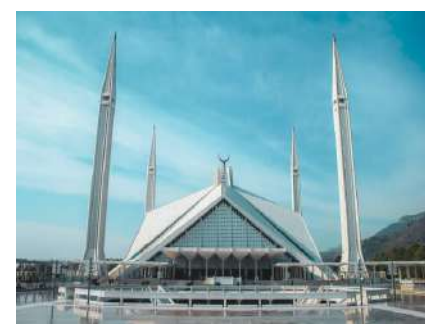




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Govt remains open to negotiations with PTI: Rana



ANI

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Wednesday again extended an olive branch to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying the government remained open to negotiations.

His remarks came as the PTI's long march towards Islamabad has entered its fourth day. According to the former ruling party, the protest is aimed at seeking the release of its jailed founding chairman Imran Khan and what it describes as the restoration of constitutional supremacy. The government-opposition talks aimed at averting the PTI's October 4 long march

towards Islamabad ended in deadlock on Saturday, with the two sides failing to reach consensus on key issues.

Both sides accused each other of sabotaging the dialogues. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday had accused the KP CM of attempting to sabotage negotiations between the PTI and the federal government.

PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja had claimed that the primary reason for the failure of the talks was the federal government's insistence that all anti-terrorism actions it unilaterally initiated in KP must be owned by the provincial government.

Addressing a press conference

today, the PM's aide said: "No demands can be met by holding the state hostage."

"Political differences can be resolved through negotiations," Sanaullah added.

He urged PTI to "set aside personal interests" and come forward to resolve issues. The PM's aide alleged that PTI's sole agenda was to create instability in the country, saying political instability had continued since 2014.

He said attempts to surround Islamabad had remained a key point of PTI's politics since its 2014 march on the capital, adding that the party was now trying to march on Islamabad again.

Sanaullah said that PTI was

using the KP government's resources for the march, saying provincial resources had been "thrown into" the effort over the past two years.

Moving on to the security situation in KP, the PM's aide said intelligence-based operations would continue in the province.

He said no new operation was being launched and "no IDPs will be made", adding that the federal government and the field marshal had already made this clear.

He said the provincial apex committee was headed by the chief minister, but Sohail Afridi had held only one meeting during his 11 months in office.

FM Dar, CNSC Aamer Raza stress 'close institutional coordination' on national security



ANI

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Commander National Strategic Command (CNSC) General Syed Aamer Raza agreed on the importance of "close institutional coordination" in advancing Pakistan's national interests and contributing to regional peace and security, the Foreign Office (FO) said on Wednesday.

According to an FO statement, General Raza called on Dar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where the deputy prime minister congratulated him on his promotion and appointment as CNSC and wished him success in his new responsibilities. "The two officials discussed matters of national security and exchanged views on regional and international developments. They agreed on the importance of close institutional coordination in advancing Pakistan's national interests and contributing to regional peace and security," the statement said. General Raza took charge as the first CNSC on July 31, after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif promoted him to the rank of a four-star general and appointed him as CNSC on July 24, a move completing the restructuring of the country's higher military command initiated under the 27th Constitutional

Amendment. The position was created under the 27th Constitutional Amendment, which rewrote Article 243. The amendment abolished the long-standing office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) and established the posts of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and CNSC. It also expanded the constitutional powers of the country's senior military leadership and introduced constitutional protections for five-star generals.

Under the amendment, the prime minister appoints the CNSC on the recommendation of the CDF and Chief of Army Staff. The appointment is for a three-year term, while the prime minister is authorised to determine the terms, conditions and rules governing the office.

The amendment also allows the prime minister to reappoint the CNSC for one additional three-year term on the recommendation of the CDF. It further provides that the appointment, reappointment or extension of the CNSC cannot be challenged before any court, placing such decisions beyond judicial review. The bill also stipulates that the retirement age, service tenure, or removal clauses under the Army Act will not apply to the CNSC, who will continue to serve as a general in the Pakistan Army while performing his duties in the role.

CDF Munir, Guterres discuss regional security, Kashmir issue, UN peace efforts

ANI

RAWALPINDI: United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres met Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, where they discussed regional security and international peace and security. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters of mutual interest, the prevailing regional security environment and the UN's role in promoting international peace and security came under discussion during the meeting. The two sides exchanged views on regional stability, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, India's abeyance of the Indus Waters Treaty and terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. Field Marshal Asim Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to international peace and highlighted the coun-



try's contributions to UN peacekeeping missions. He also appreciated the UN's role under the leadership of Secretary-General António Guterres in advancing peace, stability and humanitarian cooperation. The UN chief paid tribute to the sacrifices and contributions made by Pakistan and

its armed forces in the war against terrorism and UN peacekeeping missions. Guterres also acknowledged Pakistan's continued commitment to international peace and security and specifically appreciated the country's efforts towards the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts.

Security forces kill 18 terrorists in KP, Balochistan operations



ANI

PESHAWAR: Security forces have killed 18 terrorists belong to Fitna al Khwarij and Fitna al Hindustan in separate intelligence-based operations in North Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Mastung, Balochistan, as part of ongoing counter-

terrorism efforts under the Azm-e-Istehkam vision and Operation Radd-ul-Fitna 3. Security sources said that security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation after maintaining continuous surveillance of the movement and hideouts of Fitna-ul-Khwarij terrorists in North Waziristan and adjoining areas. As many as 13 terrorists were killed during the operation, security sources said. In a separate operation in Siyah Pasht and Killi Gashtari areas of Mastung, Balochistan, security forces targeted hideouts of Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists, killing five terrorists, the sources said. A large quantity of weapons and ammunition was also recovered from the killed terrorists, they added.

Three remaining MT Honour 25 crew members arrive in Karachi

ANI

The three remaining MT Honour 25 crew members rescued from Somali pirates arrived in Karachi on Wednesday and were received by Sindh Governor Nehal Hashmi and Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab at Jinnah International Airport. While welcoming the rescued sailors upon their arrival, Wahab said that all necessary measures would be taken to ensure the crew members' well-being, adding that while it was a "day of happiness" for those families whose loved ones were returning, it was also a day of mourning for those families who lost their loved ones. Hashmi said that it was a "national responsibility" to bring back the Pakistani crew members, adding that the entire nation should encourage them upon their repatriation. "The prime minister showed personal interest in this and was updated by the minute on developments". Earlier in the day, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said that the remaining three crew members of MT Honour 25 were en route to Karachi from Addis Ababa and would be reunited with their families.

ISPR DG says Pakistani troops already in Saudi Arabia across multiple domains

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director-General (DG) Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry on Wednesday said that Pakistani troops are already present in Saudi Arabia across multiple capabilities and domains.

Asked by CNN whether Pakistani troops or personnel were already on the ground in Saudi Arabia as part of the Makkah alliance, the ISPR DG said the forces had been there for decades. "Pakistani troops have been there for decades [...] in Saudi Arabia," Lt Gen Chaudhry said.

He said the Makkah alliance had



not emerged "in a vacuum", pointing to the longstanding diplomatic, political, military and people-to-people ties between Pakistan, Saudi

Arabia and Türkiye.

"So I can share with you that Pakistani troops, in multiple capabilities and domains, are already there," the ISPR DG said.

The remarks come after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye agreed to immediately implement their collective defence commitments and ensure the "rapid deployment" of agreed military forces and capabilities in Saudi Arabia. The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in Riyadh on Monday, according to a joint statement shared by Pakistan's Foreign Office.

PTI open to dialogue but seeks unconditional talks, says Barrister Gohar



ANI

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan has called for unconditional negotiations with the government, saying dialogue remains the only way to resolve

the country's political issues. Speaking to the media, Gohar said the party was not refusing negotiations but wanted talks to be held without any conditions. "Negotiations must be unconditional," he said, stressing that successful dialogue was essential in the interest of the country, people and democracy. Gohar opposed the imposition of governor's rule or an emergency, saying the province was already facing a serious terrorism situation. He also called for meetings with PTI founder Imran Khan and the release of arrested party leaders. He said a doctor based in Lahore, rather than one from London, could also provide treatment to Imran Khan. Referring to the government's offer of talks, Gohar said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had proposed negotiations subject to certain conditions, while restrictions were being imposed on PTI.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB, Engineer Amir

Belarus Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Volfovich Meets Field Marshal Asim Munir at GHQ

Report: ANI Correspondent:

RAWALPINDI -- A high-level delegation from the Republic of Belarus, led by Lieutenant General Aleksandr Volfovich, State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, both sides discussed evolving regional and global security, matters of mutual interest and the scope of bilateral defence cooperation.

Field Marshal Asim Munir reiterated Pakistan's desire to further strengthen defence and security cooperation with Belarus.



Lieutenant General Aleksandr Volfovich reciprocated the commitment to enhancing bilateral defence

and security cooperation and appreciated Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace and stability.

Protect Children from Fast Foods, Says Dr. Raja Mahndi Hassan

BY: ANI City Reporter

ISLAMABAD-- Renowned heart, diabetes and stroke specialist, Gold Medalist and CEO of Mahndi Heart and Medical Center Islamabad, Dr. Raja Mahndi Hassan, has stressed the importance of precautionary measures, healthy lifestyle and expert medical guidance to prevent heart-related diseases.

In a special discussion, Dr. Raja Mahndi Hassan said the popularity of Natural Bypass (EECP) treatment was gradually increasing. He said patients in countries including the USA, UK and Germany were benefiting from the treatment as an alternative option to help manage certain heart-related conditions



without surgery. He said the 35-day EECP treatment involved non-inva-

sive medical sessions and could help improve symptoms such as persistent chest discomfort and shortness of breath in suitable patients.

Dr. Raja Mahndi Hassan said patients from across Pakistan, including Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and tribal areas, were visiting Mahndi Medical Center in Sector E-11/1 Islamabad for the treatment.

He advised people to adopt healthy eating habits, consume fruits and vegetables and make walking part of their routine. He particularly urged parents to protect themselves and their children from excessive consumption of fast food, oily foods and soft drinks.

IPDS Hosts Regional Dialogue on SCO's Future

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Center for SCO Studies at the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS) hosted a high-level webinar titled "Post Bishkek SCO Summit 2026: Decisions, Challenges and Pakistan's Chairmanship 2027," bringing together diplomats, policy experts, and academic leaders from Pakistan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

In her welcome remarks, Dr. Farhat Asif, President of IPDS, reflected on Pakistan's journey within the SCO and highlighted the Center's growing contribution to SCO-focused research through initiatives including the SCO Observatory and SCO Commitment Tracker. Delivering the keynote address, Ambassador Sohail Khan, Deputy Secretary-General of the SCO, reviewed the key outcomes of the 26th SCO Summit and outlined major areas of focus for Pakistan's upcoming chairmanship, including Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence, energy, poverty reduction and development, humanitarian cooperation, and



regional cooperation.

The discussion featured insights from Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan's former Permanent Representative to the UN; Prof. Kubanychbek Taabaldiev from Kyrgyzstan; Stanislav Korolev, Director of Russia's National Center for People's Diplomacy of the SCO; Sheradil Baktygulov, Director of the Institute for World Politics Study of Kyrgyzstan; Dr. Shamsiddin Karimov, Director of Tajikistan National NGOs Association; Dr. Lidiya Parkhomchik, Chief Researcher at Kazakhstan's Institute of World Economics and Politics; and Kabuljon Sabirov, Director of the

SCO Center for Public Diplomacy in Uzbekistan.

From regional connectivity and investment cooperation to human security, logistics, multipolar diplomacy, and people-to-people engagement, the speakers examined both the achievements and unresolved challenges facing the SCO and considered how Pakistan can translate regional consensus into meaningful action during its 2027 chairmanship.

The webinar continued IPDS' longstanding tradition of post-SCO Summit dialogue, providing a platform for diverse regional perspectives on the future of cooperation across Eurasia.

UN Women Welcomes Guterres, Reaffirms Commitment to Gender Equality in Pakistan

ANI

ISLAMABAD: UN Women Pakistan has joined the United Nations Country Team in welcoming UN Secretary-General António Guterres during his official visit to Pakistan from October 6 to 8.

The visit underscores the long-standing partnership between Pakistan and the United Nations and the importance of multilateral cooperation in promoting peace, resilience and sustainable development.

The Pakistan Foreign Office said the Secretary-General's visit provides an opportunity to reaffirm Pakistan's longstanding cooperation with the UN and exchange views on regional and international developments. His engagements have also focused on Pakistan's role in strengthening multilateralism, international peace and security, as well as the country's efforts in disaster preparedness and early-warning



systems. UN Women Pakistan said strong partnerships across the UN system remain essential to advancing gender equality, protecting women's rights and empowering women and girls. It stressed the importance of ensuring that women remain at the centre of efforts to build a more peaceful, resilient and inclusive future. Guterres, who arrived in Islamabad on October 6,

has held meetings with senior Pakistani leadership during his visit. The UN chief has also highlighted the importance of diplomacy and multilateral cooperation in addressing regional and global challenges.

UN Women Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to working with partners across the UN family and in Pakistan to advance a more equal and inclusive society.

Pakistan, Philippines Discuss Stronger Consular Cooperation

ANI

MANILA: Pakistan and the Philippines have discussed measures to strengthen consular cooperation and facilitate travel and people-to-people contacts between the two countries. Ambassador of Pakistan to the Philippines Dr. Asima Rabbani called on Anne Jalando-on Louis, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Consular Affairs (OCA) at the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), where they exchanged views on matters of mutual interest.

The discussions focused on enhancing consular coordination, facilitating travel by Pakistani and Filipino officials, businesspeople and tourists, and promoting closer people-to-people links.



The engagement comes amid broader efforts to deepen Pakistan-Philippines relations. The two countries maintain established cooperation in political, economic, commercial, defence and consular

fields, with institutional mechanisms supporting bilateral engagement. The meeting also underlined the importance of smoother consular services in supporting growing bilateral exchanges

Gilani proposes measures to strengthen Pakistan-Tanzania relations

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, during his meeting with Mussa Azzan Zungu, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, on the sidelines of the 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Arusha on Wednesday, proposed concrete measures to strengthen Pakistan-Tanzania relations, with a focus on diplomatic presence, trade, technology and parliamentary cooperation.

The Chairman of the Senate called for the establishment of a resident Tanzanian diplomatic mission in Islamabad, noting that a permanent diplomatic presence would strengthen bilateral engagement while facilitating visas, business travel, tourism and greater people-



to-people interaction. He also stressed the need to substantially enhance bilateral trade and investment, including stronger linkages between the ports, business communities and chambers of commerce of the two countries. He highlighted the potential for coop-

eration in information technology, digital innovation, agriculture, education and skills development, and encouraged greater private-sector engagement to translate the goodwill between Pakistan and Tanzania into tangible economic cooperation.

Education state minister, Azerbaijan Media Council chief discuss media cooperation

ANI

BAKU: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training Wajiha Qamar held a meeting with Chairman of the Media and Broadcasting Council of Azerbaijan Ahmad Ismayilov on the sidelines of the CICA Media Forum, where both sides emphasized the need for closer cooperation and continuous exchange of experience between the two coun-

tries. Wajiha Qamar was heading a Pakistani delegation comprising Ambassador of Pakistan to Azerbaijan is Qasim Mohiuddin, Head of Pakistan TV Adil Shahzeb and other officials at the meeting. During the meeting, Wajiha Qamar and Ahmad Ismayilov highlighted the importance of developing relations in the media sector and promoting joint projects in various formats. The discussions also focused on strengthening institutional

linkages between media organisations, news agencies and national broadcasters through regular consultations and communication channels, as well as facilitating closer interaction between relevant media institutions. Both sides laid emphasis on the importance of facilitating journalist exchanges through study visits, joint media forums, fellowships, training programmes and specialised programmes, including in fact-checking.

Prayers Sought for Recovery of Former PPP Midlands General Secretary Chaudhry Abdul Majeed

Report: Ms Shah FT :

London -- Family members, friends, political colleagues and well-wishers have appealed for special prayers for the speedy and complete recovery of Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, former General Secretary of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Midlands, UK, who is reportedly unwell.

Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has remained associated with the PPP in



the UK for many years and is known within the Pakistani community for his political and social engagement.

His family, friends and colleagues have urged the

Pakistani community to remember him in their prayers and pray to Almighty Allah for his complete recovery, good health and strength.

May Allah Almighty grant Chaudhry Abdul Majeed a speedy and complete recovery, ease his difficulties, bless him with good health and strength, and grant him a long and peaceful life. Ameen. The Financial Times joins his family, friends and well-wishers in praying for his early and complete recovery.

DIG Ali Wasim, Sulaiman Zafar and Sulaiman Shah Discuss Investigation of Serious Crimes

Report: ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD-- DIG Islamabad Ali Wasim met with SSP Investigation Sulaiman Zafar and DSP CIA Sulaiman Shah to review investigations into serious criminal cases and matters related to the arrest of suspects.

DIG Ali Wasim directed the officers to ensure merit-based and effective investigations, expedite the arrest of suspects and maintain professional standards in investigations.



Pakistan, Poland Discuss Security, Migration Cooperation

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry met Poland's Minister and Head of the Council of Ministers, Tomasz Siemoniak, to discuss bilateral relations and ways to enhance security coopera-

tion between Pakistan and Poland. The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation in security, intelligence sharing, counter terrorism, tackling illegal migration, and collaboration between law enforcement agencies. Both sides agreed on the need to give new momentum to bilateral cooperation and increase high-level contacts

between the two countries. The two countries also agreed to finalize various memorandums of understanding, including Mutual Legal Assistance arrangements, at the earliest opportunity. It was further agreed that a delegation from Pakistan's Ministry of Interior, led by Minister of State Talal Chaudhry,

The Birth of Democracy and Its Evolution into Modern Politics



Written By:
Mahmood Khan
Published By:
ANI News Agency

Democracy is one of the most important political achievements in human history. The word democracy comes from the ancient Greek *demokratia*, meaning “rule by the people.” At its heart, democracy is based on the principle that political authority should ultimately come from citizens and that people should have a voice in decisions affecting their lives. However, modern democracy did not emerge suddenly. It developed gradually through centuries of political struggles, philosophical ideas, revolutions and institutional reforms.

The origins of democracy are generally associated with ancient Athens in the fifth century BCE. Athenian citizens participated directly in political affairs through assemblies, debates and voting. This represented a significant departure from systems dominated exclusively by kings or hereditary rulers. Nevertheless, Athenian democracy was limited. Women, slaves and many foreigners were excluded from political participation. Despite these limitations, Athens established an enduring principle: citizens could participate in governing their society.

The Roman Republic contributed further ideas about citizenship, representative institutions and the rule of law. Although Rome was not a democracy in the modern sense, its political institutions influenced later constitutional thinking. Over time, European political development increasingly focused on limiting the power of rulers and establishing the principle that the government should operate according to law.

A significant milestone was the Magna Carta of 1215 in England. Although originally concerned with the rights of barons and limitations on royal authority, it became an important symbol of constitutional government and

the principle that rulers were not above the law. Centuries later, the development of Parliament, the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 further strengthened the idea that governmental power should be subject to constitutional limitations and parliamentary authority.

The Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries transformed democratic political thought. Philosophers such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Montesquieu developed influential ideas about individual rights, popular sovereignty, social contracts and the separation of governmental powers. Locke argued that a legitimate government depended on the consent of the governed, while Rousseau emphasised popular sovereignty. Montesquieu developed the concept of separating political powers to prevent excessive concentration of authority.

These ideas influenced the American Revolution and the French Revolution, helping establish modern concepts of citizenship, constitutional government and political rights. The nineteenth century then witnessed the gradual expansion of democratic participation. Electoral reforms increasingly extended voting rights beyond wealthy property-owning men. Political parties developed, newspapers expanded political awareness and representative institutions became more important.

The twentieth century brought further transformation. Women's suffrage expanded across many countries, while racial and colonial inequalities increasingly came under challenge. The experience of two world wars and the rise of fascist and authoritarian regimes demonstrated the fragility of democratic institutions. After the Second World War, democratic principles became closely associated with human rights, constitutional government, political freedoms and international cooperation.

Modern politics is therefore the result of a long historical evolution. Contemporary democracy generally involves regular elections, political parties, universal or broad voting rights, representa-

tive government, freedom of expression, an independent judiciary, constitutional safeguards and mechanisms for holding governments accountable. Democracy is not simply about voting; it also requires institutions capable of protecting rights and ensuring that political power can change peacefully.

The development of modern politics has also been shaped by mass communication. Newspapers, radio and television transformed political campaigning and public debate during the twentieth century. In the twenty-first century, the internet and social media have created an even more immediate relationship between politicians and citizens. People can now communicate, organise campaigns and debate political issues across borders within seconds.

However, technological progress has also created new challenges. Misinformation, political polarisation, online manipulation, privacy concerns and the growing influence of artificial intelligence have raised important questions about the future of democratic politics. Economic inequality and declining public trust in political institutions are also concerns in many democratic societies.

The history of democracy is therefore not a finished story. From the assemblies of ancient Athens to modern parliamentary and constitutional systems, democracy has continually evolved in response to changing societies. Its central principle remains the same: people should have a meaningful voice in determining how they are governed. The future of democracy will depend on the ability of societies to protect political freedoms, strengthen accountable institutions, respect minority rights and adapt democratic participation to technological and social change. Democracy's journey from ancient experiments in popular government to modern politics demonstrates that political systems are constantly evolving and that the democratic institutions require continuous public participation and protection.



By: Dr. Nasser Hussain Bukhari
Published By:
ANI News Agency

Walk into any university canteen, school corridor or hostel room in Pakistan and you will see the same scene: heads bowed, thumbs moving, eyes lit by a small glowing screen. The smartphone has become the most constant companion of our students. We have grown so used to the sight that we no longer ask what it is doing to them.

The answer lies in a word we rarely use: neophilia. A neophile is a person who loves the new. Psychologists regard novelty-seeking as a healthy trait, the engine of curiosity and discovery. But it becomes a problem when newness itself is the attraction, when a person craves the next notification, trend or video not because it is valuable but because it is fresh. The smartphone is the perfect machine for this appetite. It delivers something new every few seconds, without effort and without end.

The neophile's habits are easy to recognise in our students. They are restless, unable to sit with a book or a lecture for twenty minutes without reaching for the phone. They fear missing out, so they check messages and feeds compulsively. They adopt trends uncritically, assuming whatever is viral must be worthwhile. Their attention is short, their patience thin, and depth bores them. Many define themselves by followers, likes and the image they present online. This is not curiosity. Curiosity asks, “Is this true?” Neophilia asks only, “What's next?”

The first casualty is learning. Real study requires sustained attention, and attention is exactly what constant switching destroys. A student who pauses every few minutes to check a message may need far longer to absorb the same material, and what is absorbed is shallow. Reading whole books has become rare.

Assignments are assembled from quick searches and, increasingly, from AI tools, with little thought in between. Classroom lectures compete with screens under desks. Teachers across the country report the same complaint: students are present in body but absent in mind. Examination results, research quality and the ability to write a coherent paragraph all suffer when the mind is trained to consume fragments.

The damage extends to lifestyle. Late-night scrolling has pushed sleep to the margins of student life. Many young people go to bed with their phones and wake up reaching for them. Meals are eaten in silence over a screen, family gatherings are interrupted by notifications, and friendships that once meant long conversations have been reduced to emojis and reactions. Time that might have gone to sport, reading, prayer, hobbies or community work is quietly consumed. There is a financial side too, as students beg for newer models and costly data packages to keep up with peers, and parents stretch limited incomes to oblige. Worse, the constant display of curated lives online breeds envy and inadequacy. A student who compares an ordinary day to someone else's staged highlights often ends up feeling that his own life is not enough.

Health pays a heavy price as well. Prolonged screen use causes eye strain, headaches and dry eyes. Hours spent hunched over a handset lead to neck and back pain, sometimes called “text neck.” Sleep deprivation weakens concentration, mood and immunity. Physical inactivity contributes to weight gain and weakened fitness in a generation that should be at its strongest. Mental health is no less affected. Researchers around the world have linked heavy social media use among young people with anxiety, low mood and loneliness. In Pakistan, where discussion of mental health still carries stigma, students struggling with these pressures often suffer in silence.

Parents are the first line of defence, and they must begin with example. A child cannot be told to put the phone away by a parent who is glued to his

own. Families should agree on phone-free times, such as meals and the hour before bed, and keep devices out of bedrooms at night. Parents should delay giving expensive smartphones, and when they do, set clear limits together with their children rather than imposing them in anger. Conversation works better than confiscation. Talking honestly about how apps are designed to hold attention, and how online lives are staged, builds resilience. Above all, parents should give children something better to do: sport, books, time outdoors, responsibilities at home and their company.

Academia has an equally important role. Schools and universities should teach digital literacy as seriously as any subject, so that students understand algorithms, advertising and the habits these technologies cultivate. Institutions can create phone-free classrooms and libraries, and design assessments that reward depth, such as long essays, presentations and original projects, over copied material. Counselling services must be strengthened and mental health openly discussed. Teachers should be trained to use technology as a tool rather than a distraction, and to model the focused reading and thinking they ask of their students. Universities should also resist the temptation to chase every educational fad themselves, since adopting each new buzzword is neophilia in academic dress.

None of this means the smartphone is the enemy. It gives students access to knowledge, opportunity and income that earlier generations could only imagine. The remedy for neophilia is not neophobia but discernment: the habit of using technology deliberately instead of being used by it.

Pakistan cannot afford to ignore this quiet addiction. A nation's future is shaped in its classrooms, and a generation that cannot concentrate, sleep or sit in stillness will struggle to build anything lasting. The question every parent, teacher and student should learn to ask is a simple one: Am I using my phone, or is it using me?

Play-Based Learning: Rethinking Education for Young Children



By: Qurratulain Mughal
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Published By:
ANI News Agency

A four year old is sitting at a desk and holding a pencil tightly in his/her little fingers as he or she practices a letter repeatedly. The page will be finished, a teacher will tick it and proudly displayed at home while at the same time another child at the table is trying to make a tower of blocks and is discussing with another child why it is not working out and experimenting with an alternative approach to make it work. Who's learning more? The tendency in Pakistan is to presume that the answer is the one that has the pencil as we have become fascinated with the visible product of our learning, we have neglected one of the most potent means of learning for young children i.e. play.

Play is not break from learning for youngsters. This is the most natural way of teaching. Children have size, balance, shape and measurement experiences with blocks. They practice a language game, counting, negotiation and decision making while playing a pretend shop. They are able to take turns and listen to one another during a group game

and learn to follow rules and manage impulses. The American Academy of Pediatrics reaffirmed in a clinical report in 2025 that developmentally appropriate play supports children in developing language, cognitive, social-emotional and self-regulation skills. Similarly, Harvard's Center on the Developing Child states that games and play help children develop skills of attention, working memory and self-control which eventually assist them in learning in and out of school.

This is of significant importance for Pakistan. According to UNESCO's latest estimate, the country's net pre-primary enrolment rate is slightly below 34 per cent, meaning that a large percentage of young children are not enrolled in formal pre-primary education. It's not much better for the future learning outcomes. The World Bank 2024 Learning Poverty Brief estimates that approximately 80% of children at the age of late-primary cannot read and comprehend an age-appropriate text in Pakistan, with children out of school included. While play-based learning is in itself insufficient to address the education crisis in Pakistan, a good early childhood experience can facilitate the acquisition of language, concentration, curiosity and confidence that are the foundations of subsequent learning. But in so many houses and classrooms we are still confusing an early start for a better start. Parents want their children to perform well and schools are expected to demon-

strate progress. It is easy to show a notebook with writing in it, it is not so easy to be curious. A completed worksheet can be photographed, but not a kid learning how to deal with a conflict with a friend. Consequently, children might spend too long copying, tracing and memorizing and not enough time talking, exploring, constructing, imagining and asking questions. Books, numbers and writing must not be taken out of early years. The real question is “how” these skills are introduced. A 5-year old can learn about numbers by counting bottle caps, about words by listening to stories, about floating and sinking by experimenting and about math by creating a bridge.

Thus, it is not a question of either playing or learning academics for Pakistan. It needs to bring the two together. Schools can set aside time for free play and directed play, train teachers to connect play-based learning to specific learning goals, and play using local, inexpensive materials and equipment, rather than relying on expensive toys. Parents should be educated as well on how learning through play should look like. UNICEF's latest evidence from the world at large highlights the importance of play in young children's learning and development and the ability of even the simplest of materials and nature itself to be used as learning tools. Perhaps it is time to stop asking children, When will you finish playing and start learning? The two were never apart for a young child.

The Makkah Pact, Bab al-Mandab and America's New Strategy



By: Rana Farooq Ashraf
Published By:
ANI News Agency

The Middle East may be entering a new phase of strategic realignment. What is unfolding around Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Bab al-Mandab is not merely another episode in the long-running confrontation between the Houthis and their regional opponents. Beneath the immediate military developments lies a larger question: who will shape the future security architecture of the Muslim world?

At the centre of this emerging equation is the Makkah Defence Pact between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye. If translated into sustained military and strategic cooperation, the pact could challenge a security model that has dominated the Gulf for decades—one heavily dependent on the American military and intelligence umbrella.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, appears increasingly determined to expand its strategic autonomy. Riyadh is not necessarily seeking to abandon Washington, but it is clearly diversifying its partnerships. Pakistan and Türkiye are particularly significant in this context because both possess substantial military capabilities, strategic influence and longstanding relations with Saudi Arabia.

The developments around Bab al-Mandab provide an important backdrop to this transformation. Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces, supported by Saudi air and naval power, launched a rapid counteroffensive against the Houthis and reportedly reversed major Houthi gains around the strategic strait and surrounding coastal areas. The speed of the reversal demonstrated that the balance of power in the Red Sea can change rapidly when air power, naval capabilities, intelligence, logistics and local forces operate in coordination.

It is important, however, to distinguish between Saudi military support and the ground forces actually conducting the advance. The immediate offensive was carried out by Saudi-backed Yemeni forces, while Saudi Arabia provided substantial air and naval assistance. This distinction does not diminish the strategic importance of the operation. Rather, it highlights Saudi Arabia's growing ability to project influence through regional partners without necessarily deploying large numbers of its own ground troops.



This is precisely where the Makkah Pact acquires greater significance.

Pakistan brings decades of military experience and deep defence ties with Saudi Arabia. Türkiye contributes an increasingly sophisticated defence industry, including advanced drone and military technologies, while pursuing greater strategic independence. Saudi Arabia brings financial power, geographical importance, energy resources and a rapidly developing military capability.

If these three countries succeed in transforming political commitments into meaningful defence coordination, the result could extend far beyond the immediate Houthi challenge. It could become the nucleus of a broader Muslim security framework.

For Washington, this development presents a complicated strategic challenge.

The American concern is not simply the Houthis, Iran or the security of the Red Sea. The deeper issue is the future strategic orientation of Saudi Arabia. For decades, American military presence and security partnerships have been central to the Gulf order. But Saudi Arabia's expanding relationship with China, combined with its growing ties with Türkiye and Pakistan, reflects Riyadh's desire for greater room to manoeuvre.

Washington will therefore have a strong interest in understanding the actual scope of the Makkah Pact and ensuring that its traditional intelligence, defence and strategic influence in Saudi Arabia is not significantly weakened.

There is also a wider Israeli dimension. A credible defence arrangement linking Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye would inevitably attract attention in both Tel Aviv and Washington. If such cooperation develops into a permanent strategic mechanism, it

could influence calculations across the wider Middle East—not only around Yemen and the Red Sea, but also regarding Iran, Israel and regional deterrence.

Iran remains a central part of this equation. The Iranian threat has long been one of the principal arguments for maintaining a substantial American security presence in the Gulf. But if Saudi Arabia and its partners develop an effective regional security mechanism of their own, the traditional justification for an overwhelming external security role could gradually lose some of its force.

This is why Bab al-Mandab should not be viewed merely as another battlefield. Its strategic importance lies in its connection to global trade, energy routes and maritime security. Any power capable of influencing this chokepoint possesses leverage far beyond the immediate geography of Yemen.

The emerging picture, therefore, is larger than the Saudi-Houthi confrontation. It is about whether the Middle East will continue to operate primarily under an American-led security structure or gradually move towards a more diversified, multipolar regional order.

The Makkah Pact could prove to be an important test of that transition. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye possess the resources, military capabilities and strategic geography necessary to create a credible framework. Whether they can convert political cooperation into an institutionalised and sustainable security architecture remains the critical question.

The real contest, therefore, is not simply over who controls Bab al-Mandab. It is about who will shape the security architecture of the Middle East in the years ahead and whether the Muslim world is prepared to build a strategic framework of its own.



Kashmiris Have Been Sacrificing for Decades to Become Part of Pakistan, Speakers

Report: ANI :

LAHORE --Speakers at a special seminar organized by Kashmir Centre Lahore (Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Cell) said Kashmiris have been making sacrifices for over seven decades with the objective of becoming part of Pakistan.

Addressing the seminar titled “Our Voice for Occupied Jammu & Kashmir,” newly elected AJK Legislative Assembly members from Lahore, Nasir Hussain Dar and Muhammad Amir Shah, emphasized the need for an effective political, diplomatic, legal, journalistic and public voice to highlight the Kashmir issue at national and international forums.



They said Kashmir Centre Lahore was playing an important role in advancing the Kashmir cause and stressed the need to provide the Centre with necessary resources and remove hurdles so it could continue its activities effectively.

The seminar was also addressed by former MLA Maulana Shafi Josh, for-

mer Punjab Assembly Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Farzana Nazir, APMC leader Engineer Mushtaq Mahmood, In-charge Kashmir Centre Lahore Inam-ul-Hassan, senior lawyer Manzoor Hussain Gilani Advocate, Professor Asma Hassan, Raja Shehzad Ahmed and other political, legal, academic and journalistic figures.

APMC Chair Qurat-ul-Ain Ali Khawaja Leads Delegation to J&K Liberation Cell, Discusses Digital Media Cooperation

Report: ANI

MUZAFFARABAD --Chairperson of the All Pakistan Media Council (APMC) (Registered) Ms. Qurat-ul-Ain Ali Khawaja, along with members of the APMC Islamabad delegation, visited the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Cell in Muzaffarabad and held a meeting with Director, National Awareness Wing, Sardar Sajid Mehmood.

The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation between APMC and the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Cell, particularly in digital media, public awareness and professional media engagement.

Both sides emphasized the importance of using digital and social media platforms more effectively and responsibly to highlight Kashmir-related issues and activities at national and international levels.

The possibility of organizing digital media workshops and awareness programmes was also discussed. The par-



ticipants highlighted the growing importance of professional digital communication and research-based media engagement. The APMC delegation stressed the need for greater institutional coordination with relevant organizations to promote credible, responsible and professional coverage of Kashmir-related matters.

Both sides expressed their commitment to maintaining mutual cooperation and exploring appropriate joint initiatives in the future. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with an understanding to strengthen professional links and enhance digital outreach and public awareness concerning Kashmir.

Senate Religious Affairs Committee Orders Halt to Demolition Operation Around Dam Dama Mandir



Report: FT

ISLAMABAD-- A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, chaired by Senator Hafiz Abdul Karim, reviewed the continued absence of the Director General Hajj, Jeddah, and the demolition operation affecting residents and shopkeepers around Dam Dama Mandir, Rawalpindi.

The committee expressed concern over the DG Hajj’s repeated absence

and directed the Ministry of Religious Affairs to provide documentary evidence regarding the cancellation of his travel and ensure his appearance at the next meeting.

The committee was also informed that a fresh recruitment process for the appointment of a new DG Hajj is currently underway.

Regarding Dam Dama Mandir, the Chairman Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) informed the committee that 19 houses and 31 shops are attached to the place of worship and

anti-encroachment operations had been initiated.

Residents alleged that legitimate properties were also being demolished and claimed that an ETPB official had collected Rs57 million from 31 shopkeepers.

The committee ordered an inquiry through a Sub-Committee and directed that the demolition operation be halted immediately until the inquiry is completed. The ETPB Chairman assured the committee of full cooperation.

Raiwind: 3-Year-Old Child Dies After Drowning in Rainwater Pond

Report: ANI

LAHORE -- A three-year-old child died after drowning in a rainwater pond that had accumulated in an empty plot in Mohallah Islamabad, Raiwind.

According to police and rescue sources, the deceased was identified as three-year-old Fahad, son of Imran. The child was playing near his home when he accidentally fell into the deep, open and unprotected pool of rainwater in the vacant plot.

When the child could not be found, his parents began searching for him and eventually pulled him



out of the water. The family rushed him to the Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital, where doctors confirmed that he had died before reaching the hospital.

The incident has caused grief and anger among local residents, who said unprotected vacant plots and poor drainage in residential areas pose a serious threat to children.

Residents demanded that authorities ensure boundary walls around vacant plots and improve the drainage system to prevent rainwater from accumulating. They also called for an inquiry into any negligence and appropriate legal action against those responsible.

Local police have initiated legal proceedings, while the tragic death of the child has left the area in deep mourning.

Government Girls High School Mithi West Holds First-Term Result Ceremony and PTM



Report Nareender Kumar/ANI

MITHI: The Government Girls High School Mithi West organised a ceremony to announce the results of the first-term examinations, recognise high-achieving students and hold a Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM).

The ceremony was attended by parents and students from Classes 6 to 10. During the PTM, teachers briefed parents about their daugh-

ters’ academic performance, progress and areas requiring further attention.

Students who achieved outstanding results were presented with prizes in recognition of their academic performance. The awards were aimed at encouraging students to work harder and maintain their interest in education.

School authorities stressed the importance of parents’ active involvement in their children’s edu-

cation and urged families to continue supporting and encouraging students in their academic journey.

The administration said such academic activities help motivate students, promote healthy competition and strengthen cooperation between parents and teachers. The school, operating under SEMIS Code , also highlighted the importance of girls’ education in building a better and brighter future for the community.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Meets JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman

Report: Hurish shah FT:

ISLAMABAD-- Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq met with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief and Member of the National Assembly Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence.

The Speaker congratulated Maulana Fazlur Rehman on performing Umrah and conveyed his best wishes to him. Maulana Fazlur Rehman thanked Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for visiting him and for conveying his congratulations and good wishes.

Speaking to the media, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that he had longstanding and close ties with Maulana Fazlur Rehman, which were above political affiliations. He said Maulana Fazlur Rehman was like a brother to him and that their relationship was based on mutual respect, sincerity and brotherhood.

He said he remained in regular contact with Maulana Fazlur Rehman and that their meetings and consultations



continued from time to time.

The Speaker said that when intentions were sincere, Allah Almighty opened new avenues and created opportunities. He expressed hope that, Insha’Allah, further opportunities would continue to emerge for Pakistan’s progress, stability and prosper-

ity.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said he also remained engaged in dialogue and consultation with Members of the National Assembly. He prayed that Allah Almighty would enable all concerned to make decisions in the best interest of Pakistan and its people.

ICCI President Invites French Investors to Explore Pakistan’s Tourism Potential

Report: Hurish Shah FT:

ISLAMABAD-- Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia has invited French and European investors to explore Pakistan’s untapped tourism potential and called for stronger cooperation in tourism, sustainable infrastructure, luxury brands, fragrances and cosmetics.

Addressing a delegation of the Pakistan Business Forum France & Europe led by Vice President Dr. Hamza Taj, he said Gilgit-Baltistan and northern Pakistan offered significant opportunities for sustainable tourism, hospitality and invest-



ment.

Both sides discussed expanding trade and investment ties, joint ventures and the use of French and European expertise in sustainable tourism, conservation and hospital-

ity development. The delegation and ICCI agreed to strengthen institutional cooperation and explore joint initiatives to promote bilateral business and investment opportunities.

FPCCI Committee Discusses Trade Reforms, Export Facilitation and Industrial Growth

Report: Hurish Shah FT

ISLAMABAD-- The 3rd meeting of the FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Import and Export Trade for 2026 was held at the FPCCI President Secretariat in Islamabad, chaired by Committee Convener Tahir Rasheed Bhutta and attended by FPCCI Vice President Tariq Mehmood Jadoon.

The meeting discussed measures to strengthen Pakistan’s external trade, including tariff rationalization, import and export facilitation, industrial competitiveness, SME development, export diversification and expansion of international market access.

Tariq Mehmood Jadoon stressed stronger public-private sector coordination, streamlined tariff structures and removal of policy bottlenecks to support exporters and



SMEs.

Tahir Rasheed Bhutta said the committee would forward actionable recommendations focused on trade reforms, export diversification, industrial growth and sustainable market access.

Deputy Conveners Syed Zulfeqar Haider and Samia Rashid also emphasized improving trade corridors, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and supporting women entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Tajikistan Independence Day Reception Held in Islamabad

Report: FT

ISLAMABAD-- A reception was held in Islamabad to mark the 35th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Tajikistan, with Senate Chief Whip Senator Saleem Mandviwalla representing the President of Pakistan.

President’s Spokesperson Murtaza Solangi also accompanied Senator Mandviwalla at the reception.

The event was attended by Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Senator Talha Mahmood, diplomats, parliamentarians, senior government officials and other distinguished guests.

The reception was hosted by Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Yusuf Sharifzoda, who welcomed the distinguished guests.

On the occasion, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla conveyed greetings



and best wishes from the President of Pakistan to the government and people of Tajikistan on their Independence Day.

He highlighted the importance of the longstanding brotherly and friendly relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan and emphasized the need to further

strengthen cooperation and people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

The participants congratulated Tajikistan on the 35th anniversary of its independence and expressed their commitment to further promoting bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields.

Strong Protest Against Expensive Electricity, Taxes and Arrests Today: Shahid Abbasi

Report: Ms Shah FT

ISLAMABAD-- Executive Member of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and General Secretary of G-9 Markaz, Shahid Abbasi, has said that traders will hold a strong protest today against expensive electricity, taxes and arrests.

He demanded that traders be spared repeated visits to government offices, notices and alleged harassment, and called for greater facilitation for the business community. Shahid Abbasi urged the rele-



vant authorities to consult the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, market associations and trader representatives before taking action over shop-

ping bags, and to provide a clear policy along with reasonable time for compliance. He questioned why manufacturers were not being targeted if certain shopping bags were illegal, saying the government and relevant institutions should address the root cause of the issue.

He said traders were not against environmental protection and wanted Islamabad to remain clean, beautiful and pollution-free. However, he added that humiliating traders in the name of environmental protection was unacceptable. Authorities should provide suitable alternatives and facilities before enforcing the regulations.