

'Convicted PM not eligible to hold office'

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LAHORE – Commenting on the conviction verdict against Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, former Chief Justice of Pakistan Saeeduz Zaman Siddiqi said a convicted prime minister was not eligible to preside over the Cabinet meeting. “The prime minister stands disqualified to hold the membership in the parliament for five years although he has option to challenge his conviction before the appellate Bench,” Siddiqi added. He said the SC decision was self speaking and therein no need to refer the matter to the speaker for his de-seating which had also automatically come about. Justice Siddiqi was of the view that after conviction any step from the PM would hold no legal authenticity and would be challengeable before the court of law. He said even if the president waives the sentence, the conviction will stay on to take affect. President SCBA Yasin Azad said the sword of conviction would continue to hang over the head of the prime minister as such he would not be able of confidently discharge the obligations of the office. He viewed that the prime minister was intact in the office however appeal against the conviction was his constitutional right. He said unless the election commission disqualifies Mr Gilani after a reference, he will stay in the office as constitutional PM. Former law minister Dr Khalid Ranjha said it would be wrong to say that prime minister instantly stand disqualified nor he can be obliged to resign on moral grounds. He said the SC did not mention about resignation of the PM as such making a demand to this effect conflicts with the constitutionality. Governor competent to appoint PRCS head, LHC told: The Lahore High Court was told on Thursday that the Punjab governor was an authority and enjoyed powers for appointment of Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS)'s Punjab chapter Chairman. PRCS Chairman Chaudhary Muhammad Nawaz submitted his statement before Justice Mansoor Ali Shah hearing a petition challenging the appointment of Zahid Bashir as Chairman Punjab of the society by Governor Latif Khosa. Mian Asad Mahmood Advocate, counsel for society's employees, argued that the appointment of Zahid Bashir as society chairman was made on merit by the Punjab governor and Liaqat Chishti's petition against Mr Bashir was filed to defame him. He requested the court to dismiss the petition of Chishti and allow Mr Bashir to continue his work as the chairman of society's Punjab chapter. Justice Shah adjourned the hearing till May 8 and asked the counsels of both parties to come up with final arguments. Liaqat Chishti, who had challenged the appointment of Zahid Bashir, had alleged that Mr Bashir was appointed beyond merit as the Punjab governor had no authority for the appointment. He had requested the court to set aside the appointment of Mr Bashir.

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