Club; Speakers Urge Young Journalists to Uphold His Legacy of Truth, Courage and Freedom of Expression**



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A condolence reference in memory of renowned journalist, poet, writer and orator Agha Shorish Kashmiri was held at the National Press Club Islamabad under the auspices of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Union of Journalists (Dastoor).Addressing the gathering, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Liaquat Baloch said Agha Shorish Kashmiri embodied truth, courage and steadfastness. He said Kashmiri viewed journalism as a means of defending principles, protecting public rights and challenging injustice.Recalling seeing and hearing Kashmiri during his childhood, Baloch said he had played a significant role in the freedom struggle and endured imprisonment without compromising his convictions. He stressed the need to introduce younger generations to Kashmiri's writings and struggle.Haji Nawaz Raza, Rana Kausar Ali, Syed Manzoor Gilani, senior journalist Shehzad Farooqi and other speakers paid tribute to Kashmiri's journalistic, literary, political and religious contributions. They said he consistently raised his voice against dictatorship and oppression, championed freedom of expression and remained committed to the Tehreek-e-Khatm-e-Nabuwwat.Farooqi said the writings of Kashmiri and other prominent intellectuals had inspired many to pursue journalism. He called for regular academic sessions to familiarise young people with Kashmiri's ideas and legacy.

11 women among 42 arrested in raids on call centers in Lahore



STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) on Wednesday raided three illegal call centers in Lahore and arrested 42 people, including 11 women,

According to details, on the directives of Additional Director NCCIA Atif Amir, raids were conducted in Garden Town, Gulberg and OPF Society, and the accused were arrested.

NCCIA also recovered 67 laptops, 50 mobile phones, and two server systems from these call centers.

The NCCIA will send all this equipment for forensic testing.

The scammers were duping American citizens by promising them mobile upgrades and telecom packages.

The accused also posed as representatives of foreign telecom companies and were involved in financial transactions.

Additional Director Atif Amir said that all those who were found involved in defrauding foreigners will be dealt with an iron hand.

Punjab demolishes 197 brick kilns in month as Pakistan plans $10m clean-air fund

■ **Punjab demolished 197 brick kilns in a month as Musadik Malik highlighted smog's unequal impact and announced plans for a $10 million clean-air startup fund.**

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



The Punjab Environment Protection Department has demolished 197 substandard brick kilns and sealed 163 others in a month-long anti-smog crackdown, while the federal government has announced plans to establish a $10 million fund for clean-air startups as part of efforts to tackle air pollution and protect public health.

According to the Punjab Environment Protection Department, a total of 11,580 brick kilns were inspected across the province between September 28 and October 27. Action was taken against kilns found violating environmental regulations, with 162 cases registered and fines totalling Rs40.7 million imposed.

As part of the campaign against industrial pollution, authorities inspected 6,650 industrial units, demolished 22 and sealed 191. A total of 333 smog notices were issued over violations, while 15 cases were registered and fines amounting to Rs28 million were imposed.

The department also continued its crackdown on the burning of plastic. Officials inspected 6,064 locations and confiscated 45,100 kilogrammes of plastic. A further 152 locations were sealed over violations.

To control emissions from industrial units, authorities are also monitoring the installation of suction hoods. Under this initiative, 4,204 industrial units were inspected, while 333 locations that failed to comply with environmental requirements were sealed.

Measures to control construction dust were carried out in 397 union councils across Punjab, with mist sprinklers installed at 49 locations.

Meanwhile, 67 quick response units remain operational in agricultural areas to prevent the burning of crop residues. Violations are being identified through satellite and field monitoring, while anti-smog guns continue to be used in Lahore.

Director General of Environment Abdullah Nair Sheikh said the province was continuing to implement a zero-tolerance policy against pollution. He said drones, night squads and field teams remained active, adding that fines, criminal cases and sealing operations would continue against those violating environmental laws.

Separately, Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik has highlighted the unequal burden of air pollution on society, saying poor communities, schoolchildren, street vendors and farmers were more exposed to smog than affluent people who could afford air purifiers and other protective measures.

SECP, Iqra University Launch Investment Competition to Empower Women Through Shariah-Compliant Finance

■ **Two-Month Initiative Targets Female Students, Faculty and Staff Nationwide to Promote Financial Literacy, Ethical Investing and Women's Participation in Capital Markets**

STAFF REPORTER

Karachi



The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and Iqra University's Center for Excellence in Islamic FinTech (IU-CEIF) have launched Empowered Women – Ethical Investments, a two-month practical investment competition for female students, faculty and staff of universities across Pakistan, aimed at promoting women's participation in Shariah-compliant investing.Speaking at the launch ceremony in Karachi, SECP Commissioner Imtiaz Haider said that financial awareness and informed investment decisions are essential to increasing women's participation in the financial sector. Sheikh Ebrahim bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Chairman of the AAOIFI Board of Trustees, attended the ceremony as Chief Guest, along with representatives of Islamic financial institutions.Mr. Haider highlighted SECP's initiatives to improve women's access to finance, including the approval of Khudmukhtar Khatoon, Pakistan's first digital financing product exclusively for women-led micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and simplified account-opening procedures to facilitate women's entry into the capital market.Women already account for a significant share of borrowers in the non-bank finance sector. As of June 30, 2026, they represented 59 percent of active borrowers in the Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) sector and 82 percent in non-banking microfinance, which disbursed Rs. 236.2 billion to women during FY2025–26.The initiative combines practical investment experience with financial education to help women develop investment skills and make informed, responsible financial decisions.

Getting fully ready for war': North Korea's Kim calls for combat readiness by army

■ **Kim Jong Un's remarks come amid tensions on Korean Peninsula**



Web DESK

RIYADH

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has said "primary" task of the country's military commanders was to "getting fully ready" their units "for fighting a war," stressing combat readiness, state media reported Wednesday.

Kim made the remarks during a photo session with participants in the third meeting of Company Leaders of the Korean People's Army a day earlier, KCNA reported.

"The primary revolutionary task of the company leaders is to round off the combat preparations of their units for getting fully ready for fighting a war and the way for its implementation is to bring about a radical improvement in the strenuous and intensive training," Kim said. He called on the military commanders to "prove" their loyalty to the ruling Workers' Party and the "revolution" through "proud successes in turning their companies into a-match-for-a-hundred ranks with firm revolutionary faith, patriotic spirit and matchless heroic mettle and fighting efficiency."



Islamabad: October 28, 2026: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, H.E. Irfan Davudov, calls on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

Jordan, Iran discuss efforts to reach sustainable ceasefire between US, Tehran

■ **Iran says Trump's Islamabad MoU remarks expose 'hollowness' of US commitments**

Web Desk

TEHRAN

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi and his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi discussed efforts to reach a "sustainable ceasefire agreement" between the United States and Iran during a phone call late on Tuesday, Jordan's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday.

During the call, which Safadi received from Araghchi, the discussions focused on "efforts to halt escalation and reach a comprehensive solution to the crisis" between Iran and the US, along with an agreement for a "sustainable ceasefire," according to the ministry.

Safadi stressed "the importance of joining efforts to restore calm and achieve lasting security and stability on foundations that ensure the security and stability of all countries in the region."



He also underscored the need to "respect international law and the principles of good neighbourliness, refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of states, and ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz."

Iran says Trump's Islamabad MoU remarks expose 'hollowness' of US commitments

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei criticised US President Donald Trump's reported remarks on the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), accusing Washington of undermining diplomatic commitments and disregarding international obligations.

In a post on X on Wednesday, Baghaei said, "Washington's contempt for diplomacy is once again laid bare."

He said that Trump's admission that he had never believed in the Islamabad MoU and considered it a waste of time exposed what he described as the "hollowness of their diplomatic commitments".

For Iran, this is nothing new," Baghaei said, accusing Washington of repeatedly reneging on its commitments and treating international obligations as disposable whenever they became inconvenient.

The Iranian spokesperson also criticised European states and other supporters of Washington, saying there was "absolutely no justification" for continuing to defend US actions or shielding Washington from accountability.

He accused them of "whitewashing US misconduct" and maintained that the United States should be held accountable for its actions.

"Broken commitments cannot be excused, international law cannot be applied selectively, and no amount of political spin can absolve Washington of accountability," Baghaei added.

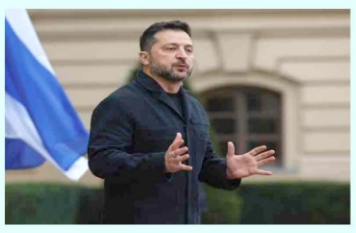
Ukraine's Zelenskiy says territory recaptured, forces on the offensive

■ **Ukraine's Zelenskiy reports battlefield gains as Ukrainian forces launch offensives, reclaim territory near Kupiansk, and counter Russian advances across eastern Ukraine.**

Web Desk

KYIV

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Ukrainian forces were retaking territory through a series of offensives, including one operation previously unannounced in which Kyiv's troops used gas pipelines to outflank Russian positions.Zelenskiy, speaking in his nightly video address, said Kyiv's battlefield position was the strongest in some time in the 4-1/2-year-long war and could be made stronger with more deliveries of air defence systems from its Western allies.Zelenskiy, citing a report by senior commanders, ?noted for the first time the "Veles" operation using pipelines in Ukraine's northeast. He also ?referred to an air assault operation in eastern



Ukraine and the "Vivaldi" operation ?further to the north, designed to prevent Russian advances in key areas.He said Operation Veles was conducted near Kupiansk, a city in northeastern Kharkiv region recaptured by Ukrainian forces ?in late 2022, but since under constant Russian pressure.

"It is a strong operation, well planned and technology-driven. The Russians tried to use underground gas pipelines to advance past our positions," Zelenskiy said.

US costs of Iran war rise to over $47 billion, according to Pentagon estimate

○ **The US military's Iran war costs have exceeded $47 billion, according to a Pentagon estimate, raising concerns over economic and political consequences.**

Web Desk

WASHINGTON

The US military has spent over $47 billion so far to prosecute the war in Iran, more than 25% higher than the Defense Department's estimate in July, according to Pentagon data obtained by Reuters.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment on its estimate, which has not been shared publicly.

The disclosure about the rising cost of the Iran war comes as Republicans wrestle with the ?political fallout of the unpopular conflict ahead of the November 3 election that will determine control of Congress for the next two years.



The war's impact on global energy costs has weighed on support for Republican candidates ?and hurt President Donald Trump's approval ratings. Trump's Republican Party holds a narrow majority in both chambers of Congress.

The Pentagon's latest estimate was tied to the operational costs of carrying out the war, with a projected cost of more than $29 billion to replace expended munitions used in the conflict.

More than $6 billion would be needed to replace military equipment and so-called "platform losses," which include the loss of aircraft including many drones lost during the war.

Trump launched the Iran war jointly with Israel in February, predicting that the conflict would last a short time.Trump's initial strategy in the Iran war focused on first using expensive, high-end precision missiles to bomb Iran's defenses so it could later use less expensive munitions, including gravity bombs like the air-launched JDAMs, which are plentiful.But an April ceasefire gave time for Iran to dig out underground storage facilities, bringing back online some Iranian defenses, as well as missiles and drones that had been inaccessible.

Indonesia Deploys Hundreds of Security Personnel Ahead of Student Protests

Web Desk

JAKARTA

Hundreds of Indonesian security personnel were deployed on Wednesday in anticipation of student protests against several of President Prabowo Subianto's policies, as well as his government's handling of forest fires. Students from the University of Indonesia said they were set to stage protests in several spots in the capital Jakarta

They are calling on the government to declare the ongoing wildfires in Sumatra and Borneo a national disaster, and to halt spending on populist programmes such as Prabowo's free meals scheme, among other demands

It is unclear how many students will take to the streetsA heavy police and military presence, as well as armoured vehicles, could be seen in busy parts of central Jakarta on Wednesday morning Protests have also been held in haze-stricken areas of Borneo and Sumatra, including one in Central Kalimantan last week

Prabowo's approval ratings have fallen steadily since late last year, ?according to surveys by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC), two years into his presidency Indonesia's last major protest took place in August, when hundreds were detained, and students also held demonstrations last week

US health chief RFK Jr faces widespread rebuke over his anti-Arab remarks



Web Desk

Washngation

US Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. faced widespread rebuke from civil rights groups, healthcare advocates and Democrats over his anti-Arab comments that the Council on American-Islamic Relations cast as "a textbook display of unvarnished racism and bigotry."

In his remarks on Monday at a campaign event in Michigan where Republican Mike Rogers is running for the US Senate against Democrat Abdul El-Sayed, the US health secretary falsely claimed that Arabs had not won major ?international awards and "don't produce" science and literature.

Iran hails Tehran security talks as a step toward regional dialogue, and other Mideast news

■ **The talks came amid growing speculation about the return to all-out war and as Saudi Arabia continues to face repeated attacks from the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.**

Web Desk

NEW YORK

A meeting of high-level security officials from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey was a step toward dialogue and peace, Iran's top diplomat said, while stressing that regional security should be handled by the countries themselves rather than outside intervention.

Separately, Egypt's foreign minister held talks with his counterparts from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as part of Cairo's efforts to de-escalate tensions. Egypt has pledged military support for Riyadh against attacks by Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

Here is the latest news from the Middle East on Wednesday. Read our full coverage here.

Iran hails regional meeting as step toward dialogue

A meeting between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey in Tehran on Monday provided an opportunity to advance dialogue and regional peace, Iran's top diplomat said.



In comments posted on social media, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also said the countries should be responsible for their own security without the military presence of "extra-regional powers."

The talks came amid growing speculation about the return to all-out war and as Saudi Arabia continues to face repeated attacks from the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Araghchi did not elaborate on the details of the meeting.

Iran repeatedly attacked neighboring Gulf Arab countries during the war that started on Feb. 28. It claimed it was targeting U.S. facilities and interests in the region. The Gulf countries said Iran had also attacked civilian facilities and infrastructure.

Egypt in talks with Saudi and UAE officials to contain tensions

Egypt's top diplomat discussed efforts to contain the crisis in the region in telephone calls with his Saudi and Emirati counterparts, against the backdrop of increasing tensions, Egypt's Foreign Ministry said.

Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty discussed political solutions to the ongoing crisis with Saudi Prince Faisal bin Farhan and Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the UAE, according to Foreign Ministry statements.

Egypt said this month it will provide Saudi Arabia with military support to defend the kingdom against attacks by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. The decision was made by the country's highest security body, then approved earlier this week by the country's lawmakers in a closed-door vote.

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Digital Hegemony and the Global Order

Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan



The architecture of international power is undergoing a profound transformation. For centuries, the strength of nations was measured by territorial possessions, military supremacy, control of natural resources, and economic influence. In the twenty-first century, however, the foundations of power are increasingly to be found in the less visible domains of artificial intelligence, semiconductor technology, data infrastructure, and algorithmic supremacy. Whereas the empires of former ages extended their dominion through conquest and occupation, the emerging digital order exercises influence through the systems that organise information, shape human behaviour, and mediate the intellectual and economic activities of entire societies.

This transformation has fundamentally altered the meaning of national sovereignty. A state may retain its territorial integrity and political independence while remaining dependent upon foreign-controlled technologies for essential economic, educational, administrative, and security functions. The decisive question is no longer merely who governs a territory, but who controls the technological infrastructure upon which its institutions and citizens increasingly rely.The intensifying rivalry between the United States and China illustrates this new contest for global supremacy. Their competition extends beyond trade and conventional geopolitics into advanced semiconductors, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and large language models. The United States has employed export controls and technological restrictions to preserve strategic advantages in sophisticated computing capabilities, while China has invested heavily in domestic innovation and alternative technological systems to reduce external dependence. The eventual outcome remains uncertain, but this confrontation raises the prospect of a fragmented internet, commonly described as a splinternet, in which competing technological standards, regulatory frameworks, and digital ecosystems increasingly reflect geopolitical divisions. The ideological frontiers of the twentieth century may thus acquire a technological counterpart in the twenty-first. The consequences are particularly significant for the Global South.

Many developing countries participate extensively in the digital economy without possessing comparable capabilities in technological research, industrial production, or intellectual property development. Their populations generate valuable data and consume digital services, while much of the infrastructure, expertise, and commercial value associated with those activities remains concentrated in foreign corporations. This imbalance creates the conditions for a new form of digital colonialism, in which technological dependence may reproduce established patterns of economic subordination.

Data sovereignty is therefore not merely a technical or administrative concern. When essential public services and economic activities depend upon foreign cloud infrastructure and externally governed systems, questions arise concerning security, continuity, accountability, and national autonomy. Foreign technology does not invariably compromise sovereignty, nor does data localisation alone guarantee independence. Nevertheless, a nation that lacks the capacity to protect its information, evaluate its technological dependencies, and exercise meaningful control over critical systems may find its freedom of action increasingly constrained.

Algorithmic power also influences the social and intellectual foundations of political life. Cyberattacks, information warfare, fabricated news, and deepfake technologies can distort public understanding and undermine confidence in authentic evidence. Recommendation algorithms and targeted communication may influence which ideas receive attention and how political debates develop. Although such systems do not invariably determine human judgment, their opacity and commercial incentives can complicate democratic deliberation. The concentration of digital infrastructure and proprietary algorithms within a relatively small number of multinational corporations further raises questions about transparency, accountability, intellectual freedom, and the equitable distribution of technological benefits.

For Pakistan, passive observation is no longer an adequate response. Artificial intelligence must not be regarded merely as an instrument of entertainment or a convenience for mobile-phone users; it is increasingly integral to scientific advancement, economic competitiveness, public administration, and national security. Pakistan a comprehensive strategy for cybersecurity, data governance, and digital sovereignty, supported by effective legal safeguards, institutional competence, and investment in indigenous technological capacity.

Such a strategy should encompass semiconductor research, advanced computing infrastructure, university-based innovation, and the development of artificial intelligence systems responsive to the country's linguistic, cultural, educational, and administrative requirements. Urdu and other national languages must not remain marginal to technological progress. At the same time, technological self-reliance cannot be achieved through declarations alone. It requires sustained investment, specialised expertise, reliable infrastructure, international scientific cooperation, and realistic priorities.

Rs930b Islamic funds curb debt

The federal government has managed to execute an Islamic financing transaction of Rs930 billion to reduce the growing circular debt in the power sector.

At a public hearing held on Tuesday, the officials of Central Power Purchasing Agency-Guarantee (CPPA-G) made the revelation about the Shariah-compliant financing to curb the debt.

CPPA-G requested the power-sector regulator – the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) – to allow the company to file a Multi-Year Tariff (MYT) petition in the next financial year instead of requiring it to submit the application immediately.

The company pointed out that it had successfully executed Pakistan's largest-ever Islamic financing transaction of Rs930 billion and made settlements, providing critical support for the government's circular debt reduction objectives.

In recognition of the CPPA-G contribution to the circular debt financing initiative, the government of Pakistan conferred Sitara-e-Imtiaz on the company's chief executive officer (CEO) and another official.

The company also informed the public hearing about the initiatives that resulted in a relief of Rs183.4 billion for end-consumers. It cited savings of Rs184.53 billion through the implementation of amended/negotiated settlement agreements, led by a task force, which benefitted consumers through tariff adjustments. It highlighted that the power sector achieved financial stability following the realisation of Rs795 billion in subsidies.

In the petition, the company mentioned that through power purchase agreements, it secured tariff rationalisation and consumer savings via strategic negotiations with wind, solar and nuclear power producers, leading to tariff reductions and a late payment surcharge waiver.

It was pointed out that portfolio scale management and commercial invoicing encompassed 39,936 megawatts of production capacity under 112 active power purchase agreements and energy purchase agreements. During financial year 2025-26, power purchase invoices exceeding Rs3 trillion were processed. "This section provides response to the issues framed by the regulatory authority."

A question was raised regarding whether the grounds provided by CPPA-G for exemption from filing the MYT petition for the subsequent financial year and acceptance of the single-year tariff petition for the current year were justified In response, the CPPA-G officials told the public hearing that the company's board had directed the management to undertake a comprehensive exercise based on realistic assumptions, ground realities and future operational and capital expenditure requirements to ensure that the tariff petition accurately reflected the company's legitimate needs and sustainable financial requirements. "Accordingly, the management is diligently working on the directives and expects to complete the necessary assessment for filing the multi-year tariff petition from the next financial year, ie, 2027-28," they said.

In view of the foregoing, the CPPA-G requested the power-sector regulator to allow the company to file the MYT petition in the next financial year instead of requiring it to submit the application immediately, so that a comprehensive, well-founded and realistic petition may be forwarded for consideration of the regulatory authority.

The hearing was further informed that the general establishment cost for financial year 2025-26 was Rs2,524 million, comprising Rs1,627 million for pay and allowances, Rs349 million for employee benefits (provident fund, gratuity, Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution, group life insurance, medical facilities and bonus), Rs199 million for bonus based on the board of directors' approval, Rs32 million for training and capacity building, Rs19 million for consultancy services and Rs298 million for new hiring costs including benefits.For current financial year 2026-27, the company has requested for expenditures amounting to Rs2,504 million, including Rs1,792 million for pay and allowances, Rs391 million for employee benefits, Rs106 million for bonus, Rs25 million for training and capacity building, Rs15 million for consultancy services and Rs175 million for new hiring costs including benefits. The total establishment cost, including new hiring, is therefore projected to drop by Rs20 million compared with FY2025-26.



Sindh's China Investment Drive: Promises and the Test of Delivery



By: Ishak Soomro

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah's recent visit to China has opened new opportunities for economic cooperation between Sindh and Chinese companies in energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, technology and urban development. Meetings with Shanghai Electric Group, Shanghai Mayor Zhu Zhongming and Huawei executives, alongside the Sindh Investment Conference in Shanghai, reflect the provincial government's efforts to attract fresh investment. However, the real success of the visit will depend not on announcements but on projects that generate employment, strengthen the economy and improve public services.

The second Sindh Investment Conference in Shanghai, held after a gap of 12 years, attracted around 400 delegates, including investors, business leaders and representatives of Chinese companies and financial institutions. According to the chief minister, 34 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed between government entities and Chinese enterprises, alongside agreements involving private-sector businesses. The proposed areas of cooperation include Thar coal, electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, renewable energy, modern agriculture and digital transformation.

While these agreements indicate renewed interest in Sindh, MoUs alone do not guarantee investment. Their significance will depend on financial commitments, project feasibility, financing arrangements, implementation schedules and employment opportunities. The provincial government must publicly disclose progress so that preliminary proposals are not presented as completed economic achievements.

Sindh has considerable advantages for attracting foreign investment. Karachi is Pakistan's principal commercial centre, while Karachi Port and Port Qasim provide access to international markets. The province also possesses an established industrial base, agricultural resources, mineral wealth and substantial wind and solar energy potential. Yet these advantages can only be fully realized through reliable infrastructure, predictable regulations, efficient administration and a business environment that encourages long-term investment.

The proposed Dhabeji Special Economic Zone is central to this strategy. Planned industrial activities include automotive manufacturing, auto parts, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, electronics, textiles, steel, construction materials and warehousing. If developed effectively, the zone could strengthen export-oriented manufacturing and create links between Chinese investors and local industries.

However, industrial zones cannot succeed through land allocation and investment announcements alone. Investors require reliable electricity, water, transport, customs facilities and consistent policies. Equally important, industrialization must create jobs for local people, transfer technical skills and provide opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises. Without these conditions, special economic zones risk becoming underutilized projects rather than engines of economic growth.Energy remains a major area of Sindh-China cooperation. Shanghai Electric's investment in the Thar Block-I Integrated Coal Mine and Power Project demonstrates the scale of Chinese participation in the province's energy sector. During his meeting with Shanghai Electric Chairman Wu Lei and senior executives, the chief minister proposed expanding cooperation into coal-to-chemicals industries.

Secret to national development lies in AI and digitisation: PM Shehbaz

effective monitoring mechanisms, further directing the relevant ministries to complete all necessary measures by November and submit a progress report.The PMO said that the meeting was briefed on the ongoing progress in various sectors under the strategic cooperation between the government and the Alibaba Group, adding that the meeting was informed that work was underway on AI-based models in the agriculture sector, tobacco track-and-trace technology, and a digital platform for the export of citrus fruits and olives. It added that a special Pakistan Pavilion had also been established on a dedicated website on Alibaba for the export of Pakistani products.

According to the PMO, the system for digital verification of trade documents through the Pakistan Single Window had been activated, while a two-year programme was also being launched in collaboration with the SMEs Development Authority and Alibaba to provide small and medium enterprises with access to global markets, training, and e-commerce opportunities."The meeting reviewed the progress on the preparation of a modern data platform and central data hub for the FBR and PRAL, and the proposed pilot project for cancer diagnosis in the health sector with the help of AI. In the energy sector, OGRA is being provided with artificial intelligence and business intelligence tools for the analysis of fuel supply chain data. Similarly, initiatives related to the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence in the sectors of higher education, railways, postal services, and urban administration are in the final stages of completion," it added.According to the PMO, the premier urged that the implementation of a cancer early detection system with Alibaba's cooperation should also be ensured at the earliest, further adding that the 15-day training programme for IT graduates in the field of artificial intelligence, under the Ignite programme of the Ministry of Information Technology and in collaboration with Alibaba, should be started soon.



Islamabad: October 28, 2026: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik held a meeting with JD Singleton, Director, Comminution EMEA at Weir, to discuss opportunities for collaboration in Pakistan's minerals sector.

Gold prices rise by Rs3,500 per tola in Pakistan

■ Gold prices in Pakistan rose by Rs3,500 per tola to Rs425,636, while international rates climbed to $4,031 per ounce. Silver prices also recorded gains in local and global markets.

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD



Gold prices witnessed an increase in the domestic market on Wednesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs3,500 to Rs425,636, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs3,001 to Rs364,914, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold rose by Rs2,751 to Rs334,516.

In the international market, the price of gold increased by $35 to $4,031 per ounce, the association reported.Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola rose by Rs61 to Rs5,854, while the price of 10 grams of 24-karat silver increased by Rs52 to Rs5,018.

The price of silver in the international market also registered an increase, rising by $0.61 to $53.76 per ounce, the association added.

PIA increases London flights, likely to restore Birmingham operations

■ The consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation took charge of the national airline on June 29, 2026, and since then, a series of revolutionary measures have been underway.

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD



PIA's journey back to international skies has entered another important phase as number of weekly flights to London has increased to seven, while direct air operations to Birmingham are also being restored from December 1.

PIA has crossed another milestone, for the first time Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft will be used for air operations.

The consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation took charge of the national airline on June 29, 2026, and since then, a series of revolutionary measures have been underway. From six-year restrictions to daily flights, the national airline has navigated this journey very well.

Under the new schedule, five flights will depart from Islamabad and two from Lahore to London, making air connectivity between Pakistan and the UK now available on a daily basis, providing passengers with more convenience and choice in travel planning. The national airline is also going to start direct flights to Birmingham from December 1st, which will facilitate Pakistanis living in the UK to travel to their homeland.This increase in flights is not just the announcement of a new schedule, but is the result of revolutionary initiatives by a consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation.

The Arif Habib Consortium took over the national airline on June 29, 2026, and since then, the journey of development has continued, and PIA is regaining its lost identity internationally.



PSX maintains positive momentum as KSE-100 reaches 164,633 points

Staff Reporter

KARACHI

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) maintained its positive momentum on Wednesday amid buying trend.

The benchmark KSE-100 Index gained 166.25 points, or 0.10 percent, to reach 164,633.45 during early trading.

The index opened the session on a positive note following a strong performance in the previous trading session, when it climbed 1,428.73 points, or 0.88 per cent, to close at 164,467.20, according to Business Recorder.

During the latest session, the benchmark index fluctuated between an intraday high of 164,918.95 and a low of 164,502.45.



LPG prices surge across Pakistan as cylinder costs hit Rs26,000

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices have surged across Pakistan, including Rawalpindi, as gas shortages drive up demand and increase operating costs for hotels and small businesses.

Hotel owners say the price of an LPG cylinder that previously cost Rs18,000 has risen to between Rs25,000 and Rs26,000.

They added that the price per kilogram of LPG has climbed from around Rs400 to more than Rs600.The sharp increase has placed additional pressure on businesses already struggling with rising expenses.

Hotel operators say higher fuel costs are affecting daily operations, making it increasingly difficult to cover routine expenditures and maintain business activity.Small traders have also expressed concern that the rising cost of cooking fuel is adding to the financial strain caused by broader inflation. Consumers are facing the indirect impact as businesses contend with higher operating costs. Hotel owners have urged the government to take immediate notice of the price increases and review LPG rates.

Govt cuts customs duty on petrol by Rs5.71 per liter

■ The reduction in customs duty has helped offset higher import costs, providing some relief to consumers.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



The federal government on Wednesday slashed customs duty on petrol by Rs5.71 per liter, bringing the price down from Rs26.27 per liter to Rs20.56 per liter with effect from October 28, 2026, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

According to the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), the reduction reflects a decline in petrol's ex-depot price despite an increase in its international benchmark cost.

Under the revised pricing calculation, petrol's ex-depot price has decreased by Rs3.19 per liter, falling from Rs379.25 to Rs376.06 per liter.

The reduction in customs duty has helped offset higher import costs, providing some relief to consumers.

OGRA's pricing document shows that the petrol cost at Karachi port increased from Rs241.40 to Rs244.73 per liter.

However, customs duty declined from Rs26.27 to Rs20.56 per liter, while the exchange rate adjustment fell from Rs0.82 to zero.

The revised petrol price includes a petroleum levy of Rs80 per liter and a climate support levy of Rs5 per litre. Sales tax remains zero-rated, according to the notification.

Meanwhile, high-speed diesel (HSD) has become more expensive under the latest adjustment. Its ex-depot price increased by Rs2.25 per litre, rising from Rs395.82 to Rs398.07 per litre.

The diesel price calculation retains the petroleum levy of Rs80 per liter and the climate support levy of Rs5 per litre, while sales tax remains zero.

The latest adjustment reflects changes in international petroleum benchmarks, import costs and other components of Pakistan's domestic fuel pricing formula.

While the reduction offers some relief to petrol consumers, the increase in diesel prices could add to transportation and freight costs, potentially putting further pressure on businesses and consumers.

The revised rates take effect on October 28, 2026, in line with OGRA's latest notification. .

FBR directs companies to submit statements through IRIS

■ Electronic documents can be verified through digital signatures or other electronic methods.

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Wednesday directed companies to submit their financial statements accompanying their income tax returns electronically through the IRIS portal in an electronically readable file format from tax year 2026,

According to a notification SRO 1912(I)/2026 issued by the FBR, the FBR has proposed inserting a new sub-rule (2F) in Rule 73 of the Income Tax Rules, 2002, under which financial statements filed with company income tax returns would have to comply with the electronic filing requirements.

"In the case of a company, for tax year 2026 and onwards, the financial statements accompanying the return of income shall be furnished electronically through IRIS only in an electronically readable file format within the meaning of clause (l9-DA) of section 2," the notification said.

Electronic documents can be verified through digital signatures or other electronic methods.

Upon submission, the FBR will issue an electronic acknowledgment containing a unique reference number, which will serve as proof of electronic filing.

Objections or suggestions may be sent to the FBR within 7 days of the publication of the notification.

UK helps Pakistani climate businesses seek $51 million in investment

■ Ten Pakistani businesses are seeking combined $51 million over the next 12 months to expand practical climate solutions, following specialist support from the UK Government.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Ten Pakistani businesses are seeking combined $51 million over the next 12 months to expand practical climate solutions, following specialist support from the UK Government.

The businesses are developing cleaner energy, transport, construction, farming and waste solutions. With UK-funded technical and financial advice, they strengthened their investment proposals and presented them directly to investors, banks and development finance institutions in Karachi.

CFA Pakistan, implemented by DAI on behalf of the UK Government, gave each business technical, financial, and gender equality and social inclusion support to prepare for investment. Between 2022 and 2024, the programme supported 22 projects in Pakistan and helped mobilise $40 million in investment for climate projects.

The two-day Climate Finance Accelerator Pakistan Investor Roadshow on 27 and 28 October connected the businesses with potential investors. Together, the ten businesses across five sectors: agriculture and land use, waste and circular economy, clean energy, building and construction, and e-mobility. Together they have a three-year investment pipeline worth $120 million.

The roadshow also brought together government, investors and industry representatives to discuss how Pakistan can attract more private finance for climate projects by addressing policy, regulatory and market barriers.



Alison Blackburne, British Deputy High Commissioner Karachi, said: "The UK's climate partnership with Pakistan is increasingly focused on mobilising climate finance, strengthening adaptation and resilience, and supporting the policy and institutional systems needed for implementation. The UK-Pakistan Green Compact, which we signed with the Government of Pakistan last December, provides the wider partnership framework, bringing together climate and clean-energy, finance, policy dialogue, private investment, green skills and international cooperation."

Welcoming guests on behalf of the Government of Pakistan, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Minister to Government of Sindh for Local Government & Housing Town Planning, reaffirmed the government's commitment to working with the private sector and development partners to mobilise finance for climate action.

Shaheen climbs to sixth in ICC ODI bowling rankings, Babar slips to ninth

● The left-arm fast bowler has taken eight wickets in four matches, underlining his importance to Pakistan's bowling attack



SPORTS DESK

DUBAI

Pakistan captain Shaheen Shah Afridi has moved closer to the top of the ICC Men's ODI bowling rankings, climbing two places to sixth after an impressive display in the ongoing home tri-series involving England and Sri Lanka.

The left-arm fast bowler has taken eight wickets in four matches, underlining his importance to Pakistan's bowling attack.

His performances have provided a positive highlight for the hosts, although fellow pacers Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah have slipped in the latest rankings.

Rauf dropped nine places to 29th, while Naseem fell six positions to 53rd.

Young spinner Arafat Minhas also made significant progress, rising 15 places to 68th with 435 rating points.

His six-wicket haul against England has strengthened his position among Pakistan's emerging bowling talents.

Meanwhile, mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed slipped one place to third despite not featuring in the tri-series.

Afghanistan's Rashid Khan retained the top spot, followed by South Africa's Keshav Maharaj in second.

Pakistan's batting rankings also produced mixed news. Former captain Babar Azam dropped two places to ninth after scoring 118 runs in four matches without converting his starts into a major innings.

All-rounder Salman Ali Agha fell one place to 13th. After opening the tournament with a century against Sri Lanka, he managed only 51 runs across his next three appearances.

Wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan dropped eight places to 42nd, while Fakhar Zaman slipped two positions to 46th following recent struggles.

However, Shadab Khan emerged as a notable gainer, surging 32 places to 92nd in the ODI batting rankings after delivering a match-winning century against England.



Haris Rauf fined for ICC Code of Conduct breach in tri-series match against England

SPORTS DESK

Islamabad

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has fined Pakistan fast bowler Haris Rauf 20 percent of his match fee for breaching the code of conduct during the One-Day International (ODI) match against England in Lahore.The incident took place on Sunday at the end of Pakistan's 46th over, when Rauf appealed for a wide and became involved in an argument with England all-rounder Will Jacks.

During the exchange, Rauf raised his bat and continued arguing despite a warning from umpire Sharfuddoula. The ICC found the Pakistani fast bowler guilty of breaching Article 2.2 of its Code of Conduct.According to the ICC, Rauf was fined 20 percent of his match fee and received one demerit point on his disciplinary record. It was his third offence within a 24-month period, taking his total number of demerit points to five. Rauf admitted his mistake and accepted the sanction proposed by match referee Jeff Crowe, avoiding the need for a formal hearing.

Iowa RB Kamari Moulton done for season due to upper-body injury

■ Iowa running back Kamari Moulton will miss the rest of the season with an upper-body injury, coach Kirk Ferentz confirmed, dealing a blow to the Hawkeyes' rushing attack.



SPORTS Desk

ISLAMABAD

Iowa running back Kamari Moulton will miss the rest of the season with an upper-body injury, coach Kirk Ferentz s Moulton left the Hawkeyes' 13-10 loss at Minnesota on Saturday in the second quarter and didn't return. According to reports, Moulton had his right shoulder examined before being moved into the medical tent and was later seen with the arm in a sling following the contest.

"Unfortunately, he's going ?to be done," Ferentz said during his weekly press conference. "We'll look forward to getting him back here, but he's got ?some rehab to go through."

Moulton ranks second in the Big Ten in rushing yards per game at 90.2. By yardage, he stands eighth with 541 in six games. He has rushed for four touchdowns.

Moulton twice achieved career highs for rushing yardage this season. He ran for 183 on 11 carries in a season-opening 40-0 rout of Northern Illinois and later had 208 yards on 26 carries in a 41-24 road victory over Washington on Oct. 9.

"Kamari is playing his best football this year because of the experience, confidence that you only get by playing," Ferentz said of the senior. "You have to go out and get beat up sometimes to grow true confidence."

Xavier Williams is the likely starter for the Hawkeyes (5-2, 2-2 Big Ten) on Saturday against No. 25 Wisconsin. He ?has rushed for 187 yards and three touchdowns on just 25 carries.

L.J. Phillips Jr., who opened the season as the backup running back, is ailing, according to Ferentz. He has rushed for 88 yards on 25 carries.

Kaleemullah hits four in Pakistan's 6-1 rout of Tonga

● Shaheens claim first win at FIFA Under-15 World Cup and Festival in Azerbaijan

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan thrashed Tonga 6-1 at the FIFA Under-15 World Cup and Festival 2026 in Azerbaijan, with Kaleemullah scoring four goals to lead a commanding comeback after an early setback.

Pakistan fell behind in the sixth minute after Tonga were awarded a penalty, but Kaleemullah levelled from the spot a minute later before putting Shaheens ahead in the 13th minute with a header from a cross on the right.

Pakistan maintained their attacking pressure and Kaleemullah completed his hat-trick with another penalty in first-half stoppage time.



The forward added his fourth goal after the break, heading home at the far post from a kick-in on the left to extend Pakistan's advantage.

Maqbool increased the lead with a powerful long-range strike before Mustafa completed the scoring with a composed finish following an attack down the left.

Pakistan continued to create chances as their movement and finishing overwhelmed Tonga, securing their first victory of the tournament after the early scare.

Pakistan Football Federation's (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani attended the match and encouraged the players before kick-off. After the final whistle, he congratulated the squad on becoming the first Pakistani team to record a victory on the FIFA World Cup stage.

Gilani also praised the team management and coaching staff for preparing the players for the competition, highlighting the value of facing opponents from different regions.

He expressed hope that the tournament would open further opportunities for young Pakistani footballers to gain international experience and develop their caree.

Tasmia takes 3-29, Natalia, Shawaal pace the chase as team Champions make winning start

■ Tuba Hassan-led Champions began the PCB Women's Super-3 T20 Tournament with a five-wicket win over Incredibles at the Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad on Wednesday.

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Tuba Hassan-led Champions began the PCB Women's Super-3 T20 Tournament with a five-wicket win over Incredibles at the Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad on Wednesday.

On Thursday, Champions will take the field again against Warriors at the same venue with the first ball scheduled at 10pm PKT.

Incredibles opted to bat first and posted 137-8 in the allotted 20 overs, which the Champions overhauled in 19.1 overs with Natalia Parvaiz and Shawaal Zulfiqar pacing the chase with 46 not out and 43, respectively.

Left-arm pacer Tasmia Rubab gave the Champions a strong start with the new ball by taking out Gull Feroza and Eman Naseer, while she also got rid of their top-scorer



Ayesha Zafar (40, 39b, 3x4s, 1x6).

Champions' left-arm wrist-spinner Tania Saeed was also effective in her four overs as she gave away only 15 runs removing the two set batters Omaima Sohail (29, 27b, 2x4s, 1x6) and Samiya Afsar (20, 19b, 3x4s, 1x6).

Incredibles could not finish their innings on a strong note as they lost five for 44 towards the end. Left-arm spinner Momina Riasat picked up 1-28 in her four overs.

In reply, Champions lost Komal Khan (11, 17b, 1x6) and Sidra Amin (8, 6b, 1x4) for low scores but Shawaal Zulfiqar kept her team well in the hunt with timely boundaries. She was run out on 43 off 29 balls having struck six fours and one six, while adding 25 runs with Natalia.

With Shawaal departing at the juncture when Champions had 70 runs on the board, Natalia took it upon herself to keep the chase on the track. Natalia saw the back of Saira Jabeen (8, 13b) and then added 27 runs with Najiha Alvi (17, 11b, 1x4, 1x6) for the fifth wicket.

Natalia was 46 not out off 37 balls having struck one four and two vital sixes when Champions got home. Skipper Tuba struck one four in her three-ball six. For Incredibles, Anosha Nasir picked up 2-25 and left-arm wrist-spinner Rida Aslam returned 1-24.

Pakistan Batting Coach Michael Smith Confident of Strong Comeback Ahead of Tournament Final

■ Smith Says Pakistan Have Developed Belief to Win from Difficult Situations; Urges Batters to Maintain High Standards After Sri Lanka Defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan batting coach Michael Smith believes his side has developed the confidence and ability to win from challenging situations and is determined to put the defeat against Sri Lanka behind them as they prepare for the final of the tournament.

Speaking exclusively to PCB Digital following Pakistan's first defeat in the tournament, Smith acknowledged that the side had fallen short of its standards but remained confident in the team's ability to bounce back in the final.

"We just didn't play as well as we should have. We have done some really good things in this tournament, being the first team to qualify for the final and we have played some exceptionally good cricket."We have reached a stage where we believe we can win from anywhere and we are building that belief within the group. Today was one of those days when things didn't go our way and we know we didn't perform to the level we are capable of."Our focus now is on moving forward and preparing as best as we can for the final."



Pakistan had already secured their place in the final before facing Sri Lanka, having remained unbeaten in their opening three matches. The hosts registered two wins against England and one against Sri Lanka during an impressive run in the tournament.

Pakistan's batting unit has produced notable performances in the competition. Salman Ali Agha has accumulated 158 runs in four matches, including a century against Sri Lanka in the tournament opener, while 24-year-old Hasan Nawaz has scored 148 runs, highlighted by a crucial 79 against England in the second match, which helped Pakistan register an 87-run win.

Shadab Khan also contributed with a memorable maiden century against England at the Gaddafi Stadium on Sunday, 25 October, playing a pivotal role in Pakistan's thrilling one-wicket win.Reflecting on the batting unit's performances and the importance of continuous improvement, Smith emphasised that the players must keep striving to raise their standards regardless of previous results."You always

Daily The Spokesman

Thursday
October 29,2026



Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan chairs a Meeting to Review Progress on NHA Projects at National Highway Authority Headquarters in Islamabad on October 28, 2026.

Punjab bans outdoor drone flights for 30 days under Section 144

Punjab's Home Department has imposed a 30-day ban on outdoor drone flights over security concerns, allowing limited exceptions with written permission.

Staff Reporter

LAHORE



The Punjab Home Department has issued a notification imposing a 30-day ban on outdoor drone flights under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, citing security concerns.

According to a spokesperson for the department, limited use of small drones will be permitted for event coverage inside halls and marquees. Organisers will be responsible for ensuring the safe operation of drones during such events.

The ban was imposed by the Punjab home secretary under Section 144(6) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. Intelligence agencies and law enforcement organisations have been exempted from the restrictions.

The Home Department has established district-level Safe Drone Usage Committees to grant written permission for drone operations. Drones may be used for agricultural, irrigation and research purposes with prior written approval from the relevant committee.

Strong local govts essential for democratic stability: PA Speaker Malik Muhammad

The speaker said the benefits of democracy could not reach ordinary citizens without empowering local governments with adequate authority and resources.

SPECIAL REPORTER

LAHORE



Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan on Tuesday stressed the need for constitutional protection of local governments and effective devolution of powers to the grassroots, saying strong local institutions were essential for democratic stability and resolution of public issues.

He was addressing the launch ceremony of the Task Force Report on Reforms in Local Governance, prepared by the BNU Centre for Policy Research (BCPR), where he attended as the chief guest.

The speaker said the benefits of democracy could not reach ordinary citizens without empowering local governments with adequate authority and resources.

He observed that local institutions in Pakistan had been unable to perform their effective role due to the concentration of powers at the provincial level.

He said strengthening local governments was essential to completing the democratic system envisaged under the Constitution of 1973.

Devolution of powers, he added, was not merely an administrative requirement but a fundamental aspect of citizens' participation in governance.

Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said Pakistan's administrative structure continued to retain features of the colonial system and stressed the need for making governance more responsive to public needs, enabling citizens to take meaningful decisions about local affairs.

He said effective local autonomy and public representation were vital for national cohesion, adding that empowered local governments could address grievances arising from resource constraints and a sense of deprivation by resolving public issues closer to citizens.

The speaker said members belonging to various political parties in the Punjab Assembly had jointly contributed to efforts to strengthen local governance.

He disclosed that more than 80 members had voluntarily expressed their willingness to join the Parliamentary Caucus on Local Governments.

Sindh govt orders release of 60 Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf workers

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



The Sindh government on Wednesday ordered the release of 60 workers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from Central Jail in Karachi,

The order of release was signed by Section Officer Judicial Officer-II of the Sindh government.

PTI leaders had approached the Sindh High Court for their release from jail. These workers were arrested from South Malir, Kemari, Korangi Central, and southern areas of Karachi.

Earlier in February 2026, the Sindh government had released nearly 300 Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) workers who had been detained under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance.

PTI spokesperson Fauzia Siddiqui said that Sindh Home Minister Zia Lanjar called party MPAs Wajid Hussain and Sajjad Ali Soomro to inform them of the government's decision.

AJK PM Gilani pledges government support for Simari ecotourism project

AJK Prime Minister Iftikhar Gilani visited the Simari ecotourism project, praising its environmental protection model and pledging government support for sustainable tourism.

Staff Reporter

MUZAFFARABAD



Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Iftikhar Gilani has visited an ecotourism project in Simari Valley, describing it as a model worthy of emulation and announcing government support for similar initiatives.

Project focal person Asif Raza Mir briefed the prime minister on the initiative, explaining its objectives of protecting natural resources, creating employment opportunities and improving tourism facilities.

The briefing highlighted that the project was designed to promote tourism while preserving the area's natural environment and resources.

Work is underway to provide five-star facilities for tourists, while measures have been taken to protect forests and wildlife.

The prime minister was informed that investment in the project aims to utilise the area's tourism potential and generate employment for the local community. Under the plan, the infrastructure established through the project will be transferred to the local community after 12 years.

Congratulating the project organisers, Gilani said the government would extend full support to such initiatives and improve infrastructure to promote tourism.

He said the Simari road would be constructed and training opportunities would also be provided to local youth and children. He emphasised that tourism activities should reflect the region's culture and traditions.

Inspector General of Police Liaquat Ali Malik, Principal Secretary Adnan Khurshid, Dr Naeem, Arif Urfi, Naveed Anjum and other officials accompanied the prime minister during the visit.



Kuwait Naval Force commander calls on Pakistan Navy chief

Kuwait Naval Force Commander Major General Saif Abdulhadi Alhamlan met Pakistan Navy Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf in Islamabad to discuss maritime security and bilateral naval cooperation.

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Major General (Navy) Saif Abdulhadi Alhamlan, Commander Kuwait Naval Force, called on Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of the Naval Staff, at Naval Headquarters (NHQ) in Islamabad.

Upon arrival at NHQ, the visiting dignitary was presented Guard of Honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Navy.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional maritime security environment and avenues for strengthening bilateral naval cooperation were discussed.

The visit underscores the longstanding brotherly ties between Pakistan and Kuwait and shared commitment to regional maritime peace and stability.

Imprisoned PTI leaders call for national reconciliation

PTI leaders alleged the government was using unlawful measures to sideline the party and its founder, adding that Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would not weaken public support for him.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



Imprisoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders have called for a national reconciliation, respect for the Constitution and the rule of law, warning that political instability and economic challenges are deepening the country's crises, In a joint statement conveyed through their lawyer, Rana Mudassar Umar, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Dr Yasmin Rashid, Ijaz Chaudhry, Mian Mahmood-ur-Rashid and Umar Sarfraz Cheema criticized the government's policies and alleged that constitutional and democratic institutions were being undermined.

PTI leaders alleged the government was using unlawful measures to sideline the party and its founder, adding that Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would not weaken public support for him.The leaders also noted that the PTI's appeal against governor's rule was scheduled for hearing at the Peshawar High Court on November 10, and stated that the matter should have been taken up earlier.

The statement expressed concern over the 26th and 27th Constitutional Amendments, alleging that they had weakened the judiciary.

PTI leaders recalled Benazir Bhutto and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's sacrifices for democracy and criticized Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, saying his statements contradicted his family's political legacy.

They also raised allegations regarding police conduct and claimed that more than 3,000 people had been killed in encounters involving the Counter Crime Department (CCD) in Punjab.

The PTI leaders further pointed out media freedom and how it is being restricted through the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA).

The statement also highlighted rising inflation, poverty, hunger and declining human development, arguing that higher petrol, gas and electricity prices were adding to public hardships.

It further claimed that political uncertainty and economic difficulties were discouraging domestic and foreign investment.

Calling for a change in approach, the leaders urged the government to pursue dialogue with the opposition and introduce confidence building measures rather than attempting to eliminate political opponents.

They also explained that national unity and public confidence were essential to combating terrorism.

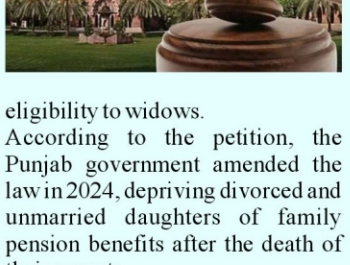
The leaders called for all stakeholders to be consulted in developing an effective counter terrorism strategy, including lasting progress required national reconciliation.

LHC strikes down family pension law, orders payments to eligible women

Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi Bench declared Punjab's amended family pension law unconstitutional and ordered payments to divorced widows and unmarried daughters previously denied benefits.

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



The Rawalpindi Bench of the Lahore High Court has declared a new family pension law null and void, ordering immediate payment of family pensions to divorced women and unmarried daughters who had been denied the benefit.

Justice Ahsan Raza Kazmi announced the reserved verdict, ruling that depriving widows, divorced women and unmarried daughters of family pensions violated Article 25 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law.

The new provincial law had restricted family pension eligibility to widows.

According to the petition, the Punjab government amended the law in 2024, depriving divorced and unmarried daughters of family pension benefits after the death of their parents.

The law was challenged by an affected woman, Ms Falak Shah, and Advocate Tanveer Sohail Shah.

The High Court ordered payment of family pensions to all women who had been deprived of the benefit under the amended law.

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