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CJCSC 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 (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamsah 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 CJCSC 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 socio-economic 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 CJCSC 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: The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Sahir Shamsah Mirza, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

New electric bus routes to be commenced after Eid: Sharjeel Memon

KARACHI (INP): Sindh's Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Transport, Sharjeel Memon, revealed that new transport initiatives are set to roll out post-Eid, following directives from Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Notably, the second phase of the women-exclusive Pink Bus Service is slated for launch in Karachi.

Memon disclosed plans to kickstart new routes for electric buses shortly after Eid, aiming to bolster the city's public transportation system. Additionally, Mirpur Khas will witness the initiation of a People's Bus Service to cater to the commuting needs of the local populace.

Highlighting efforts to modernize public transport, Memon announced the introduction of a cashless ticketing service, which is anticipated to streamline fare transactions for commuters. Furthermore, the Sindh government is poised to introduce a complimentary Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Red Line BRT, offering seamless connectivity options.

The launch of the free shuttle service for Karachi residents is scheduled to commence immediately after the Eid festivities, underlining the government's commitment to enhancing accessibility and convenience for the city's commuters.

Attaulah Tarar calls on Governor Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaulah Tarar, on Friday, called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori here at Governor House Karachi.

The overall political situation of the country, development projects of federal government in Karachi, issues of the industrialists of the metropolis and other matters of mutual interest were discussed in the meeting, said a statement issued by the Governor House.

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting appreciated welfare projects of Governor Sindh and termed the IT program of Governor Sindh as a commendable initiative.



KARACHI: Mr. Attaulah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor house.

Arsenic mixed in powder found in letters sent to SC, IHC judges: CTD

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) has disclosed that forensic analysis of the powder found in the suspicious letters sent to Islamabad High Court judges has revealed the presence of arsenic. This revelation has raised serious alarms.

According to reliable sources within the CTD, the forensic report revealed that the powder contained a 15% arsenic concentration. Arsenic, known for its toxicity and lethal effects, poses a severe threat to human health, particularly affecting the nervous system. The CTD is set to submit this critical forensic report to the Supreme Court within the next three to four days.

Moreover, CTD investigators have obtained CCTV footage from the sub-divisional post office of the Satellite Town, capturing potential suspects near the letter boxes from where the letters were potentially posted to the judges. Utilizing advanced identification methods,

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

UK media report

India ordered assassination of 20 individuals in Pakistan

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 al-

leged 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 alleg-

ing 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.

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 directives of PM Shehbaz Sharif, he added.

He said the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) had approved supplementary grant for payment of media houses' arrears and dues.

He will perform Umrah and offer prayers at the Masjid Nabawi Al-Sharif.

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.

Imran Khan strongly condemns Israel's genocide in Gaza

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman-for-life Imran Khan has strongly condemned Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and called upon the Muslim leadership to take an effective lead as the people of Gaza are counting on the Ummah to speak up and act.

In a message from Adiala Jail, PTI Founding Chairman vowed: "I stand with Gaza."

"I continue to strongly condemn Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza in which over 40,000 innocent Palestinians have been killed and many others are being deliberately starved to death," he added.

Ambassador of Japan calls on Minister for Defence,

RAWALPINDI (Online): Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Islamabad Friday.

Minister for Defence expressed that Pakistan-Japan diplomatic, military and economic relations are based on the principles of goodwill and mutual trust for each other.

He desired that Japan would help create economic activities in Pakistan as well as bring investment in maritime and industrial manufacturing sectors. Minister also commended the efforts of Japanese Government for regular holding of Pakistan-Japan Politico-Military and Military Dialogues, adding that such interactions are a concrete expression of the desire of both the countries to enhance mutual defence collaboration.

He will perform Umrah and offer prayers at the Masjid Nabawi Al-Sharif.

PM directs for fool-proof security of Chinese nationals

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.

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 11 at Bhutto House Naudero.

Chief Secy reviews court cases, directs to resolve pending pension matters

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Secretary Syed Asif Hyder Shah on Friday presided over a Secretaries Committee meeting to review anti-corruption cases, development projects and court cases.

He convened the meeting at the Sindh Secretariat, which was attended by all administrative secretaries including the Chairman of the Planning Board and Chairman of Anti-Corruption while all commissioners attended the meeting via video link.

The agenda discussed issues including anti-corruption cases, developmental projects, automation of employee pensions, court cases, employee promotions, disciplinary actions, and the Public Accounts Committee among others.

During the meeting, the Secretary Implementation and Coordination gave a briefing highlighting that since January 2023 different departments forwarded 99 cases to Anti-Corruption, out of which 21 had been resolved while 78 were pending.

Among the cases forwarded, the department of Food had the highest number of cases 46.

Furthermore, it was disclosed that there were currently 1285 disciplinary action cases against government employees with the department of School Education having the highest number 562.

Moreover, it was revealed that there were 204 pending pension cases across various departments.



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

Maritime Minister calls on CM Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh called on the Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at Chief Minister House here on Friday.

According to a CM house communique here, the Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Sheikh agreed to make the Korangi Fish Harbour properly functional and work to establish Keti Bunder Sea Port for the export of Thar coal and other commodities.

The CM and the federal minister discussed the land issues between the Sindh government and Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and agreed to resolve them amicably so that foreign investment could be attracted.

The CM directed the Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah to hold a meeting with

the Federal Secretary for Maritime Affairs Dr Erum to exchange notes on the issues, including the land so that they could be resolved.

The federal minister said that Karachi Port has become so loaded that Sindh needed another port to export coal and other commodities. At this, the CM said that he had included Keti Bunder in the CPEC projects but when the CPEC had come to a halt during the previous government of PTI the project was put on the back burner.

Qaiser Shaikh told the chief minister to discuss the matter with the prime minister and that he would also pursue it so that the Keti Bandar project could be developed. Mr Shah said that the coal reserves in Thar were so great that the coal could be exported.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah meets Admiral Naveed Ashraf NI (M) T Bt, Chief of Naval Staff at CM House.

Tarar assures practical steps to resolve issues of journalists, media workers, media houses

KARACHI (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah 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 directives of PM Shehbaz Sharif, he added.

He said the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) had approved supplementary grant for payment of media houses' arrears and dues.



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

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."

"This is subject to approval by the IMF's Ex-

ecutive Board. Upon approval by the Board, Pakistan will have access to around \$1.1 billion, and that would bring total disbursements under the SBA to about \$3 billion. We do expect the board meeting to take place in late April," the spokesperson said.

"The agreement recognizes the strong, staff level agreement, recognizes the strong program implementation by the State bank of Pakistan (SPB) and the caretaker government in recent months, as well as the new government's intentions for ongoing policy and reform efforts to move Pakistan from stabilization to a strong and sustainable recovery."

"Pakistan's economic and financial improvement has improved in the months since the first review was completed. Growth and confidence are continuing to recover.

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 inculcated 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



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

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

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

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

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.

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

Independent Report
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

Independent Report
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

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur 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 Balighur 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 Balighur 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 meeting, 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".

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 apologized 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.



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.

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.

Japan seeks to work with South Korea

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Friday said he wanted to cooperate with South Korea and the Philippines, allies shared with the US, and even engage with North Korea to promote regional security.

"The current security environment is tough and complex, and we are at a turning point in history," Kishida said in a group interview.

"Cooperation between Japan and the United States and like-minded countries is a very important issue," he added.

Turkey arrests two more suspected spies for Israel

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Turkish authorities, who have denounced Israel for its war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip, have arrested two people suspected of spying for Israeli intelligence, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said on Friday.

Since January, Turkish authorities have detained or arrested and charged dozens of people suspected of having ties to Israel's Mossad intelligence agency.

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 resumption 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 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.

CM invites Gulf states, German investors to invest in Sindh to reap good returns

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, has extended an invitation to investors from Gulf countries and Germany to consider investing in Sindh province.

He believes that Sindh is a province rich in resources and well-connected to the world via sea routes, which makes it an ideal location for trade and commerce to thrive. The Chief Minister believes that investors can expect good returns on their investment in Sindh.

This he said during his meeting with German Consul General Mr Rudiger Lotz, Consul General of Qatar Mr Nayef Shahein, and Consul General of Oman Eng. Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari here at CM House.

Mr Shah said that his government was planning to conduct a roadshow in Gulf countries to attract investment in the province.

The Ambassador of Oman, Eng. Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari, congratulated

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah for being elected as the provincial chief executive for a consecutive term. The CM appreciated the Ambassador for speaking Urdu fluently and accurately.

During their meeting, the CM emphasized the importance of strengthening the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Oman and suggested that the two countries should work together to enhance trade, commerce, and the welfare of the people. He also said that Oman imports various commodities from other far-flung countries and encouraged exploring avenues to boost trade between Pakistan and Oman—the closest neighbour.

Furthermore, the CM invited investors to visit Karachi and meet him and his investment department to discuss investment opportunities and joint ventures. He also informed the Ambassador that President Asif Zardari had proposed

the construction of a bridge between Gwadar and Oman to improve trade, commerce, and people-to-people contact.

The chief minister and Consul General of Qatar Mr Nayef Shahein also discussed investment, trade and commerce in their meeting. Mr Shah said that Qatar was a brother Muslim country and both the countries have a strong relationship.

Mr Shah invited the investors of Qatar to invest in Sindh. "We have a separate Investment department which would facilitate them and share the list of the sectors where investment opportunities were ample."

The consul general assured the CM that he would bring in here a trade delegation and investors to explore the opportunities.

The chief minister discussing investment opportunities in Sindh said that his government was working with the World Bank on Ease of doing Business in the province.



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

Commission on Enforced Disappearances files monthly performance report in SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances has filed monthly performance report for February 2024 in Supreme Court (SC).

The report said 36 cases were disposed of in February 2024 while 42 cases have increased.

On member Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances comprising Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal has issued report.

It was said in the report cases of overall 10123 missing persons were registered with commission till January 2024. Cases of more 42 persons were registered in February 2024. These way total cases reached 10185.

7832 cases were disposed of till January 2024. The number of disposed of cases reached 7866 with 36 cases of February.

The pending cases remain now 2317.

It has been said in the report the number of people who have been traced stands at 26. Those who have returned home are 14. As many as 5 persons are kept in jail.

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

members of the Bar Council have said that the High Court judges should be made a party in the six judges' letter case.

The PBC members have said that the full court comprising all the judges should hear the case and secret agencies should be prevented from interfering in judicial affairs.

The PBC members also appealed in the application that the Judicial Council should be ordered to issue instructions on the reservations of the judges of the Islamabad High Court.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson IPO-Pakistan meets Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, Ulanbek Totuiaev.

Juma-tul-Wida observed across northern Sindh with religious sanctity

SUKKUR (APP): Thousands of Muslims of northern Sindh observed Juma-tul-Wida, the last Friday of Ramadan, with traditional religious sanctity like other parts of the country.

Almost all the mosques of Sukkur and Larkana divisions including Khairpur, Ghotki, Shikarpur, Jacobabad, Noshehroferoz and other

districts were overcrowded with worshippers at Juma prayers.

Ulema and Khatibs in their sermons highlighted the importance of the day and the holy month of Ramadan.

They called upon the people to follow the principles of Islam and forge unity among their ranks by shunning all their differences.

NAB launches probe into wheat theft in Sindh

KARACHI (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Friday has launched an investigation into wheat theft worth billions of rupees in Sindh.

The NAB instructed the Deputy Director of Food Department Karachi for the details of five years' worth of wheat from Garhi Khairo in Malir's godown.

In a letter, the NAB authorities instructed the concerned officials to provide a detailed record of wheat which was brought to the Malir warehouse from 2015 to 2020.

AC visits fruit & vegetable market, monitored prices

SUKKUR (APP): Assistant Commissioner (AC) Sukkur, Sobia Falak Rao paid a surprise visit to local markets of fruits and vegetables in Sukkur on Friday to monitor the prices and quality of essential items being provided to the people during Ramzan-ul-Mubarak.

The AC spent more than two hours in markets to review the prices of essential items being provided to the citizens. She also talked to the consumers and inquired from them about the rates and quality of daily use items.

She checked the prices of vegetables, fruits, meat, and flour at the different shops as well as their quality. On the occasion, she also fined Rs 9000 to three shopkeepers.

She said that instructions have also been issued to the Mukhtiar and Assistant Mukhtiar and that quality essential items should be available to the masses at reasonable rates in the markets.

10 gamblers held, stake money, cell phones recovered

SUKKUR (INP): The police arrested 10 gamblers, recovered stake money, cell phones and gambling tools during a raid here on Friday.

The police on a tip-off raided a gambling den in jurisdiction of New Pind police station in Sukkur.

During operation, 10 gamblers including Abid Hussain, Shahid Ali, Nazeer, Shehzad, Murtaza, Latif, Bilawal and others were caught red handed.

The police recovered thousands of rupees stake money, cell phones and gambling tools from possession of the detainees who were being investigated after registering a case against them.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah meets with Consul General of Germany Mr. Rudiger Lotz at CM House.

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 well-being.

"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 guests while he was their host.

During his interaction with the children, the prime minister said he found them very intelligent who will join different professions in future and will play key role in the country's development and prosperity.

PRCS chairman meets DG Rangers Sindh, discussed humanitarian efforts

KARACHI (APP): The Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari called on Director General Pakistan Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas here at Rangers Headquarters on Friday and discussed matters related to society's humanitarian initiatives in the province.

According to a press release issued by PRCS, during the dialogue, Sardar Shahid Laghari underscored PRCS's steadfastness and commitment, especially during challenging circumstances like the devastating floods of 2022. Through partnerships with esteemed organizations such as the

IFRC, ICRC and Red Cross, Red Crescent Movement, PRCS promptly initiated relief efforts, benefiting over 2.8 million individuals across 55 districts, with a focus on underserved areas.

PRCS collaborated with the government and Armed Forces, complementing their relief endeavors to alleviate the plight of flood-affected communities.

Chairman Laghari elaborated on PRCS's emergency flood response in Sindh, detailing activities such as distributing essential supplies, providing shelter, installing water treatment facilities, and offering cash assistance to affected families.



KARACHI: Activists of Tehreek e Azadi Al Quds Pakistan hold rally.

DC chairs meeting to review Eid arrangements

HYDERABAD (APP): A meeting was held at Shahbaz building to review law and order situation and other necessary arrangements on the occasion of Eid ul Fitr under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Tariq Qureshi on Friday.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner directed the HMC officials to ensure cleanliness and cover open manholes before Eid. He also directed the police authorities to put in place an effective security plan to avoid any untoward incident. DC directed to improve the traffic arrangements to save the public from any kind of trouble.

He directed the Secretary Regional Transport Authority (RTA) to take action against the transporters charging extra fare to passengers on the occasion of Eid and ensure

implementation of fixed fares.

The Deputy Commissioner also instructed the concerned officers to ensure the safety of the lives and property of the citizens visiting Al-Manzar, a recreational spot on the Indus River during Eid holidays and to ensure possible measures to avoid any untoward incident there.

He said that Section 144 will be enforced to ban bathing in the Indus River and other canals during the three days of Eid.

The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioner (ADC)-I Shahzad Ahmed, ADC-II Mehwish Aijaz, Municipal Commissioner Jam Zahoor Lakhani, Assistant Commissioner City Babar Saleh Rahpoto, AC Qasimabad Abdul Wahid Chana, AC Rural Anees Ahmed Abbasi and other relevant officers.



SUKKUR: Rescue operation is underway after fire broke out incident due to electric short circuit, at Jhulay Lal Mandir in Sukkur.

Governor offers Jumma tul Wida prayer at Faizan-e-Madina

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori offered Jummatul Wida prayer at Faizan-e-Madina, the headquarters of Dawat-e-Islami here on Friday.

The Sindh Governor prayed for the country's security and prosperity on the occasion.

He met with the faithful observing "Itikaf" at Faizan-e-Madina, and also lauded the arrangements for them in Faizan-e-Madina.

ECP notifies victory for 12 Senators from Sindh

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday issued victory notification for 12 Senators, recently elected from Sindh.

As per details, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Masmooz Ahsan, Dost Ali Jaisir, Ashraf Jatoi, Syed Kazim Ali Shah and Nadeem Bhutto have been notified as Senators on general seats from Sindh.

Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan's Aamir Waliuddin Chishti and an independent candidate backed by PPP and MQM-P, Faisal Vawda were also notified as Senators on general seats.

Zameer Ghumro, and Sarmad Ali, on Technocrats seats, Quratulain and Rubina Qaimkhani on the reserved seats for women, and Ponjo Mal Bheel were notified as Senators on the minority seat.

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.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohnin Naqvi in a meeting with British High Commissioner HE Jane Marriott.

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 not to open any "suspicious" letter addressed to high-profile personalities until they are opened. First give the epistle a tight scrutiny and then let it be posted. The TV channel reported that the decision was taken after arsenic powder "threatening symbols" were found in the letters sent to Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez isa, several judges of the Supreme Court, Lahore High Court and the Punjab Chief Minister.

K-Electric promises affordable electricity with 640MW solar & wind power push

KARACHI (INP): K-Electric CEO, Monis Alvi, announced plans to incorporate affordable electricity into the grid within the next two years.

Speaking with journalists on Friday, Alvi highlighted the company's commitment to integrating power generated from cost-effective renewable sources.

This initiative will see K-Electric's system bolstered with a significant 640 MW of solar and wind energy over the next 24 months. The adoption of solar and wind power is expected to bring a substantial reduction in electricity production costs.

Alvi revealed a surge of interest in these alternative energy sources, with over 40 companies expressing their intent to participate. Notably, 12 companies from Europe, China, and the Middle East have specifically shown interest in the solar and wind power project.

K-Electric has identified several locations for establishing these alternative energy projects, including Balochistan Hub, Othal, Bela, and Karachi's Sarjani Town. The total investment for these projects is projected to exceed \$400 million.

This significant push towards renewable energy sources signals K-Electric's commitment to providing Karachi with a more affordable and sustainable future.



KARACHI: People offer their last Friday noon prayers (Jumma Tul Wida) during the Islamic holy fasting month of Ramadan at a Mosque, in the Provincial Capital.

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 killed 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 foot-

age, 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.