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dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk

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India ordered assassination of 20 individuals in Pakistan; reports UK publication

Indian network of extra-territorial killings 'global phenomenon', needs coordinated response: FO

GENEVA (APP): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's office ordered the assassination of individuals in neighbouring Pakistan, according to a report in The Guardian quoting Indian and Pakistani intelligence operatives.

The British newspaper said that the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW), an agency that is directly controlled by PM Modi's office, had undertaken the strategy to "eliminate (alleged) terrorists living on foreign soil".

The accounts, according to the report, gives further weight to allegations that New Delhi has implemented a policy of targeting those it considers hostile to India. While the new allegations refer to individuals

charged with serious and violent terror offences, India has also been accused publicly by Canada of involvement in the murders of dissident figures including a Sikh activist in Canada and of a botched assassination attempt on another Sikh leader in the United States last year.

The fresh claims relate to almost 20 killings since 2020, carried out by unknown gunmen in Pakistan. The Guardian pointed out, noting this is the first time Indian intelligence personnel have discussed the alleged operations in Pakistan, and detailed documentation has been seen alleging Raw's direct involvement in the assassinations.

According to Pakistani

investigators, these deaths were orchestrated by Indian intelligence sleeper-cells mostly operating out of the United Arab Emirates. The rise in killings in 2023 was credited to the increased activity of these cells, which are accused of paying millions of rupees to local criminals or poor Pakistanis to carry out the assassinations. Indian agents also allegedly recruited "jihadists" to carry out the shootings, making them believe they were killing "infidels", the report said.

This was the case in the killing of Sikh leader in Pakistan, Paramjit Singh Panjwar, who was shot dead in Lahore in May.

INP adds: Pakistan's Foreign Office stated on Friday that the Indian net-

work of extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings has now become a global concern that requires a coordinated international response.

The FO statement follows a report published by The Guardian on Thursday which states that the Indian government assassinated individuals in Pakistan.

India has denied the claims made in the report.

A spokesperson for the Foreign Office said that Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi, on January 25, shared credible evidence of the involvement of Indian agents in the killings of two Pakistani citizens on Pakistani soil.

"These cases exposed the increasing sophistica-

tion and brazenness of Indian-sponsored terrorist acts inside Pakistan, with striking similarities to the pattern observed in other countries, including Canada and the United States," the spox said in a statement.

India's assassination of Pakistani nationals on Pakistani soil constitutes a clear violation of the country's sovereignty and a breach of the UN Charter, the spokesperson said.

"It is critical to bring to justice the perpetrators, facilitators, financiers and sponsors of these extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings. India must be held accountable internationally for its blatant violation of international law," the spokesperson concluded.



CJSC briefs President about security situation, armed forces' preparedness

President lauds army's role in "defending national frontiers as well as their contributions towards socio-economic development"

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJSC) General Sahir Shamsad Mirza on Friday called on President Asif Ali Zardari and briefed him about the security situation of the country as well as the operational preparedness of the armed forces.

In the meeting, the CJSC also highlighted that the armed forces of the country had the capability to effectively deal with internal and external security challenges, according to a President House press release.

President Zardari lauded the role of Pakistan's armed forces in defending the national frontiers as well as their contributions towards the country's socioeconomic development.

He said that he had complete confidence in the security forces of the country to successfully overcome the internal and external security challenges.

The CJSC felicitated President Zardari on assuming the office of the President of Pakistan.

The meeting expressed the resolve to stamp out the scourge of terrorism with the support of the nation.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding security situation in the country.

PM directs for fool-proof security of Chinese nationals

Directs interior ministry to increase collaboration with the provinces to further improve the provincial anti-terrorism departments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed all the security agencies to ensure fool-proof security arrangements for the Chinese nationals working on various projects in Pakistan.

Chairing a meeting regarding security situation in the country, the prime minister said he had decided to personally review the meetings with respect to the overall security of the country especially the security of the Chinese citizens.

He said war against the menace of terrorism will continue till its eradication from the country. He directed the interior ministry

to increase collaboration with the provinces to further improve the provincial anti-terrorism departments.

The prime minister also instructed to chalk out a comprehensive strategy for the regular audit of the security SOPs.

The interior ministry briefed the prime minister in detail about the overall law and order situation of the country and the performance of the ministry.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Naqvi, top brass of the security agencies and the concerned high officials.

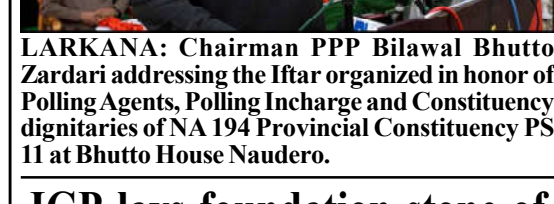
Julie Kozack says

IMF ready for new loan program with Pakistan resolving fiscal challenges

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) spokesperson Julie Kozack in a monthly press briefing the IMF authorities have expressed interest in a successor IMF-supported program with the aim of resolving Pakistan's fiscal and external stability challenges and laying the foundation for inclusive growth.

The IMF spokesperson said that of course, IMF stands ready to engage in program discussions in the coming months.

The spokeswoman of the international lender gave an overview of rounds held between Pakistan and IMF and said: "So, on March 19, IMF staff and the Pakistani authorities reached staff-level agreement on the second and final review under Pakistan's Stand-By Arrangement, SBA."



LARKANA: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the Iftar organized in honor of Polling Agents, Polling Incharge and Constituency dignitaries of NA 194 Provincial Constituency PS II at Bhutto House Naudero.

IGP lays foundation stone of School of Investigation and Police Firing Range in PTC

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh laid foundation stone of the School of Investigation and Firing Range in the Police Training College (PTC) here on Friday.

Present on the occasion were the Additional IGP Jawad Ahmed Dogar, Commandant PTC - Quetta, Muhammad Ishaq Alam, Deputy Commandant, Aurangzeb, Chief Law Instructor, Rehmatullah Bangulzai and AIGP Development.

The IGP was briefed about importance and utilization of the School of Investigation and other related matters.

Speaking on the occasion, IGP said that it is very important to make operational and investigation responsibilities extraordinary under the police department.

Rather it is requirement of the time to cope with the new techniques of the crimes, he maintained.

He also announced to set up similar schools in other police training centers of the province.

UK desires to promote ties with Pakistan in various fields

ISLAMABAD (Online): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has emphasized the formulation of a common strategy to cope with terrorism, which is an international phenomenon.

standing ties with Britain. He said the role of the Pakistani community in Britain in the development of both countries is commendable. He stressed the need for exchange of delegations



Talking to the British high commissioner Jane Marriott in Islamabad today, he said Pakistan is the only country which has made immense sacrifices in the war on terrorism. He said Pakistan Army and security agencies have created a story of courage and bravery in this war. He said the terrorists will not be allowed to disturb law and order situation.

The Interior Minister said Pakistan attaches great importance to its long

for promotion of bilateral relations.

The Interior Minister said all possible steps are being taken to prevent human trafficking.

The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in diverse fields.

They also discussed cricket series between Pakistan and England.

The British High Commissioner expressed desire to promote cooperation with Pakistan in various fields.

PPP nominates Yusuf Raza Gilani for Senate chairman

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) on Thursday nominated former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani as its candidate for the prized slot of Senate chairman.

A notification in this regard has been issued by Jamil Soomro, political secretary to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

As per an agreement between the PPP and PML-N, the post of president, Senate chairman and gover-

norship of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were given to the PPP, while the posts of Senate deputy chairman, National Assembly speaker and governorship of Sindh and Balochistan were given to the PML-N.

At the moment, Gilani has the support of 24 senators from the PPP, 19 from PML-N, four from BAP, three from ANP, three independents and one from the National Party, taking the tally to 54.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar in a group photo with Regional Manager Helping Hand Iftikhar and children during an Iftar dinner hosted by Helping Hand for Relief & Development

PM Shehbaz to embark on two-day visit to KSA today

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will undertake a three-day visit to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from Saturday.

This would be the Prime Minister's first foreign visit since his election.

The Prime Minister will be accompanied by Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Defence, Economic Affairs, Finance and Information. He will perform Umrah and offer prayers at the Masjid Nabawi Al-Sharif.

The Prime Minister is expected to meet the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz and discuss issues of mutual interest.

The two leaders will also exchange views on regional and global developments. In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan and KSA have longstanding fraternal relations rooted in religious and cultural affinity.

She said the people of Pakistan have the deepest respect and regard for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. The spokesperson said the leadership of both countries is committed to advancing the fraternal ties and mutually rewarding economic and investment relations.

Pak, US vow to strengthen bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, received a telephone call from the United States Secretary of State, Antony Blinken here on Friday and discussed bilateral ties.

Both sides reiterated their dedication to strengthening bilateral cooperation across all spheres of mutual interest. A wide range of bilateral issues including enhancing trade and investment relations, climate change, agriculture and security came under discussion.

Various matters of regional importance such as situation in Gaza, the Red Sea and developments in Afghanistan were also discussed.

Both sides expressed satisfaction at the current positive momentum in bilateral relations.

Practical steps to be taken for media houses, workers' welfare: Tarar

KARACHI (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar reiterated the government's resolve to address all the issues being faced by journalists, media workers and media houses on priority.

He expressed the resolve during his separate meetings with the office bearers of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors and Pakistan Broadcasters Association. On the occasion, he vowed to take practical steps for ensuring well-being of the media workers and houses.

The minister, during the meetings, had a detailed discussion on the problems faced by media workers, journalists and newspaper industry.

Tarar said he was fully aware of the problems of media workers and journalists and would take practical measures to protect their rights. Besides, all-out efforts would be made to provide required facilities to them, he added.

The minister assured

the office bearers of his full cooperation in getting the pending dues of media houses cleared at the earliest possible time.

In this regard, concerted efforts were underway in line with the direc-

tion of government, journalists and media houses.

He said health cards for medical treatment of journalists would be issued soon. Nobody would be allowed to violate rights of journalists and media work-



KARACHI: Mr. Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with office-bearers of APNS.

atives of PM Shehbaz Sharif, he added. e said the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) had approved supplementary grant for payment of media houses' arrears and dues.

The minister highlighted the role being played by the Ministry of Information between the

ers, he remarked. He also spoke on economic issues and expressed the government's strong commitment to address those issues in line with the vision of PM Shehbaz Sharif. He said work on digitization of Federal Board of Revenue had been initiated to ensure documented economy.

Right to Information Commission vital for ensuring transparency in public affairs: Dr. Rubaba

DGPR Muhammad Noor Khetrn says first RTI Commission to be formed in province soon

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Members of Provincial Assembly, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi and Ms. Kalsoom Niaz have underlined the need to establish the Right to Information Commission for bringing transparency and accountability in the public affairs.

They were addressing seminar held under the auspices of Association for Integrated Development (AID) Balochistan here the other day.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rubaba Buledi said that AID Balochistan is playing key role for enforcement of the Right to Information Act 2021 in the province.

Once the RTI Commission would start working, it would surely help general public to have an access to the information about the government's functioning and development projects, etc., she believed. She said that the RTI Act would open the doors of access of all information about working of the government and its works.

He said that our responsibility is to make legislation while its enforcement is responsibility of the government departments and bureaucracy.

The Director General Public Relations, Muhammad Noor Khetrn on the occasion said that the Information department is in the phase of implementation of the RTI Act.

Meanwhile, participants of the seminar called for enforcing the RTI Act in true letter and spirit besides establishing the Information Commission at the earliest.

He hoped that the first RTI Commission would be formed in the province soon. We have given advertisement for the posts of Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners in the province, he added.

The Executive Director AID Balochistan, Adil Jahangir briefed the forum about his organization's endeavours for enforcement of the RTI Act. He stressed the need for appointment of the RTI commissioners on merit.

He also spoke on economic issues and expressed the government's strong commitment to address those issues in line with the vision of PM Shehbaz Sharif. He said work on digitization of Federal Board of Revenue had been initiated to ensure documented economy.

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QUETTA: Participants are holding demonstration against USA and Israel as they are marking Yom-ul-Quds to show solidarity with people of Palestine, organized by Jamat-e-Islami (JI), in Quetta.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Failed experiment

As Pakistan calibrates its response to the ongoing wave of terrorism, a strange but familiar suggestion has come from across the western border. Speaking recently at an iftar in Khost, Mohammad Nabi Omari, Afghanistan's deputy interior minister, called for talks between the banned TTP and the government of Pakistan.

While the regime in Kabul is long believed to have favoured this option, few top Afghan Taliban leaders have said so publicly. While advising both Islamabad and the 'brothers' in the TTP, Mr Omari observed that Al Qaeda was not active in his country. He also felt that the war between the TTP and Pakistan was unwinnable, and that the 'brothers' could continue their campaign for "100 years" and not see any results. The Foreign Office, meanwhile, has rejected the prospect of negotiations with the TTP.

Perhaps the Afghan minister's suggestion is the result of the Taliban's frustration with the TTP. "We have nothing to do with it," he observed, ostensibly referring to TTP terrorism, "but we are getting the heat for it".

From Pakistan's perspective, talks with the TTP have already been tried; the 'ceasefire' collapsed in November 2022, and thereafter the terrorist outfit unleashed a wave of deadly violence against this country that continues. In fact, many observers have said that the TTP used the previous cessation of hostilities to regroup, and the PTI-led government at the time has been chided for letting militants return to their former stomping grounds in KP.

Indeed, Pakistan cannot afford a 'forever' war with the TTP or any other terrorist group. But negotiations must take place from a position of strength, and no compromises can be made on fundamentals such as supremacy of the Constitution. There is little to suggest that the TTP is willing to abide within this framework. Their earlier demands included amnesty for those accused of heinous terrorist violence, and reversal of Fata's merger with KP. Meeting both these demands would be akin to a surrender by the state, as they would involve forgiving the killers of thousands of Pakistanis, and reversing a constitutional amendment on the demand of those who have no respect for the Constitution.

If lower-ranking cadres of the TTP, who have committed no crimes, wish to surrender, the option could be considered, and these elements would have to be de-radicalised. But unconditionally embracing the TTP's leadership would be a huge mistake. Instead of promoting talks with the TTP, the Afghan Taliban should ensure that their 'brothers' do not attack Pakistan.

For the government, the only acceptable option would be for the TTP to lay down their arms, and for those involved in acts of terrorism to face the law. The failed experiment of negotiations on the TTP's terms should not be repeated.

ASER's verdict

Zubeida Mustafa

When Gen Charles Napier conquered Sindh in 1843, he sent a single-word message to his bosses in London. It read, "Peccavi", a Latin word that translates to 'I have sinned'. This was a pun.

More than 180 years later, we learn that Sindh has been 'sinned' against once more. How else would you describe the failure of those who control the destiny of this province to empower its children by educating them? This is no exaggeration. A look at the Annual Status of Education Report [ASER] 2023 is enough to inform the reader about the miserable state of education in the province.

ASER is an independent citizens-led group that has been testing children in Pakistan every year since 2008-09 and its results are credible. In 2023, over 1,53,000 children were tested in 274 districts. The findings are shocking.

As has been ASER's practice, students of Grade III and above were tested by being asked to read a story in Urdu/Sindhi and a sentence in English, and solve a two-digit division sum of Grade II level. Barely half of the Grade V students tested across the country could give correct answers—50 per cent, 54pc and 46pc respectively.

Among the provinces, Sindh stood at the bottom rung of the education ladder, with only 39pc, 22pc and 27pc clearing the test. This should give us enough cause for worry. Also disturbing is the steady decline that has been visible in Sindh. Ten years ago, in ASER 2014, Sindh's children fared much better at 41pc, 23.6pc and 30.5pc.

What needs to be done then? At the launch of the Sindh report in Karachi last week, panellists put forward

many suggestions that have been made by others as well over the decades. They seemed to be like old wine in new bottles. It would have been instructive to hear the Sindh minister of education on the subject. Unfortunately, he could not attend. Hence we had to be content with the same analyses and remedies that we have been hearing for ages.

Planning is poor. Teachers' attendance and performance are not effectively monitored. The education budget is insufficient and most of it is consumed by the salaries of the staff. Teachers need training and their numbers need to be increased to make education accessible to all children.

This neglect of details has produced bizarre results. Here is a system comprising 40,382 schools for the entire province. But 89pc of them are primary institutions enrolling children from kindergarten to Grade V. This makes a high dropout inevitable. All students who manage to complete Grade V are not ensured further education as there are only a handful of secondary institutions, which cannot accommodate all of them.

What is worse is that nearly two-thirds of primary schools are staffed by only one or two teachers each. There is no education going on in them even if the teacher is present. Then there are thousands of shelterless schools and teachers who have no schools to report to. This is what the Sindh school census 2022-23 tells us. I have visited numerous such schools over the years. For decades, this paper has been writing about this comedy of errors. The government's own advisers — be it the legendary Anita Ghulam Ali or Kaiser Bengali — tried hard to make those

yielding power see reason.

At the ASER launch, one suggestion put forward was that district education authorities be set up to decentralise the system. On paper this sounds good, but without accountability, it would lead to more corruption. Already the district education officer exercises unparalleled powers in the area of his jurisdiction.

One of them is known to be running his own school and using English as the medium of instruction. There are others running tuition centres. Doesn't this amount to a conflict of interest? Will the district authorities be able to check corruption, which is the real name of the malaise that pervades the education sector?

Another observation made at the launch event was that political will was needed to reform education in Sindh. Absolutely! That is the real challenge given the fact that exploitative landowners have actually resisted the opening of schools in areas under their jurisdiction. They fear that education would make people aware of their rights and that they would then become more difficult to exploit. The failure of the government to open schools has given a boost to the private sector.

Hence the commercialisation of education in a big way. Can one be optimistic that ASER 2023 is a watershed mark? We will have to wait and see. But we must thank ASER's team and its driving force, Baela Raza Jamil, for serving as the conscience of the nation and producing this report year after year, when others are making hay when the sun shines. -- Courtesy Dawn

Role of family

Amin Valliani

Upon birth, we open our eyes and receive our initial nourishment from our family. As time goes by, we grow up in a family and get influenced by its environment. It provides us identity, support and security coupled with love and guidance.

A family is the basic unit of society. It consists of members bound together by bonds of blood. They live under one roof and eat from a single kitchen. Adult members assume the responsibility of caring for the children. They also help young members cope with the challenges of advanced age.

For centuries, the family system has been deeply ingrained in our culture and it is often celebrated as a source of strength. The family has a crucial role in nation-building, therefore, it invests all its resources such as time, money and efforts in the development of children who are going to be responsible citizens of the country. They receive the initial training of patriotism, habit-formation, character-building, etc, from the family. It is within the family that one learns about norms, values and behaviour that are taught by religion and accepted in society. For smooth and harmonious living, these norms and values are essential.

Their violation creates an imbalanced situation but in an orderly society, these values are rigorously imparted, followed and observed.

Modernisation has brought many challenges for families. People live in a fast and constantly changing world, where they move from one area to another quite frequently, meet different people of different backgrounds and sometimes inadvertently ignore family values. The lack of adherence to

these values causes discord and dysfunction. Besides, the advent of the internet and widespread social media platforms also present major challenges to family values. We see a sustained slide in the observance of these values and in some areas, these have been badly dented. There is a gulf between family members, fighting over trivial issues. Above all, everyone has become egocentric.

The Holy Quran warns believers to safeguard their families from hellfire. It says: "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded" (66:6).

All major religions have given us principles that remain profoundly applicable in modern times to live an enlightened family life. These principles include mutual love among family members, sacrifice for each other, peace through compromise and ethical behaviour in dealing with day-to-day affairs, intellectual and aesthetic pursuits and moderating destructive emotions and appetites.

The life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gives us fundamental principles that make our family strong and happy. He was the head of state in Madinah yet he never ignored his family. He used to share his time with his loved ones including his wives, grandsons and other relatives. In the initial period of his Makkah life, where the infidels used to persecute him and his life was under constant danger, his wife Bibi Khadijah and daughter Bibi Fatima were always there to provide him succour.

Enforcing certain values in family life is the need of hour. We must accept that the new generation is our most precious treasure and if we want to see them as strong pillars of future society then we should invest in them by inculcating positive values in our children. But what are such core values that need to be inculcated?

There is a long list of values that a family needs to instil in its children, but the major values include respect for every member of the family, especially the parents and seniors. The Holy Quran at many places asks believers to show respect and dignity to their parents. The children must realise how parents struggle for their development. If these values are meticulously practised, and the members have mutual respect and consult each other before taking important decisions, the family becomes strong, stable and prosperous.

Besides, it is but natural that every family has to face difficulties and combating them requires stamina. The family should teach its members how to cope with difficult situations and determine right from wrong in complex situations. The recent economic meltdown and skyrocketing prices of necessities has negatively impacted many families. Many families have lost their unity because of high inflation. The cases of frequent altercations and infighting among family members are reported daily. But in such a situation, the family unit should instil the good values of patience, hope and constant struggle in their members to help them cope, and become responsible citizens. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

American Business Council proposes steps for documenting economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The American Business Council (ABC) of Pakistan has proposed documenting the country's economy by emphasizing tax reforms and ease of doing business in the upcoming budget 2024-25.

Tax income should be on profit and not on turnover and with this it has been suggested to restore the confidence of investors and broaden the tax net, Aisha Sarwari, Board of Director of the American Business Council of Pakistan said this while addressing the "Pre-Budget Proposal Seminar" organized by the Ministry of Commerce in Islamabad.

Addressing the seminar, Aisha Sarwari said that ABC members excel in,

and contribute to, all sectors of the economy, with a cumulative gross revenue exceeding US\$ 600 billion. She said that they employ over 130,000 people directly and more than a million indirectly in Pakistan.

The American Business Council recognizes the commercial impact and economic relevance of its members, and proactively works to facilitate and promote their interests in all matters of trade and investment, she said.

She said the organization is therefore revered as an effective channel for dialogue with the Government of Pakistan.

Sarwari Regular

suggestions and input for improvement are provided to the relevant bodies - ministries, regulatory and tax authorities - to ensure that ABC's suggestions and concerns are incorporated in the annual Federal Budget and Trade Policy.

Board of Directorate of ABC said that illicit trade and smuggling is a huge issue that creates a non level playing field in Pakistan for legitimate businesses.

There are a number of innovative products that are today being smuggled into Pakistan due to high tariffs and this also creates a barrier for legal businesses to legally import and commercialise these products in Pakistan.

Inflation remains Filipinos' biggest worry: survey

MANILA (Xinhua/APP): Higher prices of goods and services remain Filipinos' top urgent concern, according to a nationwide survey by an independent polling firm released Friday.

In a survey of 1,200 adult Filipinos conducted from March 6 to 10, the pollster Pulse Asia said that 70 percent of them considered controlling inflation as their most urgent concern.

"The need to control the spiraling prices of basic commodities is the only national concern (out of the 17 included in the survey) considered urgent by most adults in the country as well as across geographic areas and socio-economic classes," the survey showed.

Year-on-year inflation in the Philippines rose to 3.7 percent in March due to higher food prices, including rice and meat, the Philippine Statistics Authority said on Friday.



Federal Minister for Communications, Mr. Abdul Aleem Khan, on assuming charge of Ministry, is being briefed on functioning of Ministry of Communications and its attached departments by Federal Secretary communications Mr. Ali Sher Mehsood in Islamabad.

Bilal Yasin says: Continuous efforts vital to ensure price control

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said that prices of essential items remained low in the holy month of Ramadan.

He said this while presiding over a meeting of the supervisory ministry committee of Ramadan Relief Package at Civil Secretariat on Friday.

He said that prices of onion, tomato and potato had been reduced by improving their supply, adding that the government had made sincere efforts to provide relief to the people.

He further said that price control was a

continuous effort and teams should remain active in the field in this regard. Bilal Yasin said that a plan had been prepared to control inflation during last few days of the holy month of Ramadan and prior to Eid-ul-Fitr, adding that special focus was also being given to supply of essential items. He directed the administration to ensure proper monitoring of prices and supply of chicken, onion, potato, tomato and other essential items.

The meeting was informed that fair price shops would remain operational until 27th of Ramadan.

Banks must prioritise its lending to SME sector to support PM's vision of sustainable economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) on Friday proposed that at least 25 percent of concessional financing, including the Export Finance Scheme, exclusively to SMEs in the export sector may be allocated in the coming budget.

This strategic allocation will not only support small sector development but also promote a more inclusive and sustainable economy. PBF President Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman in a meeting with members of Pakistan

Cotton Ginners Association, proposed that the State Bank of Pakistan may review its credit policies by fixing a special quota to finance the small and medium enterprises, as only the large industries have been availing government's all major concessional export loaning facilities, with very limited financing is left for the SMEs which are the backbone of the economy, contributing around 40 percent to the national gross domestic product (GDP).

He observed that despite their significance, more than 5 million SMEs

face a significant credit gap, receiving only 7% of private sector credit, far below neighboring countries like Bangladesh (25%) and India (18%). To achieve near to our neighbour countries targets we must advocate for targeted and fixed SME allocations in concessional financing schemes, particularly those aimed at the export-oriented sector.

Khawaja Mehboob said the SBP has launched various policies for the promotion of SME finance, but the required results were still awaited.

Eid shoppers prioritize children's joy over personal comforts

MULTAN (APP): As the joyous occasion of Eid approaches, the bazaars that once brimmed with festive fervor now present a deserted look especially during day time due to tight grip of inflation, however, some families could be witnessed after sun set.

Amidst the vibrant displays of colorful fabrics, shimmering jewelry, and shinning shoes, middle class citizens with diminishing purchasing power are found engaged in minor level shopping at some popular bazaars and markets including Gardezi, Gulshan, Hussain Agahi and Cantt markets but a reasonable number returned

without shopping.

Similarly, many customers were being observed purchasing clothes, shoes, toys and jewellery for their kids while sacrificing their own requirements, said Sunny, a shopkeeper in Gardezi Market. He, however, remarked that over 90 percent of customers were voicing concerns about inflation. He added that the customers from rural areas were noted absent compared to previous year's visit to the bazaars.

In a clear reflection of the prevailing economic woes, Mr Arshid Sasi, a cloth merchant, also shared his perspective on the

inflationary scenario. Arshid, with a furrowed brow lamented and stated, "Inflation has caused a severe blow to the business." The prices of fabrics have skyrocketed, making it increasingly challenging for customers to afford even the most basic attire for Eid festivities. He however stated that parents preferred to purchase clothes for their kids. He estimated that over 30 percent decrease in the number of customers at his shop.

Suhaib Khan, an owner of a shoe shop, also hinted that the situation was equally dire for shoe

retailers. "With the cost of raw materials soaring, we are compelled to pass on the burden to customers, further dampening their spirits. The volume of sales has plummeted and it reflected the grim reality of shrinking incomes", he stated.

Saqib Noori, a shopkeeper in Town Wajhianwala of district Khanewal, also highlighted a concerning trend which is a remarkable decrease in the number of customers visiting his shop, amounting to nearly 40 percent, compared to previous years.

He observed that customer response was

better during the marriage season before Ramadan. He remarked that a substantial portion of his clientele hailed from rural areas with an agricultural background. He however expressed optimism and pointed out that April was the month of wheat crop harvesting, and it was a crucial time for rural communities heavily reliant on agricultural yields. Anticipating an influx of customers following the emergence of crops in markets, he pinned high hopes about a potential surge in sales at his shop.

About Eid Shopping trends, Noori also revealed a dilemma that customers,



ISLAMABAD: Women busy in shopping for upcoming Eid ul Fitr Festival at a local market, in Federal Capital.

Jam Kamal visits 'SLIC Cutting-Edge Data Management Center'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, on Friday undertook a significant visit to the State Life Insurance Company (SLIC), located within the prominent State Life Tower in Islamabad and briefed on the health insurance card.

During his visit, Minister Jam Kamal Khan was given a

detailed overview of SLIC's operations and functionalities, said a press release issued here.

Impressed by SLIC's dedication to advancing healthcare initiatives nationwide, Minister Jam Kamal Khan particularly emphasized the pivotal role of the Data Management Center in achieving this objective.

CM decides to establish three directorates in Excise Dept

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has decided to establish three separate directorates in the Excise Department with the purpose to enhance its working capacity in line with contemporary needs and requirements.

These directorates will include the Directorate of Vehicle Registration & Management, the Directorate of Intelligence and Narcotics Control, and the Directorate of Property Tax. The chief minister has directed the quarters concerned to clearly demarcate the roles and responsibilities of the proposed

directorates. He added that the ultimate goal is to put this important department on modern lines, and all possible steps would be taken in this regard. He was presiding over a meeting of the Excise and Taxation department, held here at Chief Minister's House.

The chief minister has directed the concerned authorities to propose necessary amendments in the relevant legal framework for enhancing the revenue collection of the department.

He also decided to withdraw the Excise department's vehicles under the use of unauthorized persons and directed the authorities

concerned to formally serve the notice to all unauthorized persons in this regard, adding that legal action would be taken against those who do not return the vehicles within the stipulated time frame.

All such vehicles would be handed over to the police and other provincial departments on a need basis.

He further directed that the defective and useless vehicles, currently parked at the warehouse of the Excise department, should also be auctioned in a transparent manner, and made it clear that these vehicles should not be handed over to anyone on political recommendation.

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PESHAWAR: Participants are holding demonstration against USA and Israel as they are marking Youm-ul-Quds to show solidarity with people of Palestine, organized by National Ulama and Mashaikh Council outside Sunehri Mosque.

KP to be the first province to approve drug policy: Qasim

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah announced on Friday that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be the first province to approve a drug policy. He made this statement during a meeting of the Health Department.

The minister emphasized the importance of pharmacist appointments in hospitals and highlighted that under the policy, pharmacy services would be integrated with health centers. He further stated

that doctors would prescribe medications based on formulas rather than brands for patients, aiming to eliminate price manipulation and supply constraints from the drug market.

The implementation of the policy is expected to reduce medication expenses for patients. Hospital pharmacist appointments under the policy will ensure the availability of standard medications at lower rates for the public.

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Success of Aun Ch LHC seeks reply from respondents on petition filed

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought reply from respondents on petition filed by Suleman Akram Raja against the success of Aun Chaudhry from NA-128.

Justice Baqar Ali Najafi took up for hearing petition filed by Suleman Akram Raja against Election Commission (EC) decision regarding success of Aun Chaudhry from NA-128.

The counsel for petitioner told the court EC gave decision for resorting to tribunal on our petition.

The court remarked why you did not resort to tribunal as per EC decision.

The counsel for the petitioner said as per law the jurisdiction of our petition is high court. It is requested to court to nullify EC decision.

The court while issuing notices to the respondents sought reply and adjourned the hearing of the case till May 2.



LAHORE: A large number of people participating in Al-Quds rally to express solidarity with the people of Palestine at Mall Road.

Dr. Saqib emphasizes crucial role of BISP employees in program's success

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib has emphasized the pivotal role of BISP employees in the program's success.

Addressing BISP employees at Masjid Ibrahim, Kanal Colony Zonal Office Irrigation in Bahawalpur, Dr. Amjad Saqib highlighted that BISP's success in disbursing 471 billion rupees to deserving sisters,

daughters, and mothers across the country is owed to the dedication and hard work of the employees.

Highlighting the importance of transparency, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib directed the employees to ensure that assistance amounts are disbursed with utmost honesty and integrity, particularly emphasizing the need for transparency in payments to innocent women.

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Clinics on Wheels program under new mechanism to be relaunched in Punjab

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department Khawaja Imran Nazir has announced the relaunch of the Clinics on Wheels program, scheduled for the end of April. The initiative will see a new mechanism aimed at bolstering healthcare services across Punjab. During a review meeting of the National Health Support Program (NHSP), the minister revealed that Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif will inaugurate the program,

emphasizing the government's commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure.

Highlighting the comprehensive approach, he outlined plans to revamp 2500 rural health centers and 300 basic health units by March 2028. This overhaul aims to modernize medical facilities at the grassroots level, aligning with the vision set forth by the Chief Minister.

Moreover, the minister underscored the importance of capacity building for healthcare professionals.

11 dead, 1375 injured in 1261 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE: About eleven persons were killed and 1375 injured in 1261 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 638 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 737 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 728 drivers, 55 underage drivers, 184 pedestrians, and 474 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes.

Man found dead hanging with tree

FAISALABAD (APP): The body of an unknown person was found hanging with a tree in the limits of Muridwala police station, here on Friday.

A police report said that a man was found hanging from a tree in Chak-480. After being informed by area people, the police removed it to the mortuary for a autopsy. The identification of the deceased is yet to be established.

Punjab Governor says: Promotion of hotel industry can provide employment opportunities to people

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balghur Rehman today presented a certificate of appreciation to Irshad B. Anjum, Chief Executive Officer of a private hotel, for his meritorious services in the hospitality industry at Governor House Lahore.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balghur Rehman said that the promotion of hotel industry can provide employment opportunities to many people. He said that Chief Executive Officer Irshad B. Anjum's services to the hospitality

industry are commendable. He said that Irshad B. Anjum has worked day and night for the development of his organization and spared no effort to take it to the new heights. Governor Punjab expressed the hope that he would use his skills for the development and further improvement of the hospitality industry in the future. Chief Executive Officer Irshad B. Anjum said that today the Governor of Punjab awarded him with a certificate for his meritorious services in the hospitality industry which is a matter of pride for him.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balghur Rehman presenting a certificate of appreciation to Irshad B. Anjum, Chief Executive Officer of a private hotel, for his meritorious services in the hospitality industry at Governor House.

Workers welfare Board to be made responsible organization

PESHAWAR (APP): The Workers Welfare Board will be formed very soon and responsible persons will be appointed as members of the board, said the Provincial Labor Minister Fazal Shakoor Khan here on Friday.

Board members who are interested in solving workers' problems and are serious about their welfare would be encouraged, Fazal Shakoor Khan said while presiding over a meeting

of the Workers Welfare Board. In the meeting, the provincial minister stressed on the promotion of quality education in the educational institutions managed by the Workers Welfare Board. There was a detailed discussion about various welfare board issues including scholarships for school children and other facilities given to them, the Provincial Minister said.

International News

EU leaders, Blinken pledge continued support for Armenia amid regional tensions

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: The United States and European Union will continue to support Armenia and ethnic Armenians from the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, leaders from both sides of the Atlantic pledged as they were meeting with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Friday.

Azerbaijan took control of the former breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023, prompting a mass exodus of its ethnic Armenian population.

"We're committed to further growing our support to Armenia's democratic and economic resilience," said U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, adding Washington was backing the country's efforts for more

food security, digital infrastructure and diversification of its energy sector. "And we will continue to support the 100,000 ethnic Armenians displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region. This is central to Armenia's long-term stability", Blinken added.

Armenia is a treaty ally of Russia and traditionally Moscow's closest partner in the South Caucasus, but the two sides' relations have sharply deteriorated in recent months.

Yerevan has sought to build ties with the West, blaming Russia for failing to defend it from Azerbaijan, its neighbour and longtime rival, as well as distancing itself from Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Russia, Azerbaijan and Baku's close ally Turkey had criticised the Brussels meet-

ing, saying it would not help the cause of peace in the South Caucasus, a strategic region criss-crossed by oil and gas pipelines. Speaking to journalists in Brussels, Blinken and EU president Ursula Von der Leyen and the bloc's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, said economic integration between countries in the South Caucasus region - in particular in the energy and telecoms sectors - was vital for ensuring the zone's stability. "The European Union and Armenia are increasingly aligned in values and interest", Von der Leyen said, referring to the bloc's efforts to help Armenia boost its security capabilities and efforts "to make sure that lethal equipment and technologies do not end up in the hands of the Russian military".



Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei looks at the coffins of members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps who were killed in the Israeli airstrike on the Iranian embassy complex in the Syrian capital Damascus, during a funeral ceremony in Tehran, Iran.

US threatens policy shift if Israeli excesses continue

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States on Thursday issued its strongest public rebuke toward Israel since it launched an invasion of Gaza, seeking for the first time to leverage US aid to influence Israeli military behavior.

President Joe Biden, a staunch supporter of the Israeli offensive until now, called for an immediate ceasefire in a call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, conditioning support for its offensive on concrete steps to address the safety of aid workers and Palestinian civilians.

The rebuke followed an attack on a World Central Kitchen charity convoy this week that killed seven food aid workers.

The White House had described Biden as outraged and heartbroken by the attack but, prior to Thursday's call, the president had made no fundamental change in Washington's steadfast support for Israel in its conflict against Palestinian Hamas militants.

Israel wrecking Gaza healthcare, says MSF

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: Israel is systematically destroying Gaza's healthcare system, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said on Thursday, describing scenes of carnage that no hospitals in the world would be able to handle.

The medical charity said children were turning up in hospitals with gunshot wounds from drones, while many patients were being crushed under rubble then suffering severe burns.

The MSF said deadly attacks on humanitarian staff showed either deliber-

ate intent or reckless incompetence. Amber Alayyan, MSF deputy programme manager for the Middle East, said the healthcare system in Gaza before Oct-ober was imperfect but robust and improving. "Now we're seeing the systematic and deliberate destruction of the healthcare system," she told a press conference at MSF's headquarters in Geneva.

Alayyan said the vast majority of injuries seen by MSF medics in Gaza were explosive injuries: the effects of bombs hitting homes.

US-Chinese military talks resume on safety in the air and at sea after a nearly 2-year break

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: For the first time in nearly two years, U.S. and Chinese defense officials met this week to discuss unsafe and aggressive ship and aircraft incidents between the two militaries in the Pacific region, restarting a dialogue that Beijing abruptly ended in a dispute involving Taiwan.

The meeting, which was Tuesday through Thursday in Hawaii, came as Washington and Beijing work to expand communications between the two world powers and ease escalating tensions. Military-to-military contact had stalled in August 2022, when Beijing suspended all such communication after then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, the self-governing island China claims as its own.

The thaw in relations

between the two countries got a kick-start last November when U.S. President Joe Biden and China's President Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco. About a month later, Gen. CQ Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke with his Chinese counterpart in a video call — in the first senior military-to-military contact since the Pelosi visit.

Other top-level talks have continued, including a call earlier this week between Biden and Xi, and a visit to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen that began on Thursday. The resurgence of senior military leader discussions includes the relaunch of routine engagements, including the China-U.S. Military Maritime Consultative Agreement meeting.

Strike on Iran's consulate in Syria is 'turning point', Hezbollah head says

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: The head of Lebanon's armed group Hezbollah said on Friday that Israel's strike on Iran's consulate in Damascus this week marked a "turning point" since Oct 7, when Palestinian group Hamas launched an attack on Israel that has led to escalating regional tensions.

The Damascus strike on Monday killed seven Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps members, among them a senior Quds Force commander, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi. Iran has vowed revenge.

Iran-backed Hezbollah has said it supports Iran's right to "punish" Israel, and in televised remarks on Friday, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the response was coming.

"Be certain, be sure, that the Iranian response to the targeting of the consulate in Damascus is definitely coming against Israel," he said.

Israel has braced itself for the possibility of a retaliatory attack, cancelling leave for all combat units and mobilising more troops for air defence units.

Speaking to Israeli forces at an air base on Friday, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel was attacking enemies wherever it decided to do so.

"It could be in Damascus and it could be in Beirut," he said. "The enemy is badly hit in all places and is therefore looking for ways to respond. We are ready with a multi-layered defence."

Until now, Iran has avoided directly entering the fray, while supporting a slew of attacks on Israeli and US targets by its allies across the region in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

Six months into Gaza war, Israel faces deepening isolation

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Six months into the war in Gaza, the killing of a group of aid workers by an Israeli air strike summed up both the dire humanitarian crisis and the lack of a clear way out of a conflict that is leaving Israel increasingly isolated.

The attack on Monday night that killed seven staff of the World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid group, including six foreigners, has angered even some of Israel's closest allies, adding to growing pressure for an end to the fighting. Israel's military has acknowledged the strike was conducted mistakenly by its forces and apologised for the "unintentional" deaths of the seven, who included citizens of Britain, Australia and Poland, a dual US-Canadian citizen and a Palestinian colleague.

But that has done little to ease growing alarm abroad, where public opinion even in traditionally friendly countries like Brit-

ain, Germany or Australia has swung against the Israeli campaign in Gaza, launched after the Hamas-led attack on Israel on Oct 7.

President Joe Biden, who has come under growing pressure from his own supporters to end the fighting, said he was outraged by the convoy attack. On Thursday, following a call with Netanyahu, the White House demanded "concrete and measurable steps to reduce civilian harm" and said future US support would be determined by Israel's actions.

On Friday, Netanyahu ordered the reopening of the Erez crossing into northern Gaza and the temporary use of Ashdod port in southern Israel as well as increased access for Jordanian aid through the Kerem Shalom crossing in southern Gaza.

With Gaza in ruins, most of the 2.3 million population have been forced from their homes and now depend on aid for survival.

Trump loses bid to delay hush money proceedings

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: A New York judge has denied Donald Trump's bid to delay his April 15 trial on charges stemming from hush money paid to a porn star until the US Supreme Court reviews claim to presidential immunity in a separate criminal case.

The court is scheduled to hear the former US president's arguments that he is immune from federal prosecution for trying to overturn his 2020 election defeat to Democratic President Joe Biden on April 25.

His defence lawyers in the New York case in March asked Justice Juan Merchan to delay the trial until that review was complete, arguing it was relevant because prosecutors were seeking to present evidence of statements Trump made while he was president from 2017 to 2021.

In a court ruling on Wednesday, Merchan said Trump had waited too long to raise the issue.



QUETTA: A large number of faithful offering Namaz-e-Jumma Tul Wida during Holy Fasting Month of Ramzanul Mubarak at Meezan Chowk.

Govt to establish Danish schools in Islamabad, other areas of country: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the government will establish new Danish schools in remote areas of Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and other areas of the country including Islamabad where the children will get state of the art free education, boarding, and food facilities. He was talking to the participants of the iftar-dinner hosted by him in honour of orphaned children and children with special abilities at the Prime Minister House on Thursday. Besides he also announced to establish state of the art hospitals in Islamabad, AJK and GB. The prime minister, on the occasion, taking keen interest in the children, interacted with them and inquired about their wellbeing. "I am happy to meet the cute children came from various institutions including SOS and Hassan Academy," he said adding today the children were the chief

Post offices, courier firms put on red alert after another judge receives 'toxic' letter

ISLAMABAD (INP): The authorities have put all the post offices and courier companies on "red alert" after another senior judge received a letter containing arsenic powder on Friday. Showing seriousness about the threatening letters delivered to high-profile personalities including Supreme Court and High Court judges, and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the agencies have directed the posts officers and courier services in the country to be vigilant and thoroughly check any letter sent to any high-profile personality. Sources said that all the post offices and courier services were also directed

Law minister emphasizes on role of committees to assist needy litigants

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday emphasized on active role of legal aid committees to provide legal assistance to deserving litigants. The law minister said that legal aid committees at the district level could play a role to support the poor and needy people for their access to justice. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar held a meeting with a delegation of Punjab Bar Council, Chairman Reforms Committee Rana Tufail Ahmed Noon and Chairman Executive Punjab Bar Council were also part of delegation.

PUC observes Juma-tul-Wida as Palestine Day, advocates for peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the appeal of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), Juma-tul-Wida was solemnly observed across the nation as Palestine Day with the theme of "Peace for Palestine". In mosques nationwide, scholars, imams, and khutbahs addressed large congregations, passionately advocating for an immediate ceasefire to halt the ongoing tragedy unfolding in the Holy Land. Special prayers, speeches, and resolutions were fervently organized in solidarity with the Palestinian people. PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, alongside a distinguished assembly of religious leaders voiced an urgent appeal to the international community. They called upon the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and international human rights organizations to expedite efforts towards achieving a ceasefire. They demanded the United Nations to enforce Security Council resolutions, urging Israel to immediately terminate its occupation of Palestinian territories and its "illegal blockade" of the Gaza Strip. Moreover, they emphasized the necessity for United Nations member states to cease the sale and transfer of weapons, explosives, and other military equipment to Israel. The religious leaders underscored the resilience of the Palestinian cause against decades of suppression by the United States and Israel. They hailed the recent resolution passed against Israel in the United Nations Security Council as a significant achievement for the Muslim Ummah, stressing the imperative for its immediate implementation to halt the ongoing atrocities against Palestinians. Expressing unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people, the scholars reiterated their commitment to amplifying their voices until peace is restored in Palestine and its refugees can return to their homes. They condemned the egregious crimes committed by the Zionist government, highlighting the indiscriminate targeting of civilians, including women, children, patients, and hospitals. Amidst escalating tensions, the religious leaders urged international powers to accelerate efforts for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, warning of the dire consequences of allowing the conflict to escalate further. They affirmed their steadfast support for the Palestinian cause, vowing not to remain silent until justice prevails and peace is achieved there.



KARACHI: Mr. Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with a delegation of CPNE.

Gwadar Port gets equipment of early warning system

GWADAR (INP): In the wake of China's unflinching commitment to help Pakistan mitigate detrimental impacts of natural disaster like catastrophic flood, torrential rain as well as meteorological hazards, Gwadar Port has received equipment of early warning system, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. After equipment's installation and functioning at Gwadar Port, next beneficiary areas are Jiwan and Turbat in Balochistan. China Metrological Administration (CMA) has doled out the equipment to Pakistan Metrological Department (PMD). The equipment includes the establishment of one mobile vertical observation system, one Beidou Navigation sounding station and three automatic weather stations (AWS) including two backup AWS and large screen. Talking to Gwadar Port PMD official said that CMA-PMD collaboration is a part of boosting CPEC capacity for emergency management of major meteorological disasters under the Belt and Road Initiative. He revealed that CMA is also assisting PMD for enhancing its institutional capabilities to meet the emerging hydro-meteorological challenges. "CMA will help PMD strengthen metrological observation network along the CPEC route in Pakistan," he added. Meanwhile, he said that for site-selection, transportation, installation, commissioning, daily operation and maintenance, PMD has constituted a three-member team that comprises of Muhammad Tahir Khan, Fayyaz Nazir and Ali Baqdar. The team will coordinate with the counterpart CMA, he added. Last year, on March 24, meteorological officers and experts from China and Pakistan held talks on deepening cooperation in meteorological science and technology in Beijing.

Medicines, medical equipments dispatched to Dera Bugti by MNCH Programme

QUETTA: The medicines and medical equipments were dispatched to Dera Bugti by the MNCH Programme of Health Department. The consignment consisting of different medicines as well as ultrasound machine, fetoscope, delivery table, suction machine and other equipments were dispatched on directives of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti. Speaking on the occasion, Programme Director of MNCH, Dr Gul Sabin Azam said that MNCH Programme is playing its wholehearted role in provision of public health facilities to the people in Dera Bugti. He said that necessary measures are being taken for the health of mothers and children in remote areas of the province.

54 citizens killed over resistance during robberies in Karachi in 3 months

KARACHI (INP): Murders over resistance during robberies continue in the metropolis and 54 citizens have been killing across the city in last three months. In recent incident, armed robbers gunned down two citizens over resistance in Manghopir area of Karachi. A cop in plain dress was shot injured during a robbery near nursery at Shahrah-e-Faisal. In another CCTV footage, robbers were seen looting people at a hotel in Gulistan-e-Johar while doing Sehri. Two accused of looting electronic shop in Buffer Zone were arrested during a joint raid of police and Sindh Rangers in Orangi Town. The citizens expressing grave concerns over surge in killing over resistance during robberies have demanded of the authorities for taking notice and directing strict action.



KARACHI: The Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf called on the Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at Chief Minister House.

Rahila calls for taking steps for construction of Gynae Complex in SPH Quetta

QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly and former Speaker, Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani has underlined the need to take steps for establishing a full-fledged Gynecology Complex in the Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospital Quetta. Ms. Rahila Hameed Durrani was chairing a meeting about construction of Gynecology Complex in the Sandeman Provincial Hospital here the other day. Those who were present in the meeting were included Special Secretary Health, Majeed Rehman Qamrani, Head of Surgery Department, Professor Dr. Shoaib Ahmed Qureshi, Chief Executive BINUQ, Professor Dr. Syed Liaquat Agha, Head Gynecology Department, Professor Dr. Uzma Sohail, Medical Superintendent of Sandeman Hospital, Dr. Ishaq Panezai, Professor Dr. Manzoor Hussain, Associate Professor Dr. Mariam Shoaib and Section Officer Health, Riasat Ali. Speaking on the occasion, MPA Rahila Hameed Durrani said that construction of Gynecology Complex is unavoidable for provision of healthcare facilities to the women in Sandeman Civil Hospital. She said that the facilities of operation, treatment, diagnostic tests, X-ray, CT-scan and ultra sound would be available to the patients under one roof with establishment of Gynae complex. Meanwhile, the MS Dr Ishaq Panezai briefed Ms. Durrani about construction of the Gynae complex in the Sandeman Hospital. The C&W official briefed about the features of Gynae complex.

Services of BINUQ to be improved further, says Secretary Health

QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan has stated that Balochistan Institute of Nephro-Urology Quetta (BINUQ) is an exemplary healthcare institution of the province and as such its services would be improved further. The Secretary Health said that we appreciate the exemplary services being provided by BINUQ administration, doctors and other staff to the patients. However, he stressed the need to hold the meeting of Board of Governors of the Institute on regular basis for monitoring its overall performance and improving it further. The Secretary Health on surprise visit to the BINUQ on late Thursday night. He visited emergency room, ICU, wards and dialysis unit where he inspected the attendance of doctors and other staff. He also checked the list of patients admitted on the counter of Health Card Programme. Director Admin Balochistan Health Card, Dr. Ahmed Wali briefed the Secretary about free medical treatment to the patients under the Programme. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Health directed to the concerned high ups to ensure transparency in the financial and administrative matters as no irregularity would be acceptable at all.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

Quetta district administration in action against profiteers; 41 arrested; shops of 3 sealed

QUETTA: The Quetta district administration continued crackdown against the profiteers in the provincial metropolis. According to an official hand out issued here, some 41 shopkeepers were arrested on charge of violating the official price list. Moreover, three shops were sealed on the violation while 111 shopkeepers were issued stern warning during the crackdown. The raids were conducted by different teams of the administration deputed to monitor the implementation on the official price list by the shopkeepers in different parts of the city. Meanwhile, the district administration warned that action would remain continued against the profiteering. It was also warned that stern action would be taken against those involved in profiteering and that violation of official price list.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri says Bhutto's judicial killing was a heinous conspiracy against democracy

HUB: Central leader of Pakistan People's Party and President of District Hub and Spokesman of President Asif Ali Zardari for Balochistan, Candidate PB21 Hub Mir Ali Hassan Zehri paid tribute to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on the 45th Martyrdom Day. It has been said that the continuity of democracy today is due to the sacrifice of the leader of the people, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and today, in the form of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the journey of democracy which was founded by Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto is continuing. He said that Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto did not bow down to those who killed the night of democracy and sacrificed his life for democracy. Inspirational leadership and prudent leadership gave a new thought to the nation. He said that the credit of bringing Islamic countries on one platform also goes to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. On this occasion, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's accomplishments and positive thinking are reflected in the consensus constitution of 1973, the fruits of which cannot be denied. Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto is also credited with taking Pakistan on the journey of nuclear power, which made Pakistan invincible. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri further said that today history declares the judicial killing of martyr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto as a brutal crime.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh inaugurating foundation stone of newly constructed Investigation School at PTC.

Pakistan Bar urges SC to constitute full court over IHC judges' letter

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) members including Abid Zuberi Friday appealed to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to form the full court to hear the suo moto notice of the letter written by six Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges complaining of "meddling" by intelligence agencies in judicial matters. The members of the Pakistan Bar Council have also applied to the Supreme Court to become a party in the suo moto case of the six judges' letter. In the application, the

Chief of Naval Staff calls on Sindh CM

KARACHI (INP): The Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf called on the Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at Chief Minister House here on Friday. They discussed professional matters in the call-on. The CM said that Karachi is the city of Navy. He said that Karachi is on the seashore that is why we call it the maritime city. The CM Murad said that Pakistan Navy has valuable services in the fields of education and health in Sindh. He said that during the flood, Pakistan Navy along with other forces fully helped the people of Sindh.

Provincial Ombudsman visits Trauma Center, inspects different sections

QUETTA: The Provincial Ombudsman Balochistan, Nazir Muhammad Baloch visited the Trauma Center adjacent to the Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospital here on Friday. During the visit, the Protocol Officer of Ombudsman, Aftab Ahmed and other concerned officials were also accompanied with the Ombudsman. The Provincial Ombudsman went round of different sections of the Trauma Center including Emergency Room, Wards, ICU, Operation Theatre, X-Ray, CT scan, Ultrasound and Pharmacy. Mr. Nazir Baloch inquired about the health facilities available to the patients at Trauma Center, who expressed satisfaction over the performance of staff and cleanliness situation there. The Ombudsman praised performance of the doctors and other medical staff of Trauma Center and assured complete support to its administration. He said that the Trauma Center is an exemplary institution which is providing best medical services to the patients. He said that the institutions like Trauma Center would be encouraged and fully supported.



QUETTA: Provincial Ombudsman Nazir Muhammad Baloch Advocate inspecting different sections of Trauma Center during his visit to Civil Hospital.

DC Chaman chairs meeting on repatriation of Afghan refugees & other related issues

QUETTA: A meeting was held to discuss the matters about repatriation of Afghan refugees DICC Phase-II and other related issues in Chaman on Friday. Held at the Deputy Commissioner's office, the DC Raja Athar Abbas chaired the meeting. Those who attended were included the members of DICC and representatives of law enforcement and intelligence agencies, IB, Special Branch, CTD and other concerned officials. Certain important decisions were made about the polio eradication, Chaman protest, passport and other necessary matters. The decisions were also made about the repatriation of illegal immigrants besides those having the Afghan Citizenship or POR cards. Needless to mention here that the DICC meeting was held in light of the orders of provincial government. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner said that those refugees not having any documentary proof or registration for their stay in Pakistan must proceed to their homeland. They should play their role in development and prosperity of their country, he stressed.

Railways all set to ply four special trains on Eid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has completed all arrangements to run four special trains on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr to facilitate the passengers leaving for their native towns to celebrate the auspicious occasion with their dear ones. According to the schedule issued by Pakistan Railways, the first Eid special train would depart from Karachi to Peshawar and the other from Karachi Cantonment to Lahore. As per the schedule, the first special train would leave Karachi for Peshawar on April 07 at 6:00 am.