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Bilawal seeks political reset in system, involving all stakeholders Including PTI

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has called for an inclusive political and constitutional reset, urging all political stakeholders, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), to work together to restore parliament's credibility and address the country's mounting economic challenges.

Speaking at a Meet the Press programme at the Multan Press Club on Thursday, Bilawal warned that economic difficulties could intensify, saying the entire country is going through an economic crisis and ordinary people are bearing the burden of regional conflicts.



PML-N govt hints at constituting Electoral Reforms Committee without PTI's

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A deadlock persists between the government and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) over the formation of the Electoral Reforms Committee, with the government hinting at constituting the committee without PTI's participation.

A third meeting took place between Government Chief Whip Tariq Fazal Chaudhry and Opposition Chief Whip Amir Dogar, during which the formation of the Electoral Reforms Committee was discussed, though no consensus could be reached on committee matters.

Amir Dogar stated that PTI has not yet decided whether to join the Electoral Reforms Committee, adding that he is not in a position to submit names for the parliamentary committee on his own without the approval of the party leadership.Tariq Fazal Chaudhry stated that the government has already rejected PTI's demand for equal representation on the committee, urging PTI to clarify whether it intends to join the body or not.



Attaullah Tarar welcomes Sikh devotees at Daman-e-Koh

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar met here a delegation of Sikh pilgrims visiting Pakistan to participate in the celebrations marking the birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak.

The information minister warmly welcomed the Sikh Yatrees in Punjabi language at Daman-e-Koh, one of Islamabad's popular tourist attractions. The meeting was held in a cordial and friendly atmosphere, during which the minister engaged in an informal conversation with the pilgrims in Punjabi language.

Speaking on the occasion, Attaullah Tarar said that Daman-e-Koh was one of the most beautiful tourist destinations in Islamabad, offering a breathtaking panoramic view of the federal capital.

He said it was a matter of great happiness and pride for Pakistan to have sacred religious sites associated with Sikhism.

Besides taking care of these holy places, he said that Pakistan also had the privilege of welcoming and serving Sikh devotees from around the world.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Jiang Zaidong, in Islamabad on 26 November 2026.

Shenzhou-24 mission 'living proof' of Pak-China ironclad friendship: PM Shehbaz

- PM Shehbaz Sharif calls the Shenzhou-24 mission proof of Pak-China friendship as Pakistan's first astronaut joins China's Tiangong Space Station.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday described the historic Shenzhou-24 space mission, carrying Pakistan's first astronaut to China's space station, as living proof of the strong friendship between Pakistan and China, saying cooperation between the two countries had reached the stars.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, who called on him in Islamabad. He warmly congratulated the ambassador, as well as the leadership and people of China, on the successful launch of the Shenzhou-24 mission from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre on November 25.The mission is carrying Pa kistan's first astronaut, Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, to China's Tiangong Space Station. Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan was deeply grateful to China for providing it with the opportunity to become part of the landmark mission, through which a Pakistani astronaut became the first foreign national to visit China's space station.

He said the achievement represented much more than the journey of an individual astronaut, describing it as a journey of 240 million Pakistanis that embodied the dreams and aspirations of the country's youth and scientific community. The prime minister appreciated the relevant Chinese institutions for training both Pakistani

(Continued on Page-5)

PM launches Mehfooz Dawa app to help public identify fake medicines

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has inaugurated the 'Mehfooz Dawa' mobile application, a digital initiative aimed at enabling citizens to verify the authenticity of medicines and protect themselves against counterfeit and substandard drugs, PM Shehbaz Sharif launched the application on Thursday by scanning the barcode printed on a medicine packet, which turned green on the mobile application, confirming that the medicine was genuine.



Petrol price drops by Re1, diesel by Rs2 per litre

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD

The federal government has reduced the price of petrol by Re1 per litre and high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs2, according to an Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) notification issued on Thursday. Following the revision, petrol will be available at Rs313 per litre, while diesel will cost Rs346 per litre.According to Ogra, the revised prices will be effective from November 27. Ogra has also begun publishing daily petroleum prices on its website to improve transparency and allow changes in international oil prices to be passed on to consumers more quickly.

Makkah pact nations 'to discuss Saudi-Houthis conflict in Islamabad meeting'

- Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye signed the pact in August, with the three Muslim nations pledging to come to each other's aid in the event of an attack.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Makkah pact nations will discuss the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Houthi fighters in Yemen when officials from the mutual defence agreement meet in Islamabad on Thursday, said Defence Minister Khawaja Asif.

Asif said the "continuous turmoil south of Saudi Arabia will obviously be one agenda point in the meeting and it is very important", confirming that defence and foreign ministers from the Gulf kingdom, Turkiye and Pakistan would attend.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye signed the pact in August, with the three Muslim nations pledging to come to each other's aid in the event of an attack.

Saudi Arabia has faced repeated



barrages by the Houthis in Yemen, with the group targeting cities, oil facilities and shipping since fighting in Yemen's civil war intensified in July.

"Any threat to Saudi Arabia is a threat to Pakistan and Turkiye according to the pact, which is absolutely clear," Khawaja said on Wednesday, praising Riyadh's handling of the conflict with the Houthis, who hold swathes of territory in Yemen, including its capital Sanaa.

Security forces kill 12 Indian-sponsored terrorists in Balochistan operations

- Security forces killed 12 Indian-backed terrorists of Fitna Al Hindustan in Balochistan operations across four districts. President Zardari and PM Shehbaz praised the forces' bravery.

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Security forces have killed 12 Indian backed terrorists of Fitna Al Hindustan in multiple intelligence based operations in Nushki, Sevi, Panjgur and Kech district of Balochistan.Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the terrorists were eliminated in ongoing counter-terrorism campaign.

On 20 November, terrorist hideout was targeted in Nushki district. After intense engagement eight terrorist belonging to Indian backed Fitna Al Hindustan were neutralised. Weapons and ammunition were recovered from killed terrorists.

On 21 November, in Sevi district terrorist movement was intercepted and two terrorists belonging to Indian



backed Fitna Al Hindustan were killed.

In two other engagements on 22/ 23 November in Panjgur and Kech district, terrorist hideouts were busted and two terrorists belonging to Indian backed Fitna Al Hindustan were sent to hell.

Relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by security forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign sponsored.

India weakened Pakistan in 1971, did not help Bengalis: Bangladesh speaker

- Speaker said Bangladeshis had demanded democracy in 1971 but were denied their right, while a one-party system was introduced in 1975.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Bangladesh Parliament Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed has claimed that India weakened Pakistan during the 1971 war instead of helping Bengalis, while accusing the neighbouring country of turning Bangladesh into a colony over the past 15 years.

During a conversation with journalists in Islamabad, Ahmed said Bangladesh's people had been suffering under the influence of a neighbouring country, adding that the country had struggled to achieve genuine democracy.

He said Bangladeshis had demanded democracy in 1971 but were denied their right, while a one-party system was introduced in 1975.

The speaker also made strong remarks about former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, saying she would be sent to jail if she returned to Bangladesh. He warned that Bangladesh could move the International Court of



Justice if India did not extradite her.

Ahmed claimed Hasina was unlikely to return in the next 10 years despite repeatedly announcing her intention to come back. He further alleged that the Awami League had become a terrorist organisation and said the government was considering imposing a ban on the party.Calling for the Kashmir dispute to be resolved under UN resolutions, Ahmed said Pakistan-Bangladesh relations were expected to grow stronger. He also thanked Pakistan for backing Bangladesh's candidate for the Inter-Parliamentary Union's executive committee.

NCCIA Directs Modernization Of It Infrastructure

■ Meeting reviews upgradation of digital systems, advanced technology and technical capabilities of the agency

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Important Meeting of Director General NCCIA Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi with IT Team and Staff OfficerUpgradation of NCCIA's IT infrastructure on modern lines, upgradation of existing technology and systems, improvement in digital facilities and enhancement of technical capacity of the agency discussed in detailAccording to details, an important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Director General National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi with the IT team and Staff Officer.In the meeting, detailed discussion was held on matters related to building NCCIA's IT infrastructure on modern lines, upgradation of existing technology and systems, improvement in digital facilities and enhancement of the technical capacity of the agency.In the meeting, a special briefing was given on the use of modern technology, improvement of softwares, making digital systems more effective, provision of modern equipment and technical resources, including effective use of technology in various departments of the agency.On this occasion, Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that it is inevitable to equip the agency with modern technology to deal with the growing challenges of cyber crime. Improvement in IT infrastructure will not only speed up investigations but citizens will also get timely and effective facilities.He directed the IT team to make all digital systems more secure, faster and compatible with modern requirements so that the agency can take more effective action against cyber crimes.

Judge (r) Iftikhar Hussain Shah's Official Vehicle Meets Accident Near Khanewal



STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Official Vehicle of Chairman Election Tribunal Multan Bench Meets with Accident Near KhanewalFormer Lahore High Court judge and Chairman Election Tribunal Multan Bench, Justice (Retd.) Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah, met with an accident near Kacha Khuh in Khanewal district while travelling from Lahore to Multan in his official vehicle for judicial proceedings.Justice (Retd.) Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah remained safe in the accident, while the vehicle's driver reportedly sustained minor injuries.

FDE Announces Winter Timings for Educational Institutions in Islamabad

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) has announced revised winter timings for all educational institutions working under its administrative control in Islamabad, effective from December 1, 2026, to January 29, 2027.According to an official notification issued by the Academics Wing of the FDE, single-shift institutions will operate from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm from Monday to Thursday, while on Fridays, classes will conclude at 12:30 pm.Preparatory classes will be held from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. For Early Childhood Education (ECE), ECE-I classes will run from 8:30 am to 11:30 am, while ECE-II classes will be conducted from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm.In double-shift institutions, the morning shift will operate from 8:15 am to 1:15 pm from Monday to Thursday and from 8:15 am to 12:15 pm on Fridays. The evening shift will run from 1:15 pm to 6:00 pm from Monday to Thursday, while Friday timings will be from 2:30 pm to 6:00 pm.The notification further stated that degree colleges would operate from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm or 4:00 pm, as per institutional requirements.All Area Education Officers and the Director (Colleges) have been directed to ensure the effective dissemination and implementation of the revised timings across all institutions in their respective jurisdictions.

Chairman Senate Gilani Expresses Grief Over Egypt Traffic Accident

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

*Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani Expresses Deep Grief Over Loss of Precious Lives in Traffic Accident in Egypt**Islamabad, November 26, 2026:*Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious lives in a tragic traffic accident on the Ring Road in the Al-Warraq area of Giza, Egypt. He extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families, stating that the people of Pakistan share their grief over this tragic incident.The Chairman Senate prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured and expressed solidarity with the government and people of Egypt during this difficult time.He said that Pakistan and Egypt enjoy longstanding fraternal relations based on shared values, mutual respect and enduring friendship. He reaffirmed that the Parliament and people of Pakistan stand shoulder to shoulder with their Egyptian brothers and sisters in this hour of grief.Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and strength for the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss.

IGP Islamabad Honours Police Officers For Outstanding Performance

■ Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry awards certificates of appreciation for dedication to public service



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

IGP Islamabad Appreciates Police Officers for Outstanding Public Service, Awards Certificates of Appreciation According to the details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry invited police officers who demonstrated outstanding professional performance and dedication to public service to the Central Police Office (CPO). He appreciated their efforts, encouraged them for their commitment and awarded them certificates of appreciation in recognition of their services. On the occasion, the IGP Islamabad stated that serving citizens, resolving their issues promptly and treating them with dignity and respect are fundamental responsibilities of Islamabad Police. He said that officers who perform their duties with honesty, sincerity and professional dedication, considering public service their foremost responsibility, are a source of pride for the department. IGP Islamabad directed the officers to continue performing their duties with the same enthusiasm, commitment and dedication. He instructed them to give priority to citizens' complaints and take all possible measures to resolve their issues promptly. He emphasized that courteous behavior, merit-based action and timely service to the public must be ensured at all times. IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry further stated that recognizing and encouraging officers who demonstrate good performance promotes hard work, responsibility and professionalism within the force. He reaffirmed that Islamabad Police would continue to strengthen the values of public service.

NCCIA Arrests Man In Online Harassment Case

■ Accused held in Rawalpindi for allegedly sharing objectionable pictures of women through WhatsApp

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Major Action by NCCIA Islamabad, Accused Involved in Online Harassment Arrested, Person Spreading Objectionable Pictures of Women ExposedZero tolerance policy will be followed against elements harassing women and spreading their obscene or edited pictures, citizens facing cyber harassment should contact NCCIA without any fear, citizens should report any cyber crime on Cyber Info App or Helpline 1799, Director General Syed Ali Nasir RizviAccording to details, NCCIA Islamabad, demonstrating professional expertise and timely action, arrested the accused in a case of online harassment.The accused Ibrar Shahzad, resident of Dhamiyal Rawalpindi, sent objectionable / edited pictures of the complainant's female family members through WhatsApp to the complainant's relatives, subjecting them to severe mental torture and harassment.On receipt of the complaint, NCCIA Islamabad team immediately started investigations, traced the accused with the help of modern technology and arrested the accused Ibrar Shahzad during an action in Dhamiyal Rawalpindi.



Further investigation from the accused is underway, while technical analysis of his mobile and other digital devices is also being carried out to obtain further evidence.On this occasion, Director General National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that a zero tolerance policy will be followed against elements harassing women and spreading their obscene or edited pictures. Protection of citizens, especially women, will be ensured in all circumstances and such criminals will be punished strictly in accordance with the law.He further said that citizens facing cyber harassment should contact NCCIA without any fear.Citizens should report any cyber crime on Cyber Info App or Helpline 1799.

Parliamentary Study Tour Organized For Step School Students

■ Senate Secretariat briefs students on parliamentary proceedings and the role of committees

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A delegation of 76 students of STEP School Capital Campus Islamabad, accompanied by 2 faculty members, visited Parliament House Islamabad on Thursday. Upon arrival at Parliament House, the delegation was welcomed by officials of the Senate Secretariat.During the visit to the Senate Museum, the delegation was given a comprehensive briefing on Pakistan's parliamentary history, the legislative process, and the role of the Upper House in national affairs. On this occasion,



the delegation also watched a special documentary on the history of the Senate and key parliamentary milestones.During the visit, the delegation was given a detailed briefing in the Senate Hall on the proceedings of the session, the stages of legislation, and the system of parliamentary committees. The delegation was also briefed on the effective role of the parliamentary structure and the importance of committees in the legislative process. Afterwards, the delegation visited "Gali Dastoor", where they were provided information about the making of the Constitution of Pakistan and the key phases of constitutional history.The delegation termed the visit highly informative and useful, and stated that the organization of study tours of Parliament House for students of educational institutions by the Upper House is an important initiative to acquaint the younger generation with the parliamentary system and to strengthen their association with democratic institutions.

Chairman Senate Gilani Attends Khatam-e-quran Ceremony In Multan

■ Expresses condolences to bereaved family over the demise of his cousin Makhdoom Syed Ali Gilani

CITY REPORTER

MULTAN

Chairman Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani attended the Khatam-e-Quran ceremony of his cousin, Late Makhdoom Syed Ali Gilani, brother of Syed Muhammad Mustafa Gilani, in Multan.On the occasion, the Chairman Senate expressed his heartfelt condolences to the deceased's brother, Syed Muhammad Mustafa Gilani, and his son, Syed Kabeer Mustafa Gilani, and shared in the grief of the bereaved family.The ceremony included recitation of the Holy Quran and special prayers for the eternal peace and forgiveness of the departed soul.The Khatam ceremony was



also attended by Syed Ahmad Mujtaba Gilani, Syed Kabeer Mustafa Gilani, Syed Asad Mustafa Gilani, Makhdoom Wilayat Mustafa Gilani, Syed Rajan Bakhsh Gilani, Makhdoom Syed Shafaat Mustafa Gilani, Syed Mohsin Raza Gilani, Syed Usman Mohsin Gilani, Muhammad Naeem Khan, Haji Muhammad Zubair Ahmed, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Gilani, Ashraf Qureshi, Malik Bashir Makwal and Syed Hassan Raza Gilani, along with other family members, relatives and distinguished guests.Special prayers were offered for the elevation of the departed soul's ranks, forgiveness, and strength and patience for the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

CDA Expedites Construction Of Four New Rescue 1122 Stations

Over 30 percent work completed in G-11, I-9, I-14 and Humak Town to strengthen emergency services

STAFF REPORTER

Islamabad

Capital Development Authority (CDA) is expediting the construction of 4 new rescue stations in the Federal Capital Islamabad to further strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of Rescue 1122 services during emergency and crisis situations. The objective of the project is to ensure the provision of timely assistance to citizens during emergency situations and the protection of life and property.According to details, overall, more than 30 percent of the work on the Rescue Stations has been completed so far. The 4 new rescue stations are being constructed in sectors G-11, I-9, I-14 and Humak Town Islamabad.In Rescue Stations at Sector G-11 and Humak Town, the roof slab work of the buildings is ongoing. While in I-14, the construction of the boundary wall has been started. All Rescue Stations include modern design, a control room, a conference room, a parking area and designated sheds for rescue vehicles.In line with the direction of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf, work on the project is continuing round the clock (24/7). Chairman CDA said that all construction works should be completed within the stipulated time ensuring high quality. He said that the completion of the project will develop the emergency and rescue services system on modern lines and citizens will receive timely assistance. Chairman CDA further said that the protection of citizens life and property is our top priority and all resources will be utilised to improve the effectiveness of Capital Emergency Services in Islamabad . .



SSP Operations Reviews Construction Work At F-6 Facilitation Centre

Qazi Ali Raza directs officers to ensure quality standards and timely completion of the project

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD



SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza Visits F-6 Facilitation Centre, Reviews Ongoing Construction WorkIslamabad: SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza visited the F-6 Facilitation Centre and reviewed the ongoing construction work in detail.During the visit, he directed the concerned officers to ensure high-quality construction standards and complete all work within the stipulated timeframe.He emphasized that providing the best possible facilities to citizens and making police services more efficient are among the top priorities of Islamabad Police. All available resources are being utilized to achieve these objectives.Islamabad Police remains committed to providing modern and improved facilities to citizens.

Motorway Police Celebrates 30th Raising Day Today

IG Sultan Ahmed Chaudhry congratulates officers, reaffirms commitment to safe and secure highways

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The National Highways & Motorway Police (NHMP) is celebrating its 30th Raising Day today. Inspector General Sultan Ahmed Chaudhry extended his heartfelt congratulations to all officers and staff on this special occasion, stating that the Motorway Police has become a strong symbol of public trust due to its courteous conduct, professional expertise and integrity. He said that officers and personnel are performing their duties with utmost responsibility and a spirit of public service, which continues to enhance the prestige of the institution. He further stated that providing safe, comfortable and technologically advanced travel facilities to commuters is the core mission of the Motorway Police. The institution has earned its reputation through round-the-clock dedication, effective and uniform enforcement of laws, and service to the public. Uniform enforcement of the law without any discrimination, ensuring uninterrupted traffic flow and providing modern and timely emergency assistance are the hallmarks of the Motorway Police. IG Sultan Ahmed Chaudhry said that creating awareness among people from all walks of life about safe driving in accordance with traffic laws and promoting an accident-free society remain the foremost objectives of the institution. Officers and staff of the Motorway Police are performing their responsibilities with dedication, a strong sense of duty and an unwavering commitment to public welfare. On the occasion of its Raising Day, the Motorway Police reaffirmed its commitment to continuing initiatives that keep the institution fully aligned with modern requirements and future needs. Modern traffic management, timely response systems, effective guidance through Helpline 130, and the strengthening of digital systems have further enhanced the Motorway Police's efforts to meet international standards. In conclusion, IG Sultan Ahmed Chaudhry said that the sacrifices of more than 50 brave martyrs of the Motorway Police represent a glorious chapter in the institution's history. Their eternal sacrifices have made national highways safer. The welfare and well-being of the martyrs' families remain the foremost priority of the institution, and various welfare initiatives are already underway, with further expansion being undertaken. The Motorway Police reaffirmed its resolve to continue its mission of public service and ensuring safe journeys with renewed enthusiasm, a firm commitment and a modern vision, while fulfilling its responsibilities with dedication in the future.



DIG Ali Waseem Directs Immediate Redressal Of Public Complaints

Citizens assured direct access to open court without recommendation or reference

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD

DIG Islamabad Holds Open Court, Directs Prompt Redressal of Citizens' ComplaintsAccording to the details, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waseem held an open court at his office, which was attended by a large number of citizens. He listened to their complaints and concerns in detail and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for their prompt resolution.DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem stated that the timely resolution of citizens' issues on merit is a top priority of Islamabad Police. He added that citizens can attend the open court directly and present their complaints without any recommendation or reference.An open court is held daily at the DIG Office to facilitate citizens and ensure the timely redressal of their grievances.

Balochistan CM doubles PCS exam attempts from three to six under major reforms

Balochistan CM Sarfraz Bugti orders major PCS reforms, increasing exam attempts from three to six and introducing AI-based testing and local centres.



COURT REPORTER

QUETTA

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has ordered comprehensive reforms in the Balochistan Public Service Commission's examination system, directing an increase in the number of attempts for Provincial Civil Services (PCS) examinations from three to six.Approval has also been granted to establish examination centres at the local level across the province and introduce a modern artificial intelligence-based testing system.

A meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti reviewed reforms in the Public Service Commission, including measures to modernise the examination system, ensure transparency and speed up the examination process.

During the meeting, participants agreed to replace traditional handwritten examination papers with a computerised testing system. The chief minister directed that PCS competitive examinations be conducted in accordance with modern testing standards followed by international examinations such as TOEFL and GRE.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said the provincial government wanted to provide maximum opportunities to the youth of Balochistan to compete in competitive examinations. He questioned why young people who worked hard and prepared themselves for the examinations should be deprived of opportunities through rules and regulations.

Mental, emotional abuse constitutes cruelty and wife entitled to full dower, rules LHC



STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The Lahore High Court (LHC) has issued an important ruling on dissolution of marriage on grounds of cruelty and domestic violence, declaring that physical, mental or emotional abuse of a wife by her husband falls within the definition of cruelty.The court clarified that a woman would not lose her right to dower if her marriage is dissolved on grounds of cruelty and abuse. It also ordered the husband to pay Rs500,000 in special damages to his wife.Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal of the Lahore High Court's Multan Bench issued a 10-page written judgment on a petition filed by Maryam Zafar. The court modified the lower courts' decisions to dissolve the marriage on the basis of khula and instead ordered the dissolution of the marriage on grounds of the husband's mental and physical abuse.In its judgment, the court observed that cruelty was not limited to physical violence but also included mental and emotional suffering. It stated that causing psychological distress, humiliating a spouse, adopting insulting behaviour and consistently ignoring them also amounted to cruelty.

The court emphasised that trust, respect and mutual dignity were fundamental to married life.

According to the judgment, the woman told the court that she had been subjected to repeated taunts because the couple had not had children even after two years of marriage.

Morocco wins second international Qirat competition 2026

Pakistan secures second position, Indonesia third as three-day international event concludes in Islamabad

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Second International Qirat Competition 2026 concluded in Islamabad, with Morocco securing first position, Pakistan second and Indonesia third.Qari Ilyas Lamhaouq of Morocco won the first prize of Rs5 million, while Pakistan's Qari Abdul Quddus Al-Baz secured second position with Rs3 million. Qari Daniyal Muhammad Khabibullah of Indonesia won third position and received Rs2 million.Organised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, the three-day international competition featured renowned Quran reciters from 32 countries. Eight participants from Morocco, Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iraq, the Philippines and Bangladesh competed in the grand finale.Addressing the closing ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said the Holy Quran provides guidance on peace, justice, mercy, mutual respect and humanity. He stressed the need to understand and practise its teachings in individual and collective life.Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said the competition aimed to promote Quranic teachings, encourage young people towards recitation and Tajweed, and strengthen ties among Muslim countries.International judges from Iran and Egypt evaluated the participants on recitation, Tajweed and technical standards. The successful event highlighted Pakistan's commitment to promoting Quranic teachings and strengthening unity among the Muslim Ummah.

PTI leaders stress new Charter of Democracy, national dialogue

Asad Qaiser meets Pervaiz Elahi, expresses concern over Imran Khan's health

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser and members of the assembly met with PTI Central President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi here on Wednesday.

In the meeting, Pervaiz Elahi said the country needs a new Charter of Democracy , urging all stakeholders to sit together for national dialogue.

PTI leaders reviewed the political and economic challenges facing the country and the role of the opposition.

During the conversation, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and Asad Qaiser expressed deep concern about the health of PTI founder Imran Khan, who is in prison.

Pervaiz Elahi said that Imran Khan's personal doctors and family members should be given immediate and uninterrupted access to him and that medical facilities should be provided immediately to the senior party leadership imprisoned in Kot Lakhpat.

Asad Qaiser said that the provision of medical facilities during imprisonment is a fundamental constitutional and legal right of every citizen and that PTI workers imprisoned in prisons across the country should be released.

During the meeting, the two leaders also discussed the party's organisational activities, efforts on the legal front, and political strategy, and both reiterated their commitment to continue their struggle within the constitutional and legal framework.

Iran tightens surveillance in Strait of Hormuz, boosts combat readiness amid US pressure

■ Iran tightened Strait of Hormuz surveillance and boosted military readiness, requiring ships to coordinate passage amid ongoing US hybrid pressure.



Web DESK

TEHRAN

Iranian Armed Forces spokesperson Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia has stated that the combat readiness of Iran's armed forces has significantly increased compared to the past, while surveillance and control systems in the Strait of Hormuz have been further tightened.

In his statement, Brigadier General Akraminia said that the defensive preparedness of all armed forces, including the Iranian Army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), is being further strengthened, noting that surveillance and control in the Strait of Hormuz were tightened on the directives of Army Chief General Hatami.

He stated that vessels must mandatorily coordinate with Iranian armed forces for safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, adding that new combat systems have been introduced in the waterway while older defense systems are also being modernized.



H.E. Mr. Stephane Rey, Ambassador of Switzerland, called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, in Islamabad (26-11-2026).

Iran Will Not Bow To Us, Israeli Pressure: Pezeshkian

■ Iranian president stresses national unity and vows to defend country against external aggression

Web Desk

Dubai

Four people, including two Italian nationals, were injured on Thursday in an Iranian drone attack targeting a vital facility in Kuwait, the Gulf country's military said.

Defence Ministry spokesman Col Saud Abdulaziz al-Atwan said the armed forces detected and engaged several "hostile drones" inside Kuwaiti airspace, according to an army statement.

The attack targeted a vital facility, causing shrapnel to fall and injure four people, including one Kuwaiti, two Italians and one Pakistani, he added.The attack also caused material damage,



although the ministry did not identify the targeted facility or provide details about the extent of the damage.

Al-Atwan said the armed forces remain on high alert and are taking all necessary measures, in coordination with relevant authorities, to protect Kuwait's sovereignty, security and stability.

Kuwait has repeatedly condemned attacks on its territory since the US-Israeli military offensive against Iran began in February, with Tehran carrying out retaliatory strikes across the Gulf region.

Iran will not bow to US, Israeli bullying: Iran's Pezeshkian

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said that Iranians would not bow to pressure from the United States and the Israeli regime, emphasising that national unity was essential to overcoming external challenges, according to state news agency IRNA.

Speaking during a visit to Razavi Khorasan Province on Wednesday night and Thursday morning, Pezeshkian said the Iranian people have "stood and will continue to stand to the last breath in defence of their country.

North Korea seeks wider tactical nuclear deployment during inspection of weapons facilities

Web Desk

North Korea



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country should focus on deploying tactical nuclear weapons across multiple domains and that its nuclear material production capacity was being systematically expanded, state media KCNA reported on Thursday.

Kim, who spoke during an inspection of nuclear material production and weapons research facilities, also said North Korea's status as a nuclear weapons state was "absolutely inviolable".

KCNA did not identify the facilities or their locations."Our nuclear capability is now a reality," KCNA quoted Kim as saying. North Korea's status as a nuclear weapons state would not change because of outside assertions or what he called "denuclearization rhetoric from forces that ignored objective reality and failed to recognize the changed situation."

Kim said North Korea should "focus on utilizing tactical nuclear weapons across multiple domains for different missions" and called recent achievements in nuclear weapons production a major success in carrying out the country's nuclear force policy.

He also said any attempt to deny North Korea's nuclear status, which it enshrined in its constitution in 2023, would be regarded as "an open declaration of war" and said Pyongyang would never relinquish what it called a core guarantee of national sovereignty and security.

UK tells 100,000 strategic reservists to prepare for possible call-up, says UK, media

○ Letters offer volunteers training and exercises as Britain seeks to bolster defence readiness

Web Desk

UK

The UK Ministry of Defence has sent letters to about 100,000 strategic reservists asking them to prepare for a possible call-up, media reported on Thursday.

For the first time since the Cold War, letters have been sent to about 100,000 strategic reservists, offering opportunities to volunteer for training and exercises, The Telegraph reported.

The letters, signed by the heads of the Army, Navy and Royal Air Force, also asked reservists to update their contact details and provide information about their current jobs and skills.

On Wednesday, Sky News and



The Times reported that the Royal Air Force was moving aircraft into hangars overnight and planning to build anti-drone nets to protect aircraft at British bases.

The reports followed a warning Tuesday from intelligence agency MI5 and the Ministry of Defence that British firms involved in supplying Ukraine's military faced an increased risk of sabotage by Russia.

Defence Secretary Wes Streeting has previously stressed that the country must be ready for war in 1,000 days and that Britain must "be ready with our allies to fight and win."

Meanwhile, the government recently announced £8 billion ($10.4 billion) in defence investment to improve submarine availability and readiness.

Last month, Chief of the General Staff Roly Walker said Britain's political leaders would soon ask the public to accept "sacrifices" to prioritise defence and security.

The reports came amid the Russia-Ukraine war and concerns about Europe's future security.

Trump unveils new tariffs Over excess industrial capacity, undeterred by midterms defeat

Web Desk

WASHINGTON



US President Donald Trump fired a new tariff salvo on Wednesday on 14 major trading partners including China, Japan and the European Union, undeterred in his protectionist push by the losses his Republican Party suffered in US midterm elections.

His administration proposed new maximum potential rates of 20% to 40% to counter excess industrial capacity that it says these countries are promoting. But the US Trade Representative's office said it intends to cap new tariffs at lower levels agreed under trade deals that are completed or still under negotiation.

In unveiling the results of an eight-month unfair trade practices investigation into excess industrial capacity, USTR aims to more fully rebuild Trump's tariff leverage after the Supreme Court in February struck down his broad global duties under a national emergencies law.

Indonesian rescuers resume search for 13 people trapped inside illegal mine after 13



Web Desk

JAKARTA

Rescuers will resume the search on Thursday for 13 workers trapped underground in an illegal gold mine in Indonesia's West Java province, with 13 already confirmed dead, police and rescue authorities said.

In the region of Bogor, south of the capital Jakarta, a total of 26 workers entered the mine on Monday when heavy rains inundated the shaft and left them trapped 100 m (328 ft) underground.

Hengki, West Java's police chief, told Reuters that of the 13 fatalities, six have already been identified.

The search would continue on Thursday barring bad weather conditions, he added.

19 Palestinians dead, 48 injured in Israeli attacks on Gaza despite ceasefire

■ Strikes in the Gaza Strip kill deputy education minister, wife

Web Desk

GAZA

At least 19 Palestinians were reported dead and 48 others injured across the Gaza Strip over the past 48 hours, the Health Ministry said on Thursday, amid continued Israeli attacks despite a ceasefire agreement.

In a statement, the ministry said 18 Palestinians were killed in fresh Israeli attacks, while one died of wounds sustained earlier.

Another 48 Palestinians were injured during the same period, it added.

Earlier in the day, five Palestinians, including the deputy education minister and his wife, were killed in two Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip.

A medical source at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital told Anadolu that a Palestinian man and his wife were killed and others wounded in an Israeli airstrike targeting an apartment in a residential building in the central city of Deir al-Balah.

Local sources and witnesses told Anadolu that the strike killed Khaled Mahmoud Abu Nada, 56, and his wife, Abeer Mohammed Abu Nada, 49. Sources identified Abu Nada as the deputy minister of education in the Gaza Strip.

In northern Gaza, a medical source at al-Shifa Hospital said the bodies of three Palestinians and a person seriously wounded in an Israeli attack on the northern al-Shati refugee camp had arrived at the facility.

Local Palestinian sources told Anadolu that an Israeli drone targeted a gathering of civilians in the camp, killing three people and wounding another. Separately, the Israeli army blew up Palestinian homes and other structures near positions where its forces are deployed east of the al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, amid heavy gunfire from military vehicles.



Witnesses told Anadolu that two powerful explosions were heard across large parts of the Gaza Strip during the demolitions.

Following the airstrike in Deir al-Balah, Israeli caretaker Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz said the army had killed Abu Nada, whom they claimed was "a Hamas figure responsible for the group's economy and education portfolios".

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Govt retains grip on sugar exports

Pakistan has not completely deregulated the sugar sector, as the federal government has retained control over exports, the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) will retain an active role and no deadlines to abolish sugarcane laws have been set, showed the new policy.

The timelines for amendments in 33 federal and provincial laws, which provide legal bases for tight control over the sugar sector, will be at the discretion of these governments, though a few may be changed soon. To avoid conflict of interest, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recused himself from decisions related to the sugar industry, showed the federal government has not abandoned control over sugar exports, as with rice and other commodities, and setting up new mills will still require permissions.

"The federal government will consider excluding sugar from the list of banned items in the Export Policy Order 2022 in the next three years," stated the policy, without committing that the export ban will be lifted even in that timeframe.

According to another major dent to the deregulation policy, "All provincial governments will abolish their respective sugarcane Acts, in due course," a statement that lacks firm commitment.

Currently, federal and provincial governments have 33 sugarcane-related laws: 11 managed by Punjab, seven each by Sindh and



directing that all policy matters requiring cabinet orders be placed directly before the federal cabinet.

Even permission to set up new sugar mills is conditional to "water table levels, environmental, climate change considerations and compliance with other relevant federal, provincial and local laws," making it difficult to establish new factories. The federal cabinet on Tuesday rushed the approval process to meet the International Monetary Fund (IMF) condition, which the global lender was pressing to tick before announcing the December 11 date for the board meeting, according to finance ministry sources.

But the policy document suggests it may take years before the sector is fully deregulated and any commercial enterprise can freely export or import the commodity. "It is the start of a process, which will ultimately lead us to an end-to-end deregulation of the sugar sector," said Advisor to the Prime Minister on Industries Haroon Akhtar Khan, responding to questions about controls the federal and provincial governments would still exercise under the National Policy for the Deregulation of the Sugar Sector.

The advisor said the newly introduced regime for the sugar sector was the most liberalised in South Asia. But the policy Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, three by Balochistan and five by the federal government. Last Friday, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet discreetly allowed the export of 416,000 metric tonnes of sugar, bringing total export permission for this season to 724,000 metric tonnes.

Sugar will remain on the first schedule of the Export Policy Order, which lists goods that cannot be exported except with federal government permission. Instead of relinquishing control, the federal government has tightened its grip by adding another layer of approval.

According to the policy, a new Review Committee will be established, chaired by a federal minister of the assigned ministry, with one member each from the assigned ministry, relevant stakeholders, the millers' lobbyist PSMA and any of five renowned chartered accountancy firms. The committee will analyse data on sugar production, consumption and carryover stocks, then make recommendations to the ECC for import or export.

Immediately after the reporting period ends on November 15 each year, the committee will determine domestic opening carryover stocks as of November 16, production from sugarcane and beet during the preceding crushing season, domestic consumption and actual imports and exports by obtaining data from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). The committee will also calculate average monthly

FROM FIGHTER PILOT TO SPACE WALKER



By: Izmi Herlani



A Pakistani falcon conquers a new frontier— from defending the nation's skies to carrying its dreams beyond the stars. There are moments when a nation's pride seems to rise beyond the limits of geography. On 25 November 2026, as Wing Commander Muhammad Zeeshan Ali stepped aboard China's Tiangong Space Station, Pakistan witnessed such a moment. A son of its soil, an accomplished Pakistan Air Force fighter pilot, had crossed a frontier few ever reach. He was the first Pakistani to enter Earth's orbit and the first foreign astronaut to board Tiangong. For millions watching, it was more than a spaceflight. It was the sight of a Pakistani flag entering a new domain of possibility.Pakistan Air Force has built its reputation on a distinctive ethos: discipline, courage, professional mastery, intellectual curiosity and a resolve to turn challenges into opportunities. Its fighter pilots are shaped by demanding training, constant evaluation, with preparation as the foundation of confidence. They learn to make critical decisions in seconds, trust their teams and remain composed when the margin for error is almost zero. Those habits do not end at the edge of the atmosphere. The qualities demanded of a fighter pilot—precision under pressure, rapid judgement, technical fluency, teamwork and composure in uncertainty—are equally indispensable in space. Wg Cdr Zeeshan carried that training with him. His achievement reflects an institution that prepares its people for tomorrow's challenges. Under the leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, PAF has placed renewed emphasis on modernization, technological self-reliance and the changing character of warfare. His strategic outlook recognises that air power can no longer be understood in isolation: cyber, electronic warfare, information networks, artificial intelligence and space-based capabilities increasingly shape the battlespace. The May 2025 conflict offered a sharp reminder of that reality. The contest was not confined to aircraft and missiles; it also unfolded across electronic and information domains. The world witnessed that PAF's offensive space capabilities disrupted Indian military satellite-linked systems. The strategic lesson is clear: future conflicts will be decided not only by what flies, but also by what can sense, connect, protect, disrupt and operate across multiple domains. Space is now consequential to national security.Against this backdrop, Wg Cdr Zeeshan's selection for the Shenzhou-24 mission carries significance well beyond the symbolism of a launch. Selected under the Pakistan-China human-spaceflight cooperation programme, he undertook seven months of intensive preparation in China. Training covered spacecraft and station systems, specialised operations, scientific payloads, emergency response, crew coordination and malfunction procedures. In space, every checklist and decision must be mastered before the moment arrives. There was another demanding frontier: language. Zeeshan immersed himself in Mandarin, learning mission-related commands and technical vocabulary so he could communicate clearly with Chinese crewmates. He also embraced the culture around him, learning Chinese songs and poetry and practising calligraphy. It was practical preparation for teamwork and safe operations, where communication can be as vital as technology.At his press interaction before launch, Wg Cdr Zeeshan spoke in Chinese about the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China. He read Chinese poetry and described the mission not as an individual triumph but as a journey representing 250 million Pakistanis. His words bridged two nations and gave the occasion its emotional centre. Then came the moment that will live in Pakistan's national memory. After Shenzhou-24 docked with Tiangong, Zeeshan stepped inside the station as its first foreign astronaut. He recited Allama Muhammad Iqbal's immortal verse: "Sitaron se aagay jahan aur bhi hain." Iqbal's Shaheen, forever restless and unwilling to accept the limits of the familiar sky, had found a new expression in a Pakistani air warrior orbiting Earth.The mission is also a beginning, not a finish line. It demonstrates what becomes possible when national institutions, scientific talent and international partnerships converge around a long-term ambition. As a payload specialist, Wg Cdr Zeeshan is participating in joint scientific work, including experiments in biotechnology and materials science. This work can strengthen Pakistan's research ecosystem and inspire young people towards science and innovation. The challenge now is to turn this moment into sustained capability through education, research, indigenous technology and cooperation.A fighter pilot is trained to protect the skies above his homeland. An astronaut reminds us that those skies are only the beginning. Wg Cdr Zeeshan Ali has carried the discipline of PAF, the warmth of Pakistan-China friendship and the hopes of a nation into orbit. His journey tells every child looking up at the night sky that ambition need not stop at the horizon. Pakistan's falcon has flown higher than ever before. The stars are no longer just distant points of light; they are invitations. And this time, Pakistan has answered.

The Negative Impact of Rote Learning on Students' Critical Thinking Skills

By: Laiba Faraz



Education is not merely about memorizing facts; it is about developing the ability to think, question, analyze, and apply knowledge in real-life situations. However, in many traditional education systems, rote learning remains the dominant method of instruction. Rote learning emphasizes repetition and memorization without ensuring conceptual understanding. Although this approach may help students achieve short-term academic success, it has serious negative consequences for the development of critical thinking skills, which are essential in today's rapidly changing world.

One of the most significant drawbacks of rote learning is that it promotes surface-level learning rather than deep understanding. Students who rely on memorization often focus on remembering answers exactly as presented by teachers or textbooks. As a result, they may be unable to explain concepts in their own words or understand the underlying principles behind what they have memorized. Critical thinking

requires students to analyze information, identify relationships, and evaluate ideas, but rote learning restricts learning to mere recall, leaving little room for intellectual exploration.

Furthermore, rote learning discourages questioning and curiosity, which are fundamental components of critical thinking. In classrooms dominated by memorization, students are often discouraged from asking "why" or "how." Instead, they are expected to accept information as absolute truth. This practice conditions students to depend entirely on authority figures for knowledge, reducing their ability to think independently. Over time, learners become passive and hesitant to challenge ideas or develop their own opinions.

Another negative impact of rote learning is its effect on creativity and problem-solving skills. Critical thinking involves approaching problems from multiple perspectives and generating innovative solutions. Rote learning, however, rewards conformity and repetition. Students are praised for reproducing information accurately rather than for thinking creatively. This environment suppresses originality and limits students' ability to adapt their knowledge to unfamiliar or complex situations.

Rote learning also leads to poor long-term retention of knowledge. Since memorized information is not meaningfully understood, it is often forgotten soon after examinations. This cycle of memorizing for exams and forgetting afterward reduces the overall effectiveness of education. In contrast, when students engage in

critical thinking, they actively process information, make connections, and apply concepts, which strengthens memory and understanding over time.

Additionally, rote learning fails to prepare students for real-world challenges and lifelong learning. The modern world requires individuals who can evaluate information critically, solve problems, and make informed decisions. Careers and societal roles increasingly demand adaptability and analytical thinking. Students trained through rote memorization may struggle in such environments because they lack the ability to apply knowledge beyond textbook scenarios.

In conclusion, while rote learning may offer short-term academic benefits, it significantly undermines the development of students' critical thinking skills. It limits understanding, discourages curiosity, suppresses creativity, and fails to equip learners for real-world problem-solving. To foster independent, confident, and analytical thinkers, education systems must move away from rote memorization and embrace teaching approaches that encourage inquiry, discussion, reasoning, and critical engagement with knowledge.

Shenzhou-24 mission 'living proof' of Pak-China ironclad friendship: PM Shehbaz

astronauts and paid tribute to the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), academic institutions, scientists and armed forces for their contributions to the historic achievement. He said the accomplishment would inspire Pakistan's young generation to set their sights on the Moon and beyond.

Shehbaz Sharif also asked the Chinese ambassador to convey his warm greetings and best wishes to President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang.

He paid tribute to President Xi Jinping's leadership and vision, under which China had made remarkable progress in science, technology and space exploration. He also appreciated China's decision to open its space programme to friendly countries for the benefit of humanity.



Beijing: November 26, 2026: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, addresses a press conference at the Pakistan Embassy following the historic Shenzhou-24 launch, highlighting Pakistan's space milestone and a new era of Pakistan-China cooperation in science, innovation and advanced technology.

Dollar steady as sliding yields temper safe-haven bid

■ The US dollar steadied in thin Thanksgiving trading after hitting a one-week low, as falling Treasury yields and new Trump tariff proposals offset rate hike bets and safe-haven demand.

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD



The dollar was steady in Asian trading on Thursday after dropping to a one-week low overnight, as falling Treasury yields and fragile risk sentiment offset the greenback's usual safe-haven appeal ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The US dollar index slipped overnight as US equities pared losses and showed little reaction to strong economic data, leaving it well off a 19-month high struck on Monday when Jensen Huang's return as Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab chief executive reignited the artificial intelligence trade, while also bolstering confidence ?that robust US economic growth could warrant further rate hikes.

"The risk-reward of chasing further USD gains looks less attractive, but hawkish Fed risks should keep the dollar supported," said Sim Moh Siong, an FX strategist at OCBC.

He said that the dollar's relationship with equities could remain choppy, caught between safe-haven demand and concerns that a deeper AI slowdown could weigh on US growth. The yen edged 0.1% higher against the dollar, trading around 159.06 in early Asian trade. The euro was little changed at $1.097 as the market's focus turned to the accounts of the October European Central Bank meeting, scrutinised for hints on the rate outlook. The US dollar index , which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was flat at 103.7.Hotter-than-expected US ?core personal consumption expenditures inflation in October, a sharp upward revision to third-quarter gross domestic product and a Federal Reserve survey showing continued economic growth and sticky inflation cemented expectations the Fed will raise rates by 25 basis points (bps) in December and again in early 2027.

FBR suspends two officers over corruption charges

Business Reporter

ISLAMBAD



The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) suspended two senior officials, Commissioner Inland Revenue and Deputy Director (Audit) from the Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar over alleged misuse of tax exemptions in erstwhile FATA and PATA,

It formed a four-member fact-finding committee to probe into auditing consumption quotas, cross-checking customs import data, physically verifying buyers, and assessing liabilities from goods improperly diverted outside the region.

The FBR directed the Committee to report within next 30 days.

Electricity tariff likely to rise by Rs2.88 per unit across Pakistan today

■ NEPRA will hear a request to increase electricity prices by Rs2.88 per unit under October's monthly fuel adjustment, affecting K-Electric consumers too.

Staff Reporter

KARACHI



Electricity consumers across Pakistan, including Karachi, may face an increase of Rs2.88 per unit as the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) is scheduled to hear a request for a tariff hike under the monthly adjustment mechanism today.

The regulator will conduct a hearing on the Central Power Purchasing Agency's (CPPA) request to increase electricity prices by Rs2.88 per unit under the October monthly adjustment.

The CPPA has already submitted its application to NEPRA for the monthly adjustment for October. Under the government's policy guidelines, the proposed adjustment will also be applicable to K-Electric consumers.

According to the submitted data, the cost of electricity generation through high-speed diesel stood at Rs69.59 per unit in October, while power generation through furnace oil cost Rs46.43 per unit during the same month.

Similarly, the cost of electricity generation through liquefied natural gas (LNG) was recorded at Rs28.74 per unit in October.



PSO plans over 300 EV charging stations, eyes major LPG market expansion

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

More than 300 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are expected across the major cities and roads over the next two to three years as Pakistan State Oil (PSO) plans to extend its Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) market share extensively,

Currently, PSO claims a 2.6% market share in the country's LPG industry, which has an annual volume of 2.5 million tons, and is expected to grow to 3 million tons. To increase its market share, PSO plans to invest at the ports and the LPG storage sectors in Pakistan.

The country's leading energy company already captures the traditional fuel industry, with over 47% in diesel's market share and above 46% in petrol's market share. Pakistan and Qatar are expected to sign a new LNG contract in December.

In addition, PSO plans to spend Rs1.5 billion to Rs1.8 billion on the digitalization of supply chain and retail network.

Norse Atlantic suspends agreement with PIA, two UK flights cancelled

■ Norse Atlantic Airways abruptly suspended its wet-lease agreement with PIA, resulting in two cancelled UK flights as the national airline shifted operations to Boeing 777 aircraft.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



Norwegian airline Norse Atlantic Airways has abruptly suspended its wet-lease agreement with Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), disrupting two flights from the United Kingdom, the national flag carrier said on Thursday.

According to a PIA spokesperson, the airline suspended operations without prior notice shortly before passenger check-in was due to begin in London and Manchester.

As a result, two flights were cancelled: PK-786 from London to Islamabad and PK-710 from Manchester to Lahore.

The spokesperson said Norse Atlantic suspended its operations just moments before the scheduled departures, leaving passengers affected by the sudden disruption.

PIA has taken steps to end its reliance on the foreign carrier and ensure continuity of its UK operations, the spokesperson added.

The national airline said it would operate all its UK flights using its own Boeing 777 aircraft from November 26, with alternative arrangements completed to maintain the regular flight schedule.

PIA had signed a six-month wet-lease agreement with Norse Atlantic Airways on October 8 to acquire two Boeing 787 aircraft.

The leased aircraft began operating PIA flights on November 1. However, the arrangement was suspended after just 25 days, raising questions about the reliability of the airline's short-term fleet arrangements.

PIA said it had made alternative arrangements to minimise further disruption and maintain its UK flight operations.



Islamabad Administration Bans Cash Payments At Mci Offices

■ All transactions to be conducted through digital channels from December 1, 2026

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The Islamabad administration has decided to completely end cash transactions at the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad (MCI) offices from December 1, making digital payments mandatory for all taxes, fees, fines and other charges.

The district administration has issued directives for the implementation of a cashless Islamabad initiative. Chief Officer Metropolitan Corporation Owais Afzal issued a notification on November 25, stating that no cash payments would be accepted at any MCI office, directorate, wing or branch from December 1, 2026.

According to the notification, all payments, including taxes, fees, rents, fines and licence charges, will be collected exclusively through digital channels. Payments through pay orders, demand drafts and cheques will also not be accepted.

The MCI has been directed to close all cash counters by November 30. Officials have also been instructed to seal manual receipt books and deposit them with the relevant accounts office.

Pak-Maldives direct flights by May 2027, new investment avenues, stronger trade ties

■ The Maldivian delegation indicated that it was targeting "May 2027 for the launch of direct flights between Pakistan and the Maldives", subject to the completion of necessary arrangements. The Chief Executive of the Maldivian national airline also attended the meeting.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan visited the third day of FoodAg Pakistan 2026 at the Karachi Expo Centre, where he held a high-level bilateral meeting with the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation of the Republic of Maldives, Mr. Mohamed Saeed, and engaged with international delegates, exhibitors and Pakistan's Trade and Investment Officers (TIOs) to explore new avenues for trade, investment and export promotion.

During his meeting with the Maldivian Minister, both sides discussed a broad framework of economic cooperation encompassing direct air connectivity, maritime links, bilateral trade, tourism, investment, healthcare and human resource development, said a release issued here on Thursday.

The Maldivian delegation indicated that it was targeting "May 2027 for the launch of direct flights between Pakistan and the Maldives", subject to the completion of necessary



arrangements. The Chief Executive of the Maldivian national airline also attended the meeting.Pak-Maldives direct flights by May 2027, new investment avenues, stronger trade ties Welcoming the proposed initiative, Jam Kamal Khan observed that direct flights, complemented by commercially viable shipping services, could significantly strengthen business exchanges, tourism and trade between the two countries.

He emphasised that sustainable connectivity was essential for developing reliable supply chains and expanding bilateral economic engagement.

Building upon the recent visit of the Maldivian President to Pakistan, the Federal Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to becoming a reliable, long-term economic partner of the Maldives.

He identified significant opportunities for Pakistani exports, particularly food and agricultural products, pharmaceuticals, textiles, leather, construction materials and other industrial goods.

5-5 draw knocks Pakistan out of Azlan Shah Cup on goal difference

● Pakistan drew 5-5 with hosts Malaysia in a thrilling Azlan Shah Cup clash, missing out on the final on goal average.

SPORTS DESK

KUALA LUMPUR

Pakistan failed to qualify for the final of the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup after surrendering a late lead to draw 5-5 with hosts Malaysia in a thrilling final group-stage match in Ipoh on Thursday.

The result left both teams level on ten points, but Malaysia booked their place in the final on superior goal average. Pakistan will now face South Korea in the third-and-fourth-place playoff on Saturday, while Malaysia take on Australia in the title clash on the same day.

Pakistan appeared to have secured a crucial victory when Sufyan Khan converted a penalty corner with three minutes remaining to put the Green Shirts 5-4 ahead.

However, Malaysia had the final say as Faizal Saari completed his hat-trick by converting a late penalty, earning the hosts a dramatic draw and confirming their passage to the final.



The result was another frustrating outcome for Pakistan, whose campaign featured attacking promise but recurring defensive lapses at crucial moments.

Malaysia made an early breakthrough through Abu Kamal Azari in the third minute, but Pakistan responded strongly as Ahmed Nadeem struck twice in the 12th and 15th minutes to give his side a 2-1 lead.

The hosts restored parity in the 20th minute when Jalil Marhan converted a penalty corner. Pakistan were subsequently reduced to ten players after Rana Waheed Ashraf received a green card, but neither side managed to score again before the interval.

Muhammad Ahmed restored Pakistan's advantage in the 35th minute before Hannan Shahid extended the lead to 4-2 in the 47th minute, putting the visitors in a commanding position.

Malaysia, however, mounted a swift comeback as Saari struck twice in the 49th minute, both goals coming from penalty corners, to bring the hosts level at 4-4.

Sufyan's late penalty-corner conversion appeared to have settled the contest in Pakistan's favour, but Malaysia won a penalty in the closing stages and Saari made no mistake, completing his hat-trick and denying Pakistan all three points.

The draw once again exposed Pakistan's struggles to protect leads, a weakness that ultimately proved costly in their pursuit of a place in the final.

Although the Green-shirts demonstrated considerable attacking quality, their defensive organisation remained a concern throughout the campaign. The absence of experienced defender Ammad Butt was also notable, with his leadership and defensive presence likely to be missed.



Lahore Qalandars, Punjab Sports Board join hands to develop young sporting

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE

Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise Lahore Qalandars and the Sports Board Punjab (SBP) have joined hands to identify, groom and develop promising young athletes across the province, with a particular focus on providing professional coaching and training opportunities to emerging talent from the CM Punjab Youth Games.

The two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the National Hockey Stadium on Thursday, establishing a partnership aimed at strengthening grassroots sports and creating development opportunities for aspiring cricketers and footballers.

Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar, who attended the ceremony as chief guest, described the agreement as an important step towards promoting sports in the province. He said Lahore Qalandars' experienced trainers would provide professional coaching to talented youngsters identified through the Youth Games, helping them improve their skills and prepare for higher levels of competition.

Unbeaten Pakistan Shaheens eye final spot

■ Abdul Samad-led side face Bangladesh 'A' in the semifinal on Friday



SPORTS Desk

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Shaheens captain Abdul Samad said his side would look to address shortcomings from the group stage and deliver an improved performance when they face Bangladesh 'A' in the semi-final of the ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars on Friday.

The defending champions have won all three of their Group B matches and will enter the last-four encounter as favourites after an impressive run in the eight-team tournament.

"We have won all three group-stage matches and performed well in all three departments. However, there are a few areas we need to improve ahead of the knockout stage," Samad told PCB Digital on Thursday.

"As a batting unit, our aim will be to bat for 50 overs and post a competitive total, as we have a strong bowling attack capable of defending it."

Samad said the players had completed a productive training session ahead of the crucial fixture and were focused on correcting their mistakes from the opening round.

"The players had a very good training session today ahead of the semi-final. We will look to address the mistakes made in the group stage and put up a good contest in the semi-final," he added.

The second semi-final will be played at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium in Doha, with the toss scheduled for 2:30pm Pakistan time and the first ball at 3pm.

Pakistan Shaheens began their campaign with a 61-run victory over the United Arab Emirates before defeating arch-rivals India 'A' by 48 runs. They completed their group-stage campaign with a commanding 96-run win against Nepal.

Opening batter Maaz Sadaqat has been their leading run-scorer, accumulating 125 runs in three matches, including two half-centuries.

Aqib Javed Defends Pcb's New Central Contract Structure

● Says format-based contracts aim to strengthen Test cricket, encourage domestic

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Director of High Performance Aqib Javed has defended the country's new men's central contract structure, saying it is designed to strengthen Test cricket, encourage domestic participation and build a more competitive national team.

Speaking on the Stray Drive podcast, Aqib explained that the PCB had moved away from the traditional A, B, C and D grading system towards format-based contracts, grouping players according to the formats in which they are expected to represent Pakistan over the coming year.

"The purpose of bringing the central contract for a long time is that the players whom we want to see playing for the next one year in any format should be engaged, brought under the contract, so that their focus is better and they get a financial benefit," he said.

Previously, contracts were largely based on performances in the preceding year, but Aqib said the board had been changing that approach to account for future international schedules and team requirements."We are trying to change this concept … the contract for the coming year, looking at which players will play in which format next year," he said.



The new structure groups players into Test specialists, those featuring in both Tests and one-day internationals (ODIs), players competing in ODIs and Twenty20 internationals (T20Is), and T20-only cricketers.Aqib stressed that a central contract was not a guarantee of selection, describing the categories as an indication of likely international roles rather than confirmation of a place in the national side.

'Unbelievable catch': Pakistan motorbike passenger becomes cricketsensation

■ "Fame that some people do not achieve in years came to me through a video lasting just a few seconds," says Mehran Khan

SPORTS DESK

PESHAWAR

Returning home from work on the back of a friend's motorbike in KP's Mingora, Mehran Khan acted on pure instinct when a cricket ball sailed towards him and he nonchalantly took a one-handed catch that has won him instant global fame.

"I told my friend who was riding the motorcycle to lower his head. I stood up slightly on the moving motorcycle and caught it," the civil servant, an experienced amateur cricketer, told AFP.

"Words cannot describe how happy I was after taking that catch. It felt as though I had achieved something extraordinary," the 27-year-old added.

Khan and his friend were motoring past a match in the Swat Premier League in the city of Mingora when the ball arched towards them over the boundary on Tuesday.



Batsman Abrar Lala struck a looping six, sending the ball towards the road adjoining the cricket ground in picturesque Swat Valley, where Khan plucked it out of the air with one hand. "I have been playing cricket since childhood and have played several matches at this very ground," Khan, a government employee with the Public Health Engineering Department, explained.

"When the batsman hit the six, I instinctively wished I could catch the ball," he added.

The moment has gone viral around the world and drawn the praise of cricketing greats.

'Massively viral'

"Fame that some people do not achieve in years came to me through a video lasting just a few seconds," Khan said.

"My life has changed completely. Now, whenever I go out, people recognise me and ask to take selfies with me.

"When I returned home that night my family gave me a wonderful welcome," he said.

"Nobody had ever asked to take selfies with me like that before," he added.

Khan, a batsman, fast bowler and accomplished fielder, said the footage was uploaded by a local TikTok user before going "massively viral".

He said he was particularly proud to see the video shared by Australian fast bowler Brett Lee on his Facebook page.

"I could not contain my happiness. Just imagine, I am an ordinary cricket player and here is a legend like Brett Lee sharing my catch. He captioned it 'Unbelievable Catch,'" Khan said.

Rana Irfan stuns Asif to win Snooker World Cup

■ Multan-born cueist beats three-time world champion 5-0 to annex the coveted title in Muscat

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI

Pakistan's Rana Irfan, who hails from Multan, clinched the men's title at the IBSF World Cup in Muscat, Oman, defeating compatriot Muhammad Asif 5-0 in a commanding all-Pakistan final.

Irfan produced a dominant performance to secure the gold medal, while Asif settled for silver and Asjad Iqbal claimed bronze after reaching the semi-finals, completing a remarkable medal haul for Pakistan.

The one-sided final saw Irfan take control from the outset, winning the opening frame 96-46 with a break of 56 before extending his advantage with a 67-48 victory in the second. He then took the third 64-1 and strengthened his grip on the contest with a superb break of 68 in a 91-12 fourth-frame win.

Irfan sealed the championship by taking the fifth frame 69-6 to complete a comprehensive 5-0 triumph.

Earlier, Muhammad Asif booked his place in the final with a convincing 4-1 victory over Afghanistan's Mohammad Rais Senzah.

Asif started strongly, winning the first two frames 63-8 and 76-29.

Senzah responded by taking the third 71-35, but Asif regained control, producing a break of 78 in a commanding 102-point frame before wrapping up the match with a 93-0 victory.The other semi-final proved a far more dramatic affair, with Irfan edging fellow Pakistani Asjad Iqbal 4-3 in a seven-frame thriller.Iqbal made an impressive start, taking the opening frame 87-23 with a break of 66.

Irfan levelled the match with a 64-51 win, but Iqbal regained the lead by claiming the third frame 80-26.

The contest swung back and forth,



with Irfan producing a break of 62 to take the fourth frame before a remarkable 91-point clearance, including a 91 break, put him ahead. Iqbal responded emphatically with a maximum 123 break to force a deciding frame, but Irfan held his nerve to win the decider 69-15 and book his place in the final. Despite the defeat, Iqbal's semi-final appearance earned him the bronze medal.Earlier in the quarter-finals on Wednesday Mohammad Asif defeated England's Harvay Chandler 4-1, dominating the opening two frames 95-0 and 58-1, with a break of 58 in the second. Chandler fought back with a superb break of 99 to win the fourth frame 99-11, but Asif maintained his composure to seal the match with a convincing 64-1 victory in the fifth.

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Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing a meeting of the Steering Committee on Wheat Import for the year 2026–27, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad on November 26, 2026.

CM Murad rejects referendum as solution to provinces issue

■ The chief minister said the schedule for local government elections would be announced after consultations with the ECP

Staff Reporter

KARACHI



Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has rejected a referendum as a solution to the provinces issue, saying he sees no merit in the proposed exercise.Speaking at a press conference, Murad Ali Shah said constitutional matters should be resolved in accordance with the Constitution, questioning the need for a referendum when a legal framework was already in place. “I have heard about the referendum only through the media,” he said, questioning whether the exercise was intended merely to seek public opinion.

The chief minister said the schedule for local government elections would be announced after consultations with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). He added that the polls would be held under a new law, which the government aimed to formulate within three months.He also discussed constitutional provisions governing changes to provincial boundaries, defending the Pakistan Peoples Party's proposed local government legislation and rejecting suggestions that it was being introduced under pressure.

JUI-F claims senior leaders arrested in Khushab ahead of Sargodha rally

● Police and Federal Constabulary personnel also withdrawn from security duty at the JUI-F chief’s residences in Islamabad and Dera Ismail Khan

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) has claimed that Punjab Police arrested several of its senior leaders, including party Secretary-General and MNA Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri and Punjab chief Maulana Amjad Khan, in Khushab ahead of its scheduled November 26 public gathering in Sargodha.

JUI-F spokesperson Aslam Ghauri said that authorities detained Jamiat Talaba-e-Islam central president Malik Owais, conducted raids at the residences of other party office-bearers, and enforced business closures across four Punjab districts. Despite the reported crackdown, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has vowed to proceed with the Sargodha rally. Punjab Police have yet to confirm the detentions.

The latest confrontation stems from a steady deterioration in ties between Maulana Fazlur Rehman and the ruling coalition, despite their past alliance. A key figure in the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) that ousted Imran Khan’s government in April 2022, Fazlur Rehman had previously partnered with the PML-N and PPP in Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s c oalition government.However, relations soured following the February 8, 2024 general elections, which the veteran cleric rejected over alleged rigging. Moving to the opposition benches, the JUI-F distanced itself from the ruling alliance and began cooperating with the PTI in parliament.

Tensions escalated sharply after the federal government imposed governor’s rule and an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on October 11, 2026—a move Fazlur Rehman condemned as an assault on democracy and provincial autonomy. He also accused the Centre of reneging on commitments despite his efforts to mediate between the PML-N-led government and the PTI leadership.

The dispute spilled into a public war of words involving Defense Minister Khawaja Asif and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. During a heated Senate session on October 29, Naqvi claimed that JUI-F leaders had earlier approached the government seeking governor’s rule in KP, sparking fierce protests from party lawmakers and sharp pushback from Fazlur Rehman.

The standoff intensified further in November when police and Federal Constabulary personnel were withdrawn from security duty at the JUI-F chief’s residences in Islamabad and Dera Ismail Khan.



Lahore police deny detaining Maulana Fazlur Rehman, submit report to court

■ Lahore police have told the High Court that Maulana Fazlur Rehman is neither arrested nor under house arrest, as proceedings continue over his alleged confinement.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Lahore Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) has told the Lahore High Court that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has neither been arrested nor placed under house arrest and is not wanted by the police.

The court heard a petition challenging Maulana Fazlur Rehman’s alleged house arrest. Justice Ali Zia Bajwa conducted the hearing on an application filed by JUI-F counsel Abrar Hussain. On the previous day, the court had issued a notice to the CCPO Lahore, seeking a response.

During the hearing, government counsel Farrukh Lodhi submitted a written response on behalf of the CCPO. The report stated that police had neither arrested Maulana Fazlur Rehman nor declared him wanted, adding that he had not been placed under house arrest.

The government counsel informed the court that Maulana Fazlur Rehman had left his residence the previous day to offer condolences to someone. The court questioned what evidence was available to establish that he had gone out for the purpose of offering condolences.

In response, the government counsel said police had videos and photographs of Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

Subsequently, the court summoned the CCPO Lahore in person and adjourned further proceedings until 1:00 pm.

It is worth mentioning that on November 24, Maulana Fazlur Rehman issued a video statement from his residence in Lahore, claiming that he was surrounded by state authorities. He said that the closure of all routes in Lahore would prevent him from directly addressing lawyers at the Lahore High Court Bar.

Meanwhile, Lahore Deputy Commissioner had earlier told the media that the administration had neither contacted Maulana Fazlur Rehman nor informed him of any threat alert. Regarding the alleged siege, the deputy commissioner said no orders had been issued to place the JUI-F chief under house arrest.

IHC extends stay on Islamabad LG elections by two weeks

■ The Islamabad High Court extended its stay on local government elections by two weeks, prompting the ECP to suspend the election schedule and submit a detailed response on ward delimitation.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has extended its stay order halting local government elections in the federal capital by another two weeks. Justice Umair Majeed Malik heard a petition challenging the process for holding local government elections in Islamabad.During the hearing, the ECP's counsel informed the court that the commission had suspended the local government election schedule following the court's interim order.

Justice Malik questioned whether the issue of delimitation had been resolved. In response, Qazi Adil Aziz pointed out that one ward had only two registered voters, raising concerns about how elections could be conducted there. The judge observed that the delimitation process should have been carried out under the 2015 law.

The ECP's lawyer told the court that the commission had issued a detailed order explaining its decision and the reasons behind it. The judge questioned whether the commission had properly conducted the relevant proceedings, noting that affected parties could have filed appeals if the process had been completed transparently.The ECP's counsel maintained that the commission had conducted the exercise six times.Justice Malik observed that the court was yet to know what steps Parliament might take regarding the matter. He stressed that the ECP would have to satisfy the court that the delimitation process had been completed properly. The judge also noted that several petitions had previously been filed over the issue, with applicants complaining that they did not even know which ward they belonged to.

Metro bus service partially suspended in twin cities as traffic advisory issued

■ Twin cities enforce special traffic rules from Nov 26-28 for foreign delegations, suspending parts of the Metro Bus, banning heavy vehicles, and closing Faizabad Terminal and Margalla trails.



Staff Reporter

LAHORE

Special traffic and security arrangements have been put in place in Rawalpindi and Islamabad from November 26 to November 28 in view of the arrival and movement of foreign delegations. The measures include a partial suspension of the Metro Bus service, a ban on heavy traffic, and temporary closures of key transit and hiking points.The service will operate on a limited route during this three-day period on the directives of the district administration. Buses will continue to run between Saddar Station in Rawalpindi and Faiz Ahmed Faiz Station in Islamabad.

However, the route from 7th Avenue Station to Pak Secretariat will remain suspended from 10:00 PM on November 26 until 12:30 AM on November 28. The electric bus service operating on the same route will also remain suspended during this timeframe, requiring commuters to arrange alternative transport.Due to the movement of foreign delegations in the federal capital, the entry of heavy traffic into both Islamabad and Rawalpindi will be prohibited from 6:00 PM on November 26 until 12:30 AM on November 28. Heavy vehicles will not be permitted to enter the twin cities via the Motorway or GT Road during these hours.

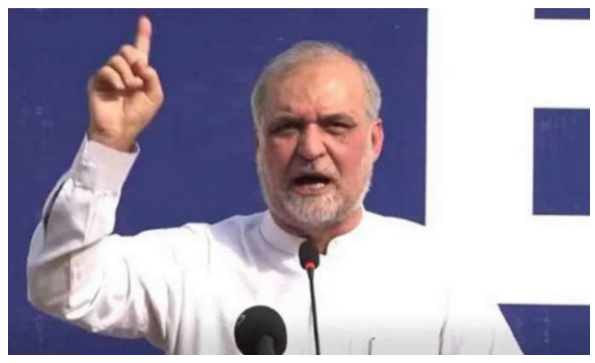
The administration also announced that the Faizabad Bus Terminal will remain closed from 6:00 PM on November 26 to 12:30 AM on November 28. Commuters traveling via inter-district buses and other passenger vehicles have been advised to adjust their travel schedules and make alternative arrangements accordingly.

JI, govt reach accord after PM Shehbaz meeting

■ Jamaat-e-Islami and the government reached an agreement following talks with PM Shehbaz, though Hafiz Naeem vowed further action on Nov 29.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan Emir Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman has stated that an agreement has been reached with the government, though the party remains firm on several remaining demands, adding that the next course of action will be announced at Minar-e-Pakistan on November 29.

Speaking to the media following a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, JI Emir Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman said that his party's committee performed commendably, noting that 20 million people have already been included in the relief package announced by the government and are receiving substantial relief.

He stated that an agreement has been reached to expand relief for vehicles up to 1,000cc, while tractor relief will also be extended to farmers and cultivators owning up to 12.5 acres of land.

Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman said detailed discussions were held on reducing the petroleum levy, noting that the windfall impact on the levy has come down from Rs80 to Rs63. He added that working on the levy will be completed before the budget, and the next budget will not rely on levy revenues.

He maintained that the government has agreed that state officials will not use vehicles exceeding 1,600cc, and clauses regarding Independent Power Producers (IPPs) have been incorporated into the agreement. He noted that reviewing IPP agreements reduced electricity bills by 25 percent, resulting in an overall 30 percent drop in power bills over two years. He stated that while JI has agreed to the accord, it stands firm on many other demands, adding that an implementation committee will monitor progress on the agreement. "We will not sit idle at home; once we secure one relief, we will take to the streets for the next," he asserted.

The JI Emir said the government will curtail its expenditures and steps will be taken toward eliminating interest (riba), warning that the party will take to the streets against bank interest.

Regarding inflation in the country, he pointed out that wheat is becoming increasingly expensive nationwide.

Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman emphasized that the government's acceptance of four demands does not mean all demands have been met, reiterating that he will unveil the next line of action at Minar-e-Pakistan.

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