

Rana Ali Raza Appointed Special Public Prosecutor at Federal Prosecution Department

Special Reporter

ISLAMABAD



: Advocate High Court Rana Ali Raza has been appointed Special Public Prosecutor at the Pakistan Federal Prosecution Department in Islamabad, following a notification issued by the Ministry of Interior and the Federal Prosecution Department. According to

the details provided, Rana Ali Raza has around 10 years of professional experience in the legal field and is associated with the legal community of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. During his career, he has handled a range of complex and sensitive cases before district and sessions courts. The statement said he had successfully concluded several significant criminal trials at the district court level and had also developed experience in constitutional and criminal law matters before the High Court.



Sehberg School System Students Shine in National Spelling Competition 2026

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Sehberg School System Students Shine in National Spelling Competition 2026 Musawar Ahmed Bashir, a talented Grade 6 student of Sehberg School System, secured *2nd position in the National Spelling Competition 2026*, while Grade 5 student Najia Muzaffar also achieved a notable position in the competition. Principal Miss Nuzhat Sohail and Vice Principal Miss Barjees are presenting awards and certificates to the outstanding students in recognition of their achievements.

Musawar Ahmed Bashir and Najia Muzaffar are the children of Muzaffar Bhatti, Senior Journalist and Chief Reporter at Daily The Spokesman. Their achievements are a source of pride for their family and school.



Punjab Police Executive Board Reviews Residential Facilities, Investigation Reforms

CRIME REPORTER

LAHORE

Inspector General of Police Punjab Abdul Kareem chaired a meeting of the Police Executive Board at the Central Police Office. Additional Inspectors General, heads of all departments and field units, Deputy Inspectors General, Assistant Inspectors General and other senior officers attended the meeting, while the Additional IG South Punjab and other officers participated through video link. The meeting discussed measures to expand residential facilities for police officers and personnel. Various proposals were also considered to further improve investigations into cases of violence against women, rape and exploitation. In addition, the deputation policy, Leave Preparatory to Retirement (LPR), training and other administrative and policy matters were discussed.

Religious Leaders Call for Muslim Unity, Reaffirm Commitment to Pakistan's Ideological Foundations

■ At 15th International Izzat-e-Rasool-o-Batool Conference, scholars urge unity under the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), call for justice on Palestine and Kashmir, and adopt a joint declaration on religious beliefs and practices.

News Desk

LAHORE

: Religious scholars and spiritual leaders have called for unity among the Muslim Ummah, saying that collective efforts based on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are essential to confronting contemporary global challenges. They said Pakistan was founded through the efforts and sacrifices of the country's religious and national leaders, and that their successors were the rightful custodians of its ideological heritage. The scholars expressed these views while addressing the 15th Annual International Izzat-e-Rasool-o-Batool Conference organised by Markazi Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat. More than 200 heads of religious seminaries and senior Muftis attended the conference, held under the patronage of the organisation's Secretary General and Islamic preacher Pir Syed Irfan Mashhadi. The event was chaired by Markazi Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat Pakistan chief Pir Abdul Khaliq Qadri. Prominent participants included Sahibzada Dewan Ahmed Masood



Chishti Farooqi, Syed Ghulam Nizamuddin Jami of Golra Sharif, Pir Israr-ul-Haq Chishti Nizami, Allama Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah Qadri, Pir Syed Habib Irfani, Pir Hassan Haseeb-ur-Rehman, Pir Ehsan Danish Qadri, Syed Zameer-ul-Hassan, Syed Sarwar Hussain Mousavi, Syed Shabeeh-ul-Hassan Mashhadi and Sahibzada Suleman Qamar Mahni. A large number of members of the Ahl-e-Sunnat community from all four provinces also attended. Addressing the gathering, Pir Syed Irfan Mashhadi said the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provided a common framework for the Muslim

Ummah. He said distancing themselves from these teachings had weakened Muslim societies and left them vulnerable to external powers, while prioritising personal interests over collective welfare had further aggravated their difficulties. He said unity was indispensable for safeguarding Pakistan's security, dignity and national interests. He also praised the Pakistan Army's efforts against militant groups, describing the sacrifices of the country's soldiers as commendable, and paid tribute to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the homeland. The conference called upon the United Nations to abandon

what the participants described as a double standard regarding Muslim holy sites and to ensure implementation of its resolutions on Palestine and Kashmir. The speakers also called for an end to what they described as discriminatory treatment of Sunni scholars and preachers by the Punjab Auqaf Department, urging the authorities to stop allegedly harassing religious scholars without justification. Pir Mashhadi said any amendment to the country's blasphemy laws would not be acceptable to his organisation, while stressing that their misuse was also condemnable. He reiterated the organisation's position regarding the constitutional status of the Ahmadi community in Pakistan. He said Sunni scholars and religious leaders had played a significant role in supporting Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Pakistan Movement. He added that the responsibility of preserving the religious and ideological legacy of the country's founding generation had been entrusted to them by Shah Ahmad Noorani. At the conclusion of the conference, participants adopted a joint declaration outlining their religious beliefs and positions on matters concerning the Prophet's family.

DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem Holds Open Court, Orders Prompt Resolution of Citizens' Complaints

■ Citizens' Issues Must Be Resolved Promptly and on Merit, Says DIG Islamabad; Citizens Can Present Complaints Directly Without Any Recommendation or Reference

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waseem held an open court at his office, where a large number of citizens participated and presented their complaints, concerns, and grievances. During the open court, DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem listened to the citizens' complaints in detail and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for their prompt and effective resolution. He instructed the officers to examine the complaints carefully and ensure that appropriate action was taken in accordance with the law and on



merit. DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem said that the timely resolution of citizens' problems and the provision of justice on merit were among the top priorities of Islamabad Police. He emphasized that public complaints must be taken seriously and addressed through effective measures to provide relief to citizens.

He further stated that citizens could directly attend the open court and present their complaints without requiring any recommendation or reference. The initiative aims to facilitate direct communication between the public and senior police officials, allowing citizens to bring their issues to the attention of the relevant authorities.

According to the details, an open court is held daily at the DIG Office to facilitate citizens and ensure the timely resolution of their grievances. Through this initiative, Islamabad Police provides citizens with an opportunity to present their concerns directly to senior officers and seek assistance regarding their issues.

IGP Islamabad Reviews Development Projects, Directs Upgrades to Police Infrastructure

■ Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry stresses timely completion of ongoing projects, effective resource utilization and improved facilities for police personnel.



News Desk

ISLAMABAD

IGP Islamabad Reviews Ongoing Development Projects; Directs Improvement of Police Infrastructure and Facilities. According to the details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry held a meeting with DIG Headquarters

Muhammad Jawad Tariq and the Assistant Director (AD) Development to review ongoing development projects, improvements in police infrastructure, progress on construction work and the provision of better facilities for police officers and officials. During the meeting, progress on various development projects and matters related to infrastructure improvement were discussed. The meeting also focused on the effective utilization of available resources and the provision of improved facilities to police officers and officials. IGP Islamabad emphasized the importance of strengthening police infrastructure in line with modern requirements and ensuring the timely and effective completion of ongoing development projects. He stated that efforts would continue to improve working conditions and provide better facilities to police officers and officials to support the effective performance of their duties.



Islamabad Police Intensifies Anti-Crime Measures to Strengthen Public Safety

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Islamabad Police Intensifies Anti-Crime Measures, SPs Direct Officers to Strengthen Policing and Public Safety. According to details, Separate Crime meetings were held under the Supervision of SP City Zone, SP Saddar Zone, SP Industrial Area Zone and SP Swan Zone, with the participation of all SDPOs and SHOs. During the meetings, the officers conducted a comprehensive review of the prevailing crime situation, crime prevention measures, ongoing operations against criminal elements and the overall law and order situation in their respective jurisdictions. The officers were directed to adopt effective and result-oriented strategies to prevent crime, take indiscriminate action against criminal elements and ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property. They were further instructed to strengthen police patrolling, enhance preventive policing, respond promptly to citizens' complaints and utilize all available resources to maintain law and order. The officers were also directed to improve coordination, remain vigilant in their respective areas and ensure effective implementation of crime prevention measures. Negligence or dereliction of duty will not be tolerated, and all officers must perform their responsibilities with dedication and professionalism. Islamabad Police remains committed to preventing crime, maintaining law and order and ensuring a safe and secure environment for all citizens.

NCCIA Launches Nationwide Cyber Awareness Campaign

■ Awareness sessions held in nine cities to promote safe internet use and prevent online fraud

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has launched a nationwide cyber awareness campaign on the directives of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to educate citizens about cybercrime prevention and promote responsible digital practices. According to an NCCIA spokesperson, awareness sessions are being conducted across the country under the supervision of Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi. The sessions have been organised in Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Gilgit, Sahiwal, Abbottabad and Karachi. In Abbottabad, a cyber awareness walk was organised at the Press Club, attracting journalists, students and members of civil society. Special



awareness sessions were also held for students at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Abbottabad, and the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi. Participants were briefed on safe internet browsing, responsible use of social media and preventive measures against online fraud. The initiative aims to enhance public understanding of cyber threats and encourage citizens to adopt secure online practices. "Creating awareness among all segments of society for a safe digital Pakistan is our mission," DG Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said. He urged citizens to report cybercrime incidents to the NCCIA through its helpline 1799 or by visiting their nearest NCCIA circle for assistance and further action.



NCCIA Holds Cyber Awareness Session at NES Schools Islamabad

■ Students urged to adopt safe online practices and report cybercrime on helpline 1799



STAFF REPORTER

Islamabad

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) organized a cyber awareness session at NES Schools Islamabad as part of its nationwide campaign to promote digital safety among young people. The campaign is being conducted on the directions

of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi and under the supervision of NCCIA Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi. During the session, Sub-Inspector Mehboob Elahi briefed students and teachers on various cyber threats, including online financial fraud, cyber harassment, cyberbullying, phishing, fake profiles, identity theft and misuse of social media. Participants were

advised to avoid suspicious links, use strong and unique passwords, enable two-factor authentication and refrain from sharing personal information and photographs with strangers. They were also urged to report suspicious online activities, harassment and fraud to the NCCIA helpline 1799. DG Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi emphasized that digital literacy among young people is essential for a secure digital

Pakistan. He said the agency remains committed to protecting citizens, particularly youth, from cybercrime and will continue awareness initiatives in educational institutions. The school administration and students appreciated the NCCIA's efforts to promote digital awareness and ensure a safer online environment for young people.

Three-Day Religious Gathering and Urs to Begin in Peshawar on Friday

Special Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The 63rd Annual Reformative, Spiritual and Religious Gathering and Urs, organised by Bazm Khairia International Pakistan, will commence on Friday, October 30, at Darbar Alia Murshidabad Sharif, Kohat Road, Peshawar, and continue until November 1. The event will be held under the spiritual guidance of Khawaja Abul Khair Pir Muhammad Abdullah Jan, with Abu-ul-Masoom Pir Muhammad Fakhr Alam Jan presiding and Khawaja Abul Jamal Sheikh Pir Muhammad Badr Alam Jan serving as patron and supervisor. The programme will begin after Maghrib prayers

on Friday with a gathering featuring Quranic recitation and Naat recitals. The main congregation will be held after Isha prayers on Saturday, with prominent religious figures, social and political personalities, and renowned Naat reciters expected to participate. Special transport arrangements have been made for devotees travelling from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Buses will depart on Saturday, October 31, from designated locations, including G-7/2 Sitara Market, Islamabad, and other points in Rawalpindi. Devotees from other cities are also expected to attend. Note: The organisers have mentioned November 3 for the concluding prayer in the original announcement.

Shaza Fatima warns of rising cyber threats

■ The minister stresses the importance of securing Pakistan's digital borders after last May's conflict with India

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja has warned that digitalisation and the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) are increasing cyber threats, stressing the need to strengthen digital security and raise public awareness.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of Cyber Security Week on Thursday, the minister revealed that an attempt had been made to defraud her father through a fake phone call, saying hackers had access to extensive information about her family.

She cautioned that sharing photographs of families and homes on social media leaves digital footprints that can be exploited by



people with malicious intentions. She also warned that phone hacking could expose personal information, stressing that digital life required security measures just as physical life did. Khawaja said protecting Pakistan's digital borders had also become increasingly important. Referring to last year's conflict with India, she said Pakistan had faced cyber warfare alongside a physical confrontation and claimed that Pakistani forces had defeated India during Marka-e-Haq.

The minister also highlighted the risks children face online, including cyberbullying, noting that even young children were increasingly active on social media and in the metaverse. She stressed the need for parents to remain aware of whom their children communicate with online.

She congratulated the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and industry stakeholders on their efforts during Cyber Security Week, emphasising that cybersecurity awareness was essential across all sections of society.

Khawaja said national and provincial cybersecurity emergency response teams were ready to respond to threats, while incident-reporting mechanisms needed improvement. She said the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) had been activated under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), adding that a social media regulatory authority would become operational soon.



Abducted judge recovered in Rawalakot operation, two injured

NEWS DESK

MUZAFFARABAD

Police have recovered Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Akram after he was abducted in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), while two people, including a police official, were injured during a subsequent operation. According to police, workers of

the banned Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee had abducted the judge.

A Rawalakot police official said the judge was recovered during an operation carried out between Wednesday and Thursday night. Police said Judge Muhammad Akram was travelling from Rawalakot to Muzaffarabad via Palandri when armed men allegedly intercepted his vehicle and abducted him at gunpoint.

LHC strikes down decision to end family pensions For daughters

■ The court ordered the provincial government to restore pensions to all affected women, ruling that depriving them of the benefit was contrary to the Constitution.



STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi Bench has declared unconstitutional and struck down the Punjab government's decision to discontinue family pensions for widowed, divorced and unmarried daughters after the death of their government-employed parents.

The court ordered the provincial government to restore pensions to all affected women, ruling that depriving them of the benefit was contrary to the Constitution.

Justice Ahsan Raza Kazmi

announced the verdict in a petition filed by Falak Shah, an affected woman, and Tanveer Sohail Shah, a former president of the Rawalpindi District Bar Association. The court rejected the arguments presented by the Punjab Finance Department and the assistant advocate general.

The dispute stemmed from a 2024 notification restricting family pension eligibility to widows, leaving divorced, unmarried and widowed daughters without pensions across 42 provincial government departments.

The petitioners argued that the restriction violated Article 25 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law. The court accepted their challenge and ordered the restoration of pensions to affected women across Punjab. The ruling has raised hopes among women awaiting their pensions, although implementation of the court's order remains to be seen.

Romania Seeks Stronger Cooperation with Pakistan in IT, AI, Agriculture



City Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Romanian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Dan Stoenescu has emphasized the need to strengthen bilateral cooperation in information technology, artificial intelligence, agriculture, education, trade and defence, saying significant opportunities exist to expand economic ties between the two countries. Addressing the Meet the Press programme at the National Press Club (NPC) Islamabad, he said Pakistan and Romania had enjoyed friendly relations for more than six decades and should

transform their longstanding friendship into practical economic and educational partnerships. The ambassador said bilateral trade currently stood at approximately \$156 million, leaving considerable room for growth. He highlighted opportunities in IT, renewable energy, industrial development and agriculture, noting that Romania's EU membership could help Pakistani businesses access European markets. He also highlighted recent cooperation between Karachi Port Trust and the Port of Constanta, as well as business and IT forums aimed at promoting trade, investment and joint ventures. Dr. Stoenescu said both countries could further strengthen defence cooperation, academic exchanges, scientific research and cultural relations. He also emphasized collaboration in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital transformation and sustainable agriculture.

MWAP Honours Dr Naeem Zafar with Champion of Child Rights Award in Lahore

■ The award was presented at a seminar held at Nishat Hotel, Lahore, acknowledging Dr Zafar's more than 25 years of work in strengthening child protection systems and improving access to essential healthcare services.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Medical Women's Association of Pakistan (MWAP) has honoured Dr Naeem Zafar with the Champion of Child Rights Award in recognition of his longstanding contributions to child protection, community paediatrics, and maternal and child health, particularly among vulnerable and underserved communities.

The award was presented at a seminar held at Nishat Hotel, Lahore, acknowledging Dr Zafar's more than 25 years of work in strengthening child protection systems and improving access to essential healthcare services.

Dr Zafar is President of PAHCHAAN, Convener of the Pakistan Paediatric Association's Child Rights Group, Chairman of the Board of the Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood, and a board member of several national and international organisations



working for children's welfare and social paediatrics.

In 2009, he initiated a hospital-based Child Protection Unit at the Children's Hospital, Lahore, pioneering an integrated approach to addressing child abuse through healthcare, social welfare and justice services. He subsequently helped establish child protection networks across 20 districts in Punjab, Islamabad and Khyber

underserved communities.

Dr Zafar has also led mental health and psychosocial support initiatives benefiting more than 40,000 children and families affected by COVID-19, floods and the Jaranwala incident involving religious minorities. His research, publications and advocacy have further contributed to addressing child abuse, including online sexual exploitation.

Pakistan Awami Quwwat Party to Promote Honest and Educated Candidates in Islamabad

■ Chairman Khakan Waheed Khawaja Announces Opportunities for Public-Service-Oriented Councillors in NA-48, NA-47 and NA-46; New Office-Bearers Appointed.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

) Chairman of the Pakistan Awami Quwwat Party, Khakan Waheed Khawaja, has said that the party will provide opportunities to honest, educated and public-service-oriented councillors in all union councils falling under NA-48, NA-47 and NA-46. He was addressing a ceremony where Muhammad Rizwan Khan was appointed president of the party for Islamabad's NA-48 constituency, while Amir Hamza was appointed coordinator for Model Town Union Council. Notification letters were presented to the newly appointed office-bearers. On the occasion, several social and political leaders joined the Pakistan Awami Quwwat Party. The party chairman welcomed the new members by presenting them with party flags. Addressing the gathering, Khakan Waheed Khawaja said that his party had embarked on a mission of public service and had remained in close contact with the people for the past four years despite not being in power. He said that seasonal political leaders



usually become active during election campaigns, whereas his party had maintained contact with the public since immediately after the last elections. He added that party workers were holding corner meetings and striving to resolve people's problems at their doorsteps. He said these sustained efforts were encouraging

more people to join the party. The newly joined leaders said they had been inspired by the party's manifesto, political narrative and public-service initiatives undertaken without being in power. They expressed their commitment to working alongside the party leadership and voiced confidence that the party would achieve success in its mission.

Clashes resume in southern Yemen's Taiz

■ Houthi ballistic missile targeting eastern Saudi Arabia intercepted: Coalition



Web DESK

Yemen

Clashes have resumed between Yemeni government forces and the Houthi group on several fronts south of Taiz, The channel said fighting had resumed on the Al-Aqroudh and Al-Masrahk

fronts, as well as in Al-Rahn village in the Sabir al-Mawadim district. In a related development, Aden International Airport resumed flights. The airport and nearby areas were targeted by missile attacks following Houthi threats to strike the facility. On Wednesday, a missile landed at Al-Nasr Camp, adjacent to the airport, where Yemeni Coast Guard forces and Interior Ministry headquarters are located, eyewitnesses told Anadolu. Houthi ballistic missile targeting eastern Saudi Arabia intercepted: Coalition Saudi air defences intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi group toward the kingdom's Eastern Province early on Thursday, the Saudi-led coalition said.



Saudi Ambassador Dr. Rajeh Tami Albugamy calls on Federal Minister Dr. Musadik Masood Malik.

South Korean special counsel seeks death penalty for ex-President Yoon over marital law declaration

■ Lower court sentenced Yoon in February to life imprisonment for attempting to impose martial law in 2024

Web Desk

South Korea

A special counsel team on Thursday again sought the death penalty for former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol in his appeal trial on insurrection charges stemming from his failed attempt to impose martial law, local media reported. The team, led by Special Counsel Cho Eun-suk, requested the sentence at the Seoul High Court, where Yoon is appealing his life imprisonment sentence, Yoon was sentenced to life imprisonment in February for leading an insurrection through his failed martial law bid in December 2024, which lasted only a few hours before it was successfully blocked and overturned by the National



Assembly. Prosecutors first sought the death penalty in January of this year. Yoon faces a total of eight trials in

connection with his martial law attempt, his wife's alleged corruption and the 2023 death of a marine officer. He was formally removed from

office in April 2025 after the Constitutional Court unanimously upheld his impeachment over his December 3, 2024 martial law declaration, triggering a snap presidential election. Yoon apologised in February for his short-lived declaration of martial law in December 2024, a day after a Seoul court sentenced him to life in prison for masterminding an insurrection. In a statement released by his lawyers, Yoon said that while he was sorry for the "frustration and hardship" brought upon the people by his martial law decree, he stood behind the "sincerity and purpose" behind his actions. The Seoul Central District Court's decision to hand him a life sentence on Thursday was "predetermined," he said, adding that the verdict against him was political retaliation.

North Korea fires 'around a dozen' ballistic missiles into East Sea

● North Korea has tested a slew of weapons recently, including a new precision-guided torpedo system and an intermediate-range hypersonic missile, both of which were said to employ AI technology.

Web Desk

North Korea

North Korea fired "around a dozen" short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast on Thursday, Seoul's defence ministry said, less than a week after South Korea proposed talks over a growing border row. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said its military detected "around a dozen short-range ballistic missiles fired from the Wonsan area of North Korea towards the East Sea", the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan. "Our military has stepped up surveillance and vigilance



against possible additional launches," it added in its statement.

The Japan Coast Guard separately said that "an object that appears to be a ballistic

missile launched from North Korea seems to have already fallen", urging ships to be vigilant. North Korea has tested a slew of weapons recently, including a new precision-guided torpedo system and an intermediate-range hypersonic missile, both of which were said to employ AI technology. Thursday's flurry of missiles comes against the backdrop of growing tensions over a landmine explosion along the heavily fortified border between the two Koreas that saw three South Korean soldiers wounded. A joint Seoul-UN investigation earlier this month concluded that North Korea planted the landmines over a year ago.

US fires top army general in latest ouster

■ No reason was given for Sylvia's departure and no replacement has been named, The Atlantic said.

Web Desk

WASHINGTON

The United States has fired its top military planner, The Atlantic reported Wednesday, in a surprise shake-up as President Donald Trump appears to be preparing to resume large-scale strikes against Iran. Army Lieutenant General Brett Sylvia was removed this week from his role as head of strategy, plans and policy on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the magazine reported, citing unidentified defense department officials. Sylvia's ouster would be the latest in a series of high-profile departures from the military since Trump returned to power a year ago. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth said last month that the United States has slashed the number of its generals and admirals by 20 percent, in a move he said is aimed at "accountability."



He suggested the cuts targeted officers who failed to get on board with his efforts to ensure the military is focused on war-fighting rather than the "woke" policies of previous administrations, describing the reductions as an "accomplishment." No reason was given for Sylvia's departure and no replacement has been named, The Atlantic said. AFP has contacted the Pentagon for comment. The reported sacking comes as Trump is widely considered to be weighing fresh strikes against Iran after the US midterm elections on November 3.

Next round of Ukraine talks depends on Middle East, other factors, Kremlin aide says

Web Desk

MOSCOW

The timing of the next round of three-way talks on a settlement of the Ukraine conflict is linked to the conflict in the Middle East, Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov was quoted as saying, casting doubt on whether the talks will take place next month as initially proposed. Ushakov, quoted by Russian news agencies, said Moscow had not yet proposed a specific date for the talks. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Wednesday he hoped that a meeting would take place in Abu Dhabi



between November 6 and November 10. "It will also depend on the situation on the battlefield and the situation in general. You can see the situation now in the Middle East. It just doesn't allow us to hold it in the near future. That's my assumption," Ushakov told journalists, referring to the regional fallout from the US-Israeli war on Iran.

Vance outreach to Iran related to medical supplies, says Trump

Web Desk

WASHINGTON



US President Donald Trump said that Vice President JD Vance's outreach to Iran was about helping the country get medical supplies, after US media reported Vance had written to Tehran's top security official to revive peace talks.

Tehran has received a letter from Vance but it has not responded to it yet, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on Thursday.

Vance sent the letter to Iranian Security Council chief Mohsen Rezaei in a bid to revive peace negotiations, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times reported on Wednesday, citing US officials and people familiar with the matter. Reuters could not immediately verify the reports. The Wall Street Journal reported that Vance sent the letter at Trump's direction. When asked by reporters later on Wednesday if he directed Vance to reach out to Iran to restart peace negotiations, Trump said: "No."

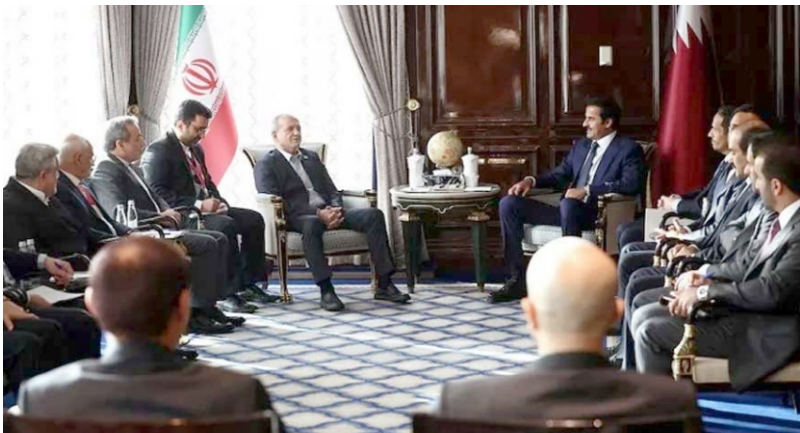
Qatar presents Iran with new draft deal to end ME war, Tehran calls ideas unacceptable

■ Qatar, along with Pakistan, has led mediation to end the war, which has disrupted global shipping and oil supplies and recently spread to Saudi Arabia and Yemen

Web Desk

TEHRAN

Qatari mediators have presented Iran with a new draft deal to end the war with the US and Israel, an official briefed on the negotiations said, but a senior Iranian official said Doha had only put forward unacceptable ideas that did not amount to an offer. The official briefed on the negotiations, who is not from Iran, said a new draft peace proposal for the eight-month-old conflict was presented on Sunday and was being considered by Tehran, with a response expected by the end of the week. Qatar, along with Pakistan, has led mediation to end the war, which has disrupted global shipping and oil supplies and recently spread to Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The proposal presented by Qatar sets a seven-day timeline addressing both Tehran's and Washington's concerns,



laying out daily confidence-building steps that each side must take, the official briefed on the negotiations said. The timeline could begin early next week and several countries would act as guarantors of the deal, the official added. Shortly afterwards, a senior Iranian official involved in the talks said Qatar had presented only "unacceptable ideas

and not an offer", and that Tehran's policy on showing no flexibility over the nuclear issue remained unchanged. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Wednesday that Tehran remained in close contact with intermediaries to review ideas that could ensure the implementation of its own seven-day proposal aimed at ending the war in the Middle East.

He said Iran continued to give diplomacy a chance to succeed, adding that Tehran's seven-day plan could be implemented in less than a week. Washington wants Iran's decades-long nuclear programme to be part of negotiations to end the war from the outset, while Iran says its conditions — which include an end to the US blockade of Iranian ports and the lifting of sanctions on Iranian oil exports — must be met first. Iran rejects Western concerns that its nuclear programme is military in nature. In late September, Iran presented its seven-day proposal under which Araqchi said the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy shipping channels, could be reopened if certain conditions were met. US President Donald Trump rejected it, prompting further Qatari mediation. The draft discussed in Tehran on Sunday was different from that proposal, the official briefed on the negotiations said, though the details of the latest plan were not immediately clear.

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Pakistan brings regional rivals together

Within days of the US and Israeli strikes on Iran in late February, officials from key Muslim countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, were already scrambling to assess the potential fallout.

As the bombing continued and it became increasingly clear

with the Iranian leadership.

The gathering brought together the three members of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement and Iran at a time when the region remains on edge. The pact, signed in August by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye, provides that an armed attack on one member would be treated as an attack on



that neither Iran's regime nor its core security structures were going to collapse, the focus among regional powers shifted to what could come next. The fear was simple: a wider regional conflagration that could engulf countries far beyond the immediate battlefield.

It was against this backdrop that the idea of Muslim countries joining hands to protect their collective interests began to take shape.

"In the current situation, we... Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye... will have to work together," a senior diplomat had told The Express Tribune several months ago, when discussions about what eventually became the Makkah defence arrangement were still in their infancy.

The diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, had also predicted that Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye would eventually have to speak to Iran together.

That prediction materialised on Monday when Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman and Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin travelled to Tehran for an unprecedented meeting

all.

But the significance of the Tehran meeting went beyond the formal defence arrangement.

Diplomatic sources familiar with the discussions described the atmosphere as "very cordial and positive", saying Pakistan had played a key role in bringing the Makkah defence partners and Iran to the same table.

"This would not have been possible without Pakistan's effort," one source said.

While details of the discussions were kept closely guarded, the talks were described as having gone "very well". The decision to continue dialogue in the same format was seen as an important development, particularly given the competing interests of the four countries.

The Saudi decision to send its defence minister to Tehran was considered particularly significant. For Riyadh, the timing could hardly be more sensitive. The kingdom is facing growing security concerns linked to Yemen, where Houthi attacks have intensified. The issue has become one of the major concerns for Saudi Arabia and was expected to figure prominently in the discussions with Tehran.

Iran, meanwhile, has consistently argued for a regional security mechanism that does not depend on outside powers.

JUI-F sought governor's rule In KP, Mohsin Naqvi tells PTI senators In heated session

religion for political and personal benefit. "They have used Islam for politics, they have used Islam for business," he said, alleging that they invoked religion whenever it served their personal interests. The interior minister further accused JUI-F leaders of benefiting from the state when it suited them and turning against it when they were denied a share in power.

"For them, the state is a mother until the day they can squeeze the state," Naqvi

said, adding that they considered the state good as long as they received benefits from it. "When they do not get a share in the government, then [they] spit on the state," he added. Naqvi warned that such remarks would not go unanswered, saying a "line" had been crossed repeatedly.

"If they do it, they will get an answer," the interior minister said as JUI-F members continued protesting his speech.

Education for All: Scholarships, Merit and HEC's Role in Shaping Pakistan's Future



By: Syed Mujtaba Rizwan

The true measure of a nation's progress is not merely the strength of its economy, the size of its infrastructure or the abundance of its natural resources. It is the extent to which it enables its people—particularly its young generation—to realize their potential. For Pakistan, this principle carries exceptional importance. With a large and growing youth population, the country possesses an enormous reservoir of talent. Yet for thousands of capable students, the dream of higher education remains beyond reach simply because their families cannot afford the increasing cost of university education. This is where merit- and need-based scholarships become far more than financial assistance. They represent an investment in human potential, an instrument of social mobility and, ultimately, a means of breaking the cycle of poverty.

The recently concluded two-day Stakeholder Feedback and Learning Session of the US-supported Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Programme provided an important opportunity to reflect on this journey. Vice Chancellors and representatives of 30 partner universities shared their experiences, achievements, challenges and recommendations. More importantly, the session reaffirmed the commitment to sustain financial assistance for deserving students and to build upon the lessons learned through the programme.

The scale of the initiative demonstrates its significance. According to the programme's latest figures, an investment of \$33.1 million has supported 6,675 fully funded scholarships. In addition, career workshops have been organized for 5,000 students, while 1,500 university administrators have received professional training. These figures underline an important reality: a successful scholarship programme is not simply about paying a student's university fees. It is about creating an environment in which talented young people can complete their education,



develop professional skills and prepare themselves for meaningful careers.

The Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Programme has sought to combine two principles that should remain at the heart of Pakistan's higher education policy: merit and financial need. Academic ability alone should not be rendered meaningless by poverty, while financial hardship should not become an automatic substitute for merit. The objective should be to identify capable students who have the determination and academic potential to succeed but lack the financial resources required to pursue higher education.

According to information provided by the Higher Education Commission, the USAID-funded Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Programme began supporting Pakistani students in 2004. During its initial phase, 1,807 scholarships were awarded at 11 universities, with an investment of \$10.63 million. A second phase was launched in 2013, expanding the programme to 30 partner universities and providing broader opportunities, including significant participation by women.

The programme's importance also lies in its geographical and academic reach. Universities from different parts of Pakistan were included, while special attention was given to women's education. Scholarships supported students in fields ranging from agriculture and business to engineering, technology, medicine, nursing and the social sciences. This broad academic coverage recognized that Pakistan's development requires talent across virtually every sector of the economy and society.

The initiative also demonstrated that financial assistance should be accompanied by professional development. Career workshops for thousands of students and capacity-building

for university administrators were valuable components of the programme. A university degree is increasingly only the beginning of a young person's professional journey. Students also need career guidance, exposure to employment opportunities, communication skills, professional networks and an understanding of the changing requirements of the labour market.

This is precisely why the role of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission is so important.

Over the years, HEC has developed and supported a range of scholarship programmes designed to expand access to higher education for talented students, including those facing financial difficulties. Its own Need-Based Scholarship Programme represents an important component of this effort. According to HEC, the programme was launched to enable academically capable students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue higher education. By April 2026, 46,824 students had benefited from the programme, while 3,946 scholarships were awarded during the academic year 2024-25.

These figures provide a strong indication of the scale of HEC's efforts to make higher education more accessible. The underlying principle is straightforward: a student should not be denied the opportunity to study simply because his or her family lacks the financial means to meet university expenses.

Under HEC's Need-Based Scholarship Programme, selected students receive financial support towards tuition fees as well as a monthly stipend, subject to the applicable programme conditions.

Asset Declarations Missing, ECP Suspends 18 Lawmakers



By: Amjad Rana

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has taken action to suspend the membership of 11 National Assembly members (MNAs) and 7 members of the Sindh Assembly for failing to submit their asset declarations as required by law. Among the suspended MNAs are Khurram Dastagir, Mohsin Nawaz Ranjha, Ishaq Khan, and Muhammad Ali. Similarly, Sindh Assembly members Adeel Ahmed, Hizbullah, and Arslan Taj have faced suspension for the same reason. The ECP's directive is based on Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017, which mandates all Members of Parliament and Provincial Assemblies to submit annual Statements of Assets and Liabilities by December 31,

including details of their spouses and dependent children. The suspension will remain in effect until these members provide the required asset details. The suspension of members of the National and Provincial Assemblies by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for failing to submit asset declarations can lead to several consequences. Suspended members lose their ability to attend and vote in the National Assembly or Provincial Assembly sessions. This can weaken the political representation of their constituencies and their ability to influence legislation or policy discussions. As long as the suspension is in place, members may lose their salary, allowances, and other privileges that come with their office, including travel allowances and official housing. Prominent figures like Khurram Dastagir and Mohsin Nawaz Ranjha, among others, may lose political influence if they remain suspended for an extended period. This can also affect their standing within their parties or

among constituents. Failure to submit asset declarations could raise questions about transparency and accountability, potentially damaging the public image of the suspended members. If the members fail to submit the required details even after suspension, there is a possibility that they could face further legal consequences, including disqualification from holding office, under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017. If a significant number of members from the same political party are suspended, it can reduce the party's strength in the assemblies, potentially impacting legislative votes and coalition dynamics. In summary, the suspension has both immediate practical effects and long-term political consequences if the members do not comply with the ECP's requirements. To resolve the issue of suspended memberships due to the failure to submit asset declarations, several steps can be taken by the members, political parties, and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Suspended members should immediately submit their Statements of Assets and Liabilities, including those of

their spouses and dependent children. This is the quickest way to have their suspension lifted and resume parliamentary duties. Members should ensure that all financial information is accurately reported, including property, bank accounts, investments, and other assets. Parties can establish internal committees or processes to monitor compliance with legal obligations, such as asset declarations, to ensure members submit their details in time. Regular workshops or reminders can be provided to members about their legal responsibilities, particularly around submission deadlines. The ECP can improve its online submission system by offering user-friendly, digital portals for asset declaration submission. This will make it easier for members to file their documents on time without administrative delays.

The ECP can implement an automated notification system that reminds members to submit their declarations well before the deadline. The ECP can conduct awareness campaigns to emphasize the importance of asset declarations for transparency and good governance.

PM Health Insurance Scheme for Journalists and Media Workers to Be Launched Soon: Ashfaq Ahmed Khalil

deserved recognition for their services and that the government was committed to improving their working conditions. He added that his doors remained open to journalists and media workers and called for joint efforts to promote the media industry. Principal Information Officer Raeesa Adil said the professional contributions of journalists and media workers were highly valuable. She emphasized continued coordination between media organizations and relevant institutions to address their problems and safeguard their legitimate rights. APNEC Chairman Muhammad Siddiq Anzar said protecting the rights and welfare of journalists and media workers was a fundamental responsibility of media organizations. He called for unity among journalistic bodies and stronger cooperation to address workers' challenges and improve their working environment. Media Workers Organization President Kaleem Shamim highlighted the importance of economic security,

professional development and protection of workers' rights for the stability of media institutions. APNEC Gilgit-Baltistan Chapter Chairperson Mahwish Mumtaz Baig thanked the participants and reaffirmed the organization's commitment to protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of journalists and media workers in the region. National Press Club President Abdul Razzaq Sial, Secretary Dr Furqan Rao, senior journalists Tariq Usmani and Dr Saadia Kamal, Fourth Pillar President Farooq Mirza, Qurban Satti, Muhammad Fayyaz Chaudhry, Farhat Fatima, Imran Akbar and Raja Javed also addressed the ceremony. The speakers congratulated the newly elected office-bearers and expressed hope that they would work actively to strengthen the organization, promote unity within the media community and ensure the welfare of journalists and media workers.



Syed Shakeel Shah, Member (C-Ops), Pakistan Customs, and Li Qingua, Deputy Head of Urumqi Customs and Director of Tashkurgan Customs, Sign Green Channel Agreement for Sost-Khunjerab Border between Pakistan and China, ceremony held online at FBR, Islamabad.

PSX stays bullish, gains over 1,456 points

■ The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish momentum on Thursday, gaining 1,456.68 points

Special Correspondent
ISLAMABAD



The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish momentum on Thursday, gaining 1,456.68 points, a positive change of 0.88 percent, to close at 167,193.44 points against 165,736.76 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 816.834 million shares, compared to 578.124 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs 31.541 billion from Rs 26.203 billion. Market capitalisation increased to Rs

18.492 trillion from Rs 18.329 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 499 companies that traded in the ready market, 232 posted gains, 232 suffered losses, while 35 remained unchanged. Cnergyico PK led the volume chart with 184,011 million shares, followed by Pervez Ahmed Co with 81.146 million

shares and K-Electric Ltd. with 46.827 million shares. Among the top gainers, PIA Holding Company LimitedB surged by Rs 398.50 to close at Rs 13,950.00, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited advanced by Rs 150.98 to settle at Rs 25,851.20. On the losing side, Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited declined by Rs 113.39 to close at Rs 1,020.47, while J.K. Spinning Mills Limited fell by Rs 44.55 to Rs 427.55. In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 520.614 million shares with a traded value of Rs 23.050 billion, compared with 422.813 million shares worth Rs 17.391 billion in the previous session. Of 313 companies traded in the DFC market, 167 advanced, 138 declined and 8 remained unchanged.

Pakistan, China sign agreement to operationalize green channel at sost-khunjerab border for agricultural

■ The Chinese delegation was headed by Ms. Li Qingua, Deputy Head of Urumqi Customs and Director of Tashkurgan Customs.

Staff Reporter
ISLAMABAD



An online signing ceremony for the operationalization of the Green Channel at the Sost-Khunjerab Border for agricultural and allied products was held today at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Headquarters, Islamabad, between the customs administrations of Pakistan and China, marking an important step towards facilitating bilateral trade between the two countries. The Pakistani delegation was headed by Syed Shakeel Shah, Member (C-Ops), and comprised the Chief Collector of Customs, Peshawar, Collector of Customs, Gilgit-Baltistan; representatives of the Department of Plant Protection, NAFA, Pakistan Single Window (PSW), and the Ministry of Commerce; and the Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Pakistan in China, said a release issued here on Thursday. The Chinese delegation was headed by Ms. Li Qingua, Deputy Head of Urumqi Customs and Director of Tashkurgan Customs. The agreement aims to establish a Green Channel for trade in an agreed list of agricultural products between the two countries. Under the arrangement, the customs administrations of Pakistan and China will facilitate the movement of eligible consignments through priority

processing and examination, while implementing risk-based controls to ensure effective customs oversight. The agreement also provides for enhanced exchange of information and risk alerts between the two customs administrations to strengthen coordination and improve the management of cross-border trade. Recognizing the time-sensitive nature of agricultural trade, the arrangement further provides for priority handling of perishable consignments to minimize delays and facilitate their timely movement across the border. The ceremony concluded with the signing of the agreement and concluding remarks by the heads of the two delegations, reaffirming the commitment of both sides to enhanced customs cooperation and trade facilitation. The operationalization of the Green Channel is expected to provide a more efficient and coordinated framework for trade in agreed agricultural products between Pakistan and China, while strengthening bilateral customs cooperation and facilitating the movement of time-sensitive consignments through the Sost-Khunjerab Border.

Oil prices drop as peace hopes for Middle East grow

■ Brent was at \$114.50 a barrel, down 82 cents or 0.7%, while US WTI stood at \$101.74, lower by \$1.04 or 1.0%.

Staff Reporter
KARACHI

Crude oil prices retreated on Thursday after gains a day earlier, as reports of renewed diplomatic efforts eased some concern about Middle East supply risks. Brent was at \$114.50 a barrel, down 82 cents or 0.7%, while US WTI stood at \$101.74, lower by \$1.04 or 1.0%. US Vice-President JD Vance had sent a letter to Iran's security council

chief in an effort to restart peace negotiations. The oil price decline was limited by continuing Houthi attacks and fears of possible US action against Iran; the Saudi-led coalition said it had intercepted a missile headed towards the kingdom's east. Separately, US energy firms reduced crude inventories by 1.9 million barrels in the week to October 23, although gasoline stocks increased by 3.9 million barrels.



Dollar steady after Fed hold leaves rate path murky

■ The US dollar steadied after the Fed held interest rates unchanged, as investors assessed inflation risks and awaited policy decisions from the European Central Bank and Bank of Japan.

WEB DESK
SHANGHAI/SINGAPORE

The US dollar steadied on Thursday after the Federal Reserve held interest rates as expected while hinting upcoming inflation data would influence future policy moves, leaving investors uncertain about the rates outlook. The Fed opted to delay any changes to borrowing costs until after next week's midterm election in a 10-2 decision, which came with an upgraded assessment of an economy that the central bank now says is growing at a "strong pace." That, along with the confidence expressed by Fed Chair Kevin Warsh that inflation can be lowered to the 2% target without having to "throw sand in the gears" and slow growth or raise unemployment, pushed traders to rein in bets for rate hikes in 2027. The euro eased 0.15% to \$1.1134 in early Asian hours after the common currency firmed 0.3% in the previous session following the Fed decision. Against the Japanese yen, the dollar was up 0.14% at 158.045 yen. The greenback had held near two-week highs ahead of the announcement but turned lower after Warsh's press conference offered no clear steer on a December move. "Warsh's silence on further rate hikes was interpreted as dovish, or not hawkish enough," said Carol Kong, a currency strategist at Commonwealth Bank of Australia. "Some market participants might have expected him to pair the on-hold decision with a little bit of guidance on the December meeting, but he

didn't do that." Traders are pricing in a 78% chance of a hike in December, the FedWatch tool showed. The dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of six currencies, was at 102.26. The Treasury yield curve steepened after Warsh started his press conference, with the 2-year note yield, which typically moves in step with Fed interest rate expectations, falling as low as 4.678%. It was last down 2.3 basis points at 4.712% in Asian hours. Kerry Craig, global market strategist at J.P. Morgan Asset Management, said the meeting outcome gave the market and the Fed time to assess upcoming jobs and inflation data. "The market reaction today was dovish... However, with policy tightening already being priced in, this implies that yields will remain range-bound unless there is a clearer signal for more aggressive policy tightening or a pivot to cuts," Craig said. Warsh said on Wednesday the central bank would begin setting aside one of its eight regularly scheduled policy meetings next year and two in 2028 to weigh major issues facing the institution and would not use them to consider changes in monetary policy. "The changing of meeting schedules for 2027 and 2028, where one and two of the eight meetings will discuss strategy not policy changes, respectively, reads as dovish to us," analysts at TD Securities said in a note. "It may also have the side effect of producing potentially both more extreme and more inter-meeting moves down the line."

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to boost trade and investment

■ Aurangzeb thanked Saudi Arabia for its continued support for Pakistan and briefed the ambassador on recent economic developments

News Desk
ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb met Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Nasser bin Abdullah Al-Buqami on Thursday to discuss ways to further strengthen economic cooperation, enhance bilateral trade and promote investment between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Finance, the meeting focused on strengthening the longstanding friendship and brotherly relations between the two countries, which are rooted in shared faith, common history, mutual trust and respect. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepening their strategic

partnership and expanding cooperation across key economic sectors. During the meeting, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb

expressed gratitude to the Saudi government for its continued support for Pakistan and acknowledged the importance of the close relationship between the

two countries. He highlighted the significance of sustained bilateral engagement in promoting economic development, improving trade relations and creating new

opportunities for investment. Aurangzeb also briefed the Saudi ambassador on Pakistan's recent economic developments, highlighting improvements in macroeconomic stability, foreign exchange reserves and inflation. He further informed the ambassador about the improvement in Pakistan's international credit rating, which reflects developments in the country's economic position and its efforts to strengthen financial stability. The finance minister emphasized that Pakistan remained committed to maintaining economic discipline, pursuing structural reforms and creating a stable and predictable environment for domestic and foreign investors. He underlined the importance of continued reforms to support sustainable economic growth, strengthen investor confidence and improve the

country's position in international financial markets. A key topic discussed during the meeting was Pakistan's planned issuance of \$3 billion in Eurobonds and its efforts to regain access to international capital markets. The discussions also covered opportunities for Pakistan to access China's capital market as part of its broader efforts to diversify financing sources and expand its engagement with international investors. Access to international capital markets is an important consideration for Pakistan as it seeks to meet its financing requirements, strengthen external-sector stability and support its economic reform agenda. The planned Eurobond issuance was discussed in the context of the country's efforts to re-establish its presence in global debt markets and

Probe blames substandard materials, official negligence for Peshawar school tragedy

- The roof of the private school in Peshawar's Dir Colony collapsed during classes on October 15, killing 34 children and a female teacher.



OUR Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

An inquiry into a school collapse that killed 35 people in Peshawar has blamed the owner for using substandard construction materials and identified negligence by government departments, the governor's office said on Wednesday. The roof of the private school in Peshawar's Dir Colony collapsed during classes on October 15, killing 34 children and a female teacher. The disaster prompted authorities to order inspections of private schools across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The findings raise questions about both construction standards and regulatory oversight. After the collapse, relatives of some victims said they had previously complained to the school's owner about rainwater seeping into classrooms.

"The inquiry report held the school

owner responsible for the use of substandard materials in the construction of the school building," the governor's office said in a statement. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi received the report at a meeting attended by senior education officials, the provincial chief secretary and members of

the inquiry committee.

The committee briefed him on the causes of the collapse, statements from relevant officials, departmental responsibilities and its findings and recommendations.

The statement said Kundi was also informed of negligence by the departments concerned, but did not identify the officials involved or detail their failures.

Kundi directed authorities to consult the provincial law department on the report's legal implications and take strict action against those responsible. The statement announced no new arrests, prosecutions or disciplinary penalties.

Police arrested the school owner after the collapse and registered a criminal case against the owners, shareholders and construction contractor. The case included an allegation of causing death without an intention to kill.



Mohsin Naqvi, JUI-F's Kamran Murtaza exchange words during Senate session

- The confrontation intensified when PML-N Senator Abid Sher Ali also lost his temper and directed harsh remarks at Murtaza

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

A heated exchange erupted in the Senate after Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's speech prompted a protest from Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Senator Kamran Murtaza, triggering noisy scenes in the House.

Tensions escalated as Naqvi and Murtaza exchanged heated remarks. Responding to the senator's protest, the interior minister insisted that he should listen to his remarks, adding that those who criticise others must also have the courage to hear their response.

During his speech, Naqvi said the state was viewed favourably as long as people benefited from it, but it was inappropriate to turn against the state when personal interests were not served.

Murtaza responded by urging the minister to watch his language.

Also Read: Political differences no excuse for anti-state remarks, Mohsin Naqvi tells politicians

The confrontation intensified when PML-N Senator Abid Sher Ali also lost his temper and directed harsh remarks at Murtaza, accusing him of using abusive language against mothers. The two lawmakers subsequently exchanged heated words. To defuse the situation, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry intervened and asked Abid Sher Ali to sit down.

Addressing the protesting lawmakers, Naqvi reiterated that parliamentary proceedings could not function if members insisted on expressing their own views while refusing to listen to others. The interior minister further stressed the need to distinguish between political disagreements and remarks concerning state institutions, urging critics to demonstrate the patience to hear opposing viewpoints.



First Lady Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari visiting a Mobile Registration Van during her visit to the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) headquarters, Islamabad on October 29, 2026.

Islamabad court upholds non-bailable arrest warrants for Sohail Afridi



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

District and Sessions Court on Thursday upheld non-bailable arrest warrants for Sohail Afridi over his continued absence in a case involving alleged misleading statements against state institutions and attempts to damage their reputation. Judicial Magistrate Malik Aman heard the case and ordered Sohail Afridi's arrest and production before the court. The court adjourned further proceedings until November 15. The FIA Cyber Crime Wing registered the case against Sohail Afridi under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA).

PTI committee backs talks with govt, but disputes procedure

- Sources said Barrister Gohar and like-minded leaders, including Mahmood Achakzai and Raja Nasir Abbas, are in favour of pursuing dialogue with the government.

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) parliamentary committee has expressed support for negotiations with the government, although differences have emerged among party leaders over the procedure and composition of the negotiating team, according to sources.

Sources said Barrister Gohar and like-minded leaders, including Mahmood Achakzai and Raja Nasir Abbas, are in favour of pursuing dialogue with the government.

However, several PTI members have called for the formation of a dedicated negotiation committee to represent the party in the talks.

Some members have also expressed reservations about



the role of opposition leaders, arguing that broader political demands could take precedence over PTI's own demands during negotiations.

They have stressed that the party should establish its own committee to ensure its priorities remain central to the process. According to sources, PTI members have proposed including Mahmood Achakzai and Raja Nasir Abbas in the committee while limiting their authority to negotiate on the party's behalf.

The proposed committee would focus on securing relief for PTI

founder Imran Khan and pursuing the party's demands through negotiations with the government.

Sources added that some members favour adopting a "give-and-take" approach to reach an understanding with the government.

The internal discussions indicate that while the PTI parliamentary party broadly supports dialogue, the structure of the negotiating team, its authority and the priorities to be pursued remain key points of disagreement. .

Imaan Mazari, Hadi Ali Chatha sentenced to 10 years in security breach case

- An anti-terrorism court sentenced Imaan Mazari and husband Hadi Ali Chattha to 10 years each in the barricade removal case.

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

An anti-terrorism court has sentenced lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chatha, to 10 years in prison each in a case involving the removal of barricades and interference with official duties. The verdict was announced by Judge Tahir Abbas Supra at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, where the proceedings were held. The court also imposed fines under three separate legal provisions. According to the court order, the sentences under the three individual provisions totalled 13 years for each defendant. However, the benefit

of Section 182 resulted in the effective prison term being set at 10 years each.

The Anti-Terrorism Court delivered its ruling in the case concerning the removal of barricades and alleged interference with government duties. Both defendants were handed prison sentences along with financial penalties.

The case was registered against Mazari and Chatha on October 25, 2024. The court appointed a state counsel to represent them during the proceedings.

State counsel Atif Mahmood cross-examined the witnesses presented in the case, while the prosecution produced a total of seven witnesses.

The court formally indicted



Mazari and Chatha on October 7. The proceedings subsequently continued with evidence presented by the prosecution and the examination of witnesses.

The case centred on allegations linked to the removal of barricades and interference with official duties. The court imposed sentences under three separate provisions and also ordered the defendants to pay fines of Rs50,000 under the relevant

provisions, according to the reported court order.

The lawyer couple has been in custody since January 23, when they were arrested in a case registered over a protest outside the Islamabad High Court.

The next day, a sessions court sentenced them to 17 years on multiple charges under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) in a case linked to controversial social media posts. After months of proceedings, the Supreme Court on September 17 suspended their sentences in the tweets case and granted them bail against Rs200,000 surety bonds each, pending a final decision by the Islamabad High Court.

Maryam Nawaz distributes stroke cards, says treatment must not stop due to lack of frunds

- Maryam Nawaz distributes stroke cards at Lahore General Hospital, highlighting timely treatment and awareness

City Reporter

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has distributed stroke cards at Lahore General Hospital, highlighting the importance of timely treatment and public awareness to prevent deaths and disabilities caused by strokes.

Addressing the stroke card distribution ceremony, Maryam Nawaz said Punjab was the country's most populous province and that serving as its chief minister was not an easy responsibility. She added that being entrusted with such a position by Allah was also a blessing. She said the stroke programme was being launched for the general public,



noting that awareness about strokes remained limited. She added that measures had been taken to support the rehabilitation of stroke patients. The chief minister directed authorities to ensure that no patient's treatment was delayed or halted due to a lack of funds. She said strokes could occur without warning and recalled seeing a young patient whose life was saved after receiving an injection in time.

Maryam Nawaz stressed that awareness was essential for stroke 3 districts, while 15 more were under development.

prevention and said the number of primary stroke centres had increased over the past few months. She said 40 primary stroke centres were operational in 23 districts, while 15 more were under development.

She emphasised that timely treatment after a stroke was crucial, adding that an injection used to treat the condition costs Rs300,000, an amount that poor patients cannot afford.

The chief minister also said the world's largest cancer hospital was being built in Lahore and would become operational soon. Cancer centres were also being established in every division, she added.

Noreen Niazi admitted to PIC after heart problem in Kot Lakhpat jail: lawyer

- PTI expresses concern over her health in detention and her transfer to PIC in Lahore. Lawyer alleged that no family member was informed of her transfer to the hospital.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

PTI founder Imran Khan's sister, Noreen Niazi, has been shifted from Kot Lakhpat Jail to Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) for heart complaints, according to her lawyer Rana Mudassar Umar.

Rana Mudassar Umar, the lawyer for Noreen Niazi, has confirmed her transfer to the hospital and explained her health status.

The lawyer has stated that Noreen Niazi had a heart problem, for which she is



undergoing initial tests at the hospital. "Noreen Niazi Sahiba has been transferred to Punjab Institute of Cardiology due to deteriorating health in jail," her legal counsel, Rana Mudassar Umer, said on X. He alleged that no family member was informed of her transfer to the hospital. The PTI expressed serious

concern over the reported deterioration in Noreen's health in detention and her transfer to the PIC in Lahore, in what the party described as an "extremely alarming condition".

In a statement shared on X, the party criticised the authorities over the treatment of the 70-year-old, alleging that she was being held in illegal and unconstitutional detention. The PTI described the situation as an example of state oppression and raised concerns about the risks to her health.