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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 (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.

The Indian foreign intelligence agency changed its strategy to assassinate potential threats after the 2019 Pulwama attack, which was claimed by Jaish-e-Mohammed group, The Guardian reported quoting Indian officials.

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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.

Imran 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.

Imran Khan stated that despite people across the world demanding an immediate ceasefire, the powerful continue to remain unmoved as all humanitarian laws, laws of war, the UN Genocide Convention, the Geneva and Vienna Conventions continue to be violated with impunity by Israel.



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

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.

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 Mohammad 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.

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 governorship 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.

If he gets the support of three MQM-P and five JUI-F senators, then the tally will be 62 which suggests that the ruling coalition nominee will be in a comfortable position to win the election.

NA speaker summons NA session on April 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday summoned the session of the National Assembly on April 15 (Monday) at 5:00 PM in the Parliament House.

According to the National Assembly Secretariat, the speaker summoned the session under Article 54(3) of the Constitution. The upcoming session will be the third session of the 16th National Assembly.

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.



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

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 directives 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 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 workers, 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.



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

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.



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

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, the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) is actively engaged in identifying individuals featured in the footage. In light of these developments, the CTD has initiated investigations targeting individuals deemed suspicious based on the CCTV footage.



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.

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

DGPR Muhammad Noor Khetran 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 Commis-

sion 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 Khetran on the occasion said that the Information department is in the phase of implementation of the RTI Act.

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.

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

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.

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 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 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.

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."



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.

On Quds Day PM calls for global role to halt Israeli oppression against Palestinians

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reiterated that Pakistan would continue its moral and diplomatic support to the people of Palestine until their liberation from the Zionist occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestine state as per pre-1967 borders.

The prime minister, in his message on Quds Day, annually observed on the last Friday of Holy Ramadan (Jum'at-ul-Wida), said the entire Pakistani nation condemned the Zionist oppression and expressed solidarity with the suffering Palestinian people.

He said for the past

seven decades, Israel had illegally occupied Palestine and Jerusalem and continuously violated international laws and human rights to maintain its occupation, while the international community acted as a silent spectator.

The prime minister said that the Israeli occupation and atrocities spanned over the last seven decades but its intensity increased manifolds since October last year.

"So far, 32,000 Palestinians, including 17,000 children, have been killed and 70,000 injured in Gaza. Hospitals, refugee camps and schools have been deliberately targeted. Despite the UN Security Council's resolution for ceasefire, the

unprovoked bombing of innocent civilians by Israel continues in Gaza," the prime minister commented.

He reiterated Pakistan's demand for the international community to play its role to pressure Israel to stop oppression against the Palestinian people.

He also requested the Muslims in Pakistan and all over the world, observing the last Friday of Holy Ramadan to specially pray for their Palestinian and Kashmiri brothers and sisters for their salvation from the atrocities.

He also called for prayers for peace, security and prosperity of Pakistan, and its riddance from the economic problems.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary IPC chaired a meeting for Launching of the E-licencing portal for provision of Online services to users of travel and Hospitality trade in ICT and GB

By-election campaigns set to conclude at midnight on April 19

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ongoing election campaign for by-elections in 21 national and provincial assemblies of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan will conclude late Friday night (April 19-20), giving voters the opportunity to carefully consider their options before casting their votes for preferred candidates in their respective constituencies.

In accordance with election regulations, campaigning will come to an end precisely at midnight falling between the April 19th and 20th. The ECP advises that candidates who continue engaging in political activities after this deadline will face legal consequences. Additionally, the ECP calls upon the media and the public to work together to uphold a free, fair, and transparent election process.

The Election Commission has reminded the candidates participating in the by-elections about Section 182 of the Election Act, 2017. This section prohibits individuals from orga-

nizing, attending, or participating in any public meetings or processions within the constituency's area for a period of 48 hours after the polls end, until midnight.

The ECP cautioned that those who breach these regulations could be subject to penalties such as imprisonment for a maximum of two years, a fine of up to Rs 100,000, or both.

Arrangements have almost been completed to hold the by-elections in five National and 16 provincial assembly constituencies in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan on April 21. National Assembly constituencies included NA-8 Bajaur; NA-44 Dera Ismail Khan-I; NA-119 Lahore-III; NA-132 Kasur-II; and NA-196 Kamber Shahdadkot-I.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa constituencies included PK-22 Bajaur-IV and PK-91 Kohat-II. Balochistan Assembly constituencies included PB-20 Khuzdar-III and PB-22 Lasbela. Punjab Assembly constituencies included PP-22 Chakwal-Cum-Talagang.



ISLAMABAD: Members of global animal welfare organizations, Four Paws International perform a surgical procedure on a female bear 'Anila' removing her nose ring at the old Islamabad zoo, in the Federal Capital.

IFA inspects 1291 food outlets, issues fines worth Rs 2.8mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) Dr Tahira Saddique on Friday sharing a monthly report of the authority said that the authority inspected 1291 food outlets and imposed fines of Rs 2.8 million on errant shopkeepers found flouting regulations.

Talking to APP, she said that with an unwavering commitment to quality assurance, the authority's latest report underscored its relentless pursuit of adherence to food safety standards across the Federal Capital. On the directions of Director Food, Irfan Nawaz Memon, she accompanied by the Food Safety Teams (FSTs) inspected 1,291 establishments and sealed 16 outlets due to substandard food quality and inadequate arrangements, with legal actions initiated against three offenders, she said.

Additionally, she said a staggering total of 664 oral

warnings and 446 written notices were issued, signaling a zero-tolerance approach towards violations. Responding promptly to citizens' concerns, the authority diligently addressed 14 complaints, ensuring accountability and responsiveness in its operations, Dr Tahira said.

She said that during the holy month of Ramadan, the IFA intensified its oversight, conducting thorough inspections at 360 points within Ramadan Bazaars. Furthermore, in a bid to streamline operations and promote compliance, licenses were granted to 43 food establishments, bolstering the regulatory framework. Highlighting its commitment to combating adulteration and excess, Dr Tahira said the IFA disposed of 6,500 kilograms of compromised food items, reaffirming its dedication to upholding stringent quality standards and protecting consumer welfare.

Intl Day of Conscience being observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Day of Conscience was being observed in Pakistan as well as in other parts of the world on Friday.

This year's theme of the day is "Promoting the Culture of Peace with Love and Conscience."

International Conscience Day is celebrated to highlight that everyone has self-respect and the right to live with peace and security.

Man deprived of mobile phone by impersonator

ISLAMABAD (APP): A robbery incident was reported in another day at a private hospital where a citizen fell victim to a cunning imposter posing as a doctor, resulting in the theft of an iPhone 13 Pro Max.

According to details, the victim, Saif Muhammad, a resident of Korang Town lodged a complaint at Gulraiz police station, recounting how he was lured by the impersonator through a social media platform with the promise of purchasing a mobile phone.

The fake doctor arranged to meet Saif Muhammad at a private hospital under the guise of conducting the transaction. Upon arrival, the imposter meticulously examined the mobile device, leaving Saif Muhammad waiting under the pretense of fetching payment and copies of his National Identity Card from his office.

IHC imposes fine of Rs 50000 on PCB for not presenting lawyer

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has imposed fine of Rs 50,000 on Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for not presenting new counsel during hearing of petition filed against removing president and secretary of Regional Cricket Association (RCA).

The court has issued order if lawyer from the side of PCB is not here on next hearing then chairman PCB will be summoned.

Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan issued written order Friday.

IHC wraps up petition seeking removal of senior journalist Sami from ECL

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has wrapped up the petition seeking removal of the senior journalist Sami Ibrahim from Exit Control List (ECL).

IHC heard the petition seeking removal of name of Sami Ibrahim from ECL on Friday.

The court had expressed annoyance over non removal of Sami Ibrahim name from ECL despite court's orders. The court had sought report from interior secretary within one hour.

Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq remarked interior secretary should tell reason that as to why name of Sami Ibrahim was not removed from ECL.

Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq remarked if interior secretary does not give satisfactory reply then SHO will be ordered to arrest.

IHC issued bailable arrest warrants of interior

VC AIOU says: Success lies in the teachings of Quran

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on Friday said that the success lies in truly following the teachings of the Holy Quran.

While addressing the Khatam al-Qur'an ceremony on the 25th night of Ramadan at the University's Colony Mosque, he said that all the good things and achievements of this world and the hereafter have been mentioned by Allah in the Quran. The Quran is not just a book to be read and understood, but it is necessary to live our lives according to its teachings.

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ISLAMABAD: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami holds Palestine national flags during demonstrate to mark Al-Quds (Jerusalem) day, an annual pro-Palestinian event held on the last Friday of the Islamic holy fasting month of Ramadan, at Aabpara chowk, in the Federal Capital.

Infrastructure development projects pose serious threat to Snow leopards, prey species in GB: WWF study

ISLAMABAD (APP): "Rapid infrastructure development, primarily roads, potentially degrades the Snow leopard (Panthera uncia) habitat resulting in disrupting the big cats' movement and increasing human-wildlife conflict in the Gilgit-Baltistan region. The prey species of the Snow leopard such as Himalayan ibex and domestic livestock are also killed due to heavy traffic on the highways."

This has been revealed in WWF-Pakistan's baseline research study undertaken through the project titled "Building Ecological and Sustainable Transport and Linear Infrastructure for Snow Leopards in the Hindu Kush Karakoram Himalaya Landscape in Pakistan

(BEAST)".

The project was supported by the "With Snow Leopards Small Grant" (SLSG) initiated by Tencent Foundation and Shan Shui Conservation Center with support from Huatai Foundation, Amity Foundation, and Pecking University Center for Nature and Society.

The study recommended that there is need to strike a balance between boosting infrastructure development with conservation of threatened wildlife such as Snow leopards in the region. The report stated that the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region is home to diverse wildlife including vulnerable Snow leopards. It pointed out that the linear infrastructure development, which cuts

through the landscape such as roads, has fragmented the Snow leopard habitat. The report found that although linear infrastructure improves national and regional economies, it restricts wildlife movement and poses threat to the Snow leopards and their prey species such as ungulates.

Focusing on the broader road ecology theme, the study gathered evidence on infrastructure-related threats to Snow leopards and their habitat in the GB region. It collected data on wildlife-vehicle collisions, investigated the impact of increasing infrastructure on human-wildlife interaction and analysed land use changes in known Snow leopard hotspots over the past twenty years.

Minister joins NPC, gala festival

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Friday joined the National Press Club Gala Festival, where he engaged with journalists and their families, distributing gifts in a gesture of appreciation for their contributions. Welcomed by National Press Club president, Azhar Jatoi, Secretary Neyyar Ali, and other senior journalists, the minister highlighted the importance of press clubs in fostering a conducive environment for journalistic endeavors, said a Press release issued here.

In addition to the federal minister, several parliamentarians graced the occasion, underscoring the significance of the press in the democratic process. Minister Jam Kamal Khan commended the efforts of the press club and praised the amiable atmosphere cultivated by its members.

Expressing his commitment to supporting journalists, the minister affirmed that his office would always be accessible to them, ensuring facilitation at all levels.

This pledge signifies the government's recognition of the vital role played by journalists in informing the public and upholding democratic principles.

Private sector urged to create job opportunities for women

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director Lok Virsa Dr Fouzia Saeed on Friday urged private sector and civil society organizations to strengthen business sustainability and women's empowerment to ensure their active participation by creating job opportunities for them.

Fouzia said that adequate implementations of laws are crucial to providing a secure environment for women to prosper themselves. "As a way of strengthening confidence, personal and professional skill building can provide opportunities to women, she added.

She said women can build their self-confidence, and increase their economic power by learning new skills adding that women's empowerment is important for the progress of a country or a nation.

"Frequent training and awareness programs can be arranged to make women aware of their rights and equip them for exercising just demands," she said.

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Second phase of Hajj training to start from April 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): The second phase of Hajj training will commence from April 15 and it will be conducted by 40 resource persons and religious scholars of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony at 122 locations across the country.

Chief Master Trainer Ahmed Nadeem Khan said this while addressing the concluding session of training of Hajj Master Trainers of the ministry on Friday.

He further said the Hajj Curriculum Committee consisting of experienced officers of the ministry has finalized the Hajj training curriculum after many days of hard work.

He said the committee has finalized the training schedule and locations for the second phase of Hajj training after long consultations with the respective

Haji camps.

In the second phase, he said Hajj pilgrims from suburban areas will be gathered at major training sites to save time and resources as well as complete the training phase before the flights start for the sacred journey.

The chief master trainer said the ministry's mission is to ensure that every pilgrim is fully aware of the Hajj rituals and administrative matters and performs his worship with discipline and integrity. "One of the objectives of the training is to inform the Hajj pilgrims about the arrangements of the Religious Affairs Ministry and the facilities of the Government Hajj Scheme so that they can seek guidance and help for themselves or their fellow pilgrims if needed," he maintained.

He said the committee has finalized the training schedule and locations for the second phase of Hajj training after long consultations with the respective



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan meeting with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Jiang Zaidong, to offer his condolences over the recent accident of Chinese engineers.

NDMA launches Disaster Management Coordination Forum

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has established a national level forum titled "Disaster Management Coordination Forum" (DMCF) to bolster provincial coordination. The forum is designed to provide strategic guidance and to oversee, coordinate and monitor disaster management activities and interventions at both national and provincial levels, a news release said.

The inaugural meeting of the DMCF was convened at NDMA Headquarters, presided by Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider

Malik.

The meeting was attended by all Members, including NDMA senior management, as well as the Director Generals of Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA) and State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).

The DMCF is set to meet quarterly to deliberate on matters outlined in the Terms of Reference (TORs). Additionally, NDMA's Disaster Risk Reduction Wing will provide secretariat support for the DMCF.

CPO/DIG Operations says: Citizens should cooperate with police to ensure peace and tranquility

ISLAMABAD: DIG Operations Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari has issued an important message to the citizens of Islamabad, stating that the foremost priority of Islamabad Capital Police is the protection of the lives, property, and dignity of the citizens.

If you feel that police officers are unlawfully harassing you, demanding marriage certificates, unnecessarily checking your vehicle documents, or bothering you with something

unrelated to any crime, you can message me at this number 0330-0260022.

He further said that, it is also essential to note that if police officers stop you anywhere, cooperate with them. The police are here for your own safety. The most important thing is that senior police officers are present to listen to all your complaints. So, I believe there's no need to engage in conflicts. The police personnel standing on the roads are there for the protection of your life.

SP Plan & Patrolling orders Dolphin Squad officials to perform their duty efficiently

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of CPO/ DIG Operations Syed Shehzad Nadeem

police officers and officials in the prevention and control of crimes, emphasizing their role in ensuring the safety of lives and prop-

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Bukhari, the SP Plan and Patrolling gave a briefing to the Dolphin Squad officers and officials, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the SP Plan and Patrolling Hakim Khan emphasized the need to make patrols more effective in combating crimes in Islamabad, particularly by positioning themselves strategically in areas with higher crime rates.

Encouragement was extended for arrests of criminals, and a strict zero-tolerance policy against corruption within the police force was underscored.

Furthermore, the SP Plan and Patrolling reiterated the importance of all

erty of the citizens.

The formation of the Dolphin Squad aims to instill confidence in citizens regarding their safety, not tarnish the department's reputation. It's essential for officers to exhibit good conduct and adhere to clear policies aimed at crime control, he added.

Officers were reminded of their duty to respond promptly to reports of crimes and to conduct searches for suspicious individuals or vehicles without license plates.

He further said that, protecting the lives and property of citizens remains the top priority of Islamabad Capital Police.

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik presides over first meeting of Disaster Management Coordination Forum (DMCF) at NDAM HQs.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Saturday April 06, 2024

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.

Zafar Mirza

Six days ago, The Lancet published an extraordinary article, titled 'The Lancet and Colonialism: Past, Present, and Future'. The authors include two Pakistanis: Prof Mishal S. Khan, the lead author, and Muhammad Naveed Noor, along with Thirusa Naidu, Irene Torres, Jesse B. Bump and Seye Abimbola. The Lancet is a 200-year-old peer reviewed weekly medical journal from the UK. The first issue appeared on Oct 5, 1823, and the latest on March 30, 2024. As an influential journal it has the highest impact factor. Since its launch, the journal has expanded into a family of more than 20 specialty journals and has set up a number of global Lancet Commissions on various important issues in medicine and healthcare.

The journal has seen a lot in its last two centuries of existence — from the 1820s, when the first trains were just getting onto the track, to the present times, when we live in a hyper-connected global village powered by IT and AI.

Apart from pivotal advances in medical sciences, many of which The Lancet itself reported over the 200 years, the journal also lived through many eras of political, economic and social upheaval. When it started, slavery was still the norm and colonialism was rife. While beginning the bicentennial year, the editorial in the journal in January last year mentioned that, "while we cherish our independence and acknowledge our privileged position ... we also recognise that The Lancet has, at times, been complicit in grievous violations of human rights. The legacy of colonialism inevitably looms large in our history. During the coming year, we will not only reflect on our contributions to medicine, but also invite scholars to review the journal's role during a period of imperial expansion".

This is a brave introspection. It is also a sign of confidence and maturity. Credit goes to the maverick editor-in-chief of The Lancet, Richard Horton, who has held this position since 1995. He is a bold and bright man who has been raising issues of health in-

equities and social justice through the years.

This is the context in which Prof Mishal was invited to lead with an opinion piece. Below are some paraphrased key points from the article.

The launch of The Lancet took place during a time of great political agitation against colonial slavery, but the founder of the journal, Thomas Wakely, is not known for having taken any position on Britain's Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 or against colonialism. However, research shows that the editor did publish "deliberate misinterpretations of the protest of enslaved people against oppression", labelling them as insane.

In 1851, a US physician resorted to 'disease mongering', coming up with the term 'drapetomania' to describe the pathological mental state of an enslaved person itching for freedom. In 1874, The Lancet published "similarly ignorant views" and belittled the "insanity" of slaves who wanted to be freed.

There are also some examples of how The Lancet kept publishing on the superiority of Western

medical knowledge, describing local knowledge in the colonies as "magic", "supernatural" and "the fetish worship of native races". This prejudice precluded any effort to explore and understand local knowledge systems.

The Lancet also helped legitimise the field of tropical medicine at the turn of the 20th century. For example, in 1904, Patrick Manson and his British colleagues were credited for linking sleeping sickness and tsetse fly bites, without acknowledging indigenous peoples' previous discoveries on which their work was based. Similar is the case regarding the 'discovery' of Kwashiorkor (a protein deficiency condition among babies) by Cicely Williams in 1935. Instead of recognising the value of local African knowledge in this case, Williams noted in The Lancet that "the idea that the 'simple savage' has instinctive knowledge in caring for her children is without foundation".

Of course, the journal was not alone in this; it reflected its times by reinforcing existing prejudices and inequities. That said, some

attitudes have carried over — with a prevailing sense of supposedly superior medical knowledge. The idea of stringent clinical trials as a gold standard reflects such attitudes. Covid-19 has raised questions about these straitjacketed research methods.

In The Lancet's 200-year existence, only a small proportion of the overall papers published have been primarily qualitative studies, which are considered essential for exploring and disrupting entrenched inequalities.

Another reflection of the superiority of Western knowledge and knowers is in a comment published in 2020 which analysed three Lancet Commission reports published within the previous decade and found that "more than 70 per cent of Commission authors originated from institutions based in North America and Europe, home to less than 20pc of the world's population".

All editors-in-chief of The Lancet over its 200-year history have been white, male and educated exclusively in European institutions.

To its credit, however, things are improving after the establishment of The Lancet's internal Group for Racial Equity, supported by an external Racial Equity Advisory board. The Lancet Global Health is also taking some initiatives to tackle inequities in access to the journal's content in crediting authors from low-income and middle-income countries.

Late Prof Owsei Temkin of the Institute of the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University saw medicine as embedded in the culture and social life of a particular period and the role of the historian as interpreting, rather than merely documenting.

The Lancet's commissioning of this viewpoint is a step in the right direction. The clock cannot be reset but continued recognition and reparation for exploitation during the colonial era are moves to redempt its inglorious history. The opening of hearts and minds and methodological pluralism will only broaden the scope of studying and improving human health and healthcare across the world. -- Courtesy Dawn

State of lawlessness

mobile phones, often claiming to be bank officials or suggesting that the recipient of the call has won a large award. These scams are widespread and are thought to have generated huge sums of money for those behind them; the same is true of the robberies and kidnappings that take place virtually across the country but most notably in larger cities like Karachi and Lahore.

This is the state of the nation as a whole. Karachi with its known rate of crimes and a city that holds more small weapons than most others around the world has been particularly vulnerable to the wave of crime. But this is visible also in other big cities including Islamabad which was once known as being comparatively safe and a good place in which you set up business or go for a drive. This is said to be no longer true with muggings occurring on city streets and on the more deserted hill tracks which run through the Margalla Hills and are used both by people who drive their vehicles up to scenic spots and by trekkers who go out for exercise or pleasure.

The point here is that something needs to be

done. Of course, law and order need to be improved and the decision to step up the salaries for law-enforcement personnel posted in notoriously unpoliced areas is not a bad idea, but it is not enough. The root of the problem lies in the manner in which people are living and the desperation of so many of them, notably those who are young and without jobs.

Practically speaking, these young people have no real option but to turn to crime if they are to survive. There is no excuse for holding up people at gunpoint or kidnapping traders and businessmen. But we need to ask what the alternative is for a young man who has been left without a job or without any hope of attaining one over the coming days and weeks. The problem is a very real one and needs to be addressed. Such people feel their only option is to live unlawfully and at least keep food coming into their homes and their kitchens. So many have succeeded given a poor system of law enforcement that more are tempted to take the same path and do all that is possible to keep themselves afloat.

We therefore need to cope with poverty and the situation of people. There has been much written about how impossible this is, given the current state of the economy and the current state of the country as a whole. After all, we have a government, which most people know, handles very little real matters of significance and is there merely as a front. But at the same time, we also have 220 million people, including most who are young, who need to survive and need to manage, one way or the other. We should then question how this can be achieved and what is to be done.

In other states of South Asia, as well as in other parts of the world, heavy investment in just two areas of life, education and healthcare, has helped countries climb up the ladder of social development and towards safety for their families and themselves. We need to follow the same paths. Indeed, we need to look at all the paths that have been taken around the world to rescue people from similar situations. This may require some thinking and a degree of intellectual togetherness. It also requires dialogue and discus-

sion among the parties that sit on the treasury benches or make up a part of the decision-making system in one way or the other. But there is now no alternative but to come up with a method despite the positive ones and despite the grave economic challenges we face.

In the first place, there needs to be a reduction in administrative spending, given that we are in no situation to do away with debt servicing. This is one of the chief expenditures on the budgetary pie, or even with defence, which takes up another huge chunk of the budget. But even if this is not possible for practical reasons, there are other ways to get around the situation. There is no reason why the federal government owns thousands of vehicles of various kinds, many of them luxury cars. After all, every minister needs at most one car to go about his or her business. The same should be true for other people in government service.

The number of perks and privileges other sections of our system enjoy are unprecedented in global terms. In Scandinavian countries, parliamentarians

serve voluntarily, without any privileges and any salaries. We have reached a point where our government and those that represent it, need to think along similar lines. Even worse is the fact that these representatives often pay very little in taxes as do those who own vast amounts of land.

We need to tax property as an initial step and bring about the kind of reform and renovation that is required in the nation. There is still time to achieve this before it is too late. Soon there will be no more time left as more and more people move away from Pakistan and try to set up lives elsewhere in different places. There has to be a major effort to change and educate and healthcare should be the responsibility of the state and is in fact now a responsibility handed over to the provinces after the 18th Amendment. If all this is implemented, we could go a long way in saving ourselves from the dangers in which people live their daily lives, often stepping out of their houses in fear and risking a situation where they may never return to open their front doors and reunite with their families. -- Courtesy TheNews

Kamila Hyat

As we can all see and read frequently in both mainstream and social media, a new wave of crime is sweeping across the nation. This is perhaps most visible in the so-called 'kacha' areas of Sindh, named because since colonial days they have been victims of underdevelopment and a lack of governability because of the dacoits who have taken control of these parts and adjacent ones in Punjab.

The issue however is not limited to these parts. It stretches also to Karachi where a wave of crime has affected low-income, middle-income and high-income groups. It would need a full study to determine the precise reasons for this. But it is not hard to understand where the problem lies.

There is every reason to believe that the high rate of unemployment and the continued rate of inflation are affecting people in many different ways. One of them is their vulnerability to criminals of various kinds who have come forward both in the form of those who scam people over the net or on their

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 lau-nch

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 Kai-

ser 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 aging 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 fam-

ily 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, infighting over trivial issues. Above all, everyone has become ego-

centric. 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 pro-

vide 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

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

KARACHI (APP): Sindh's 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.

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.



KARACHI: Mr. Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with office-bearers of Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA).



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.

He stressed the importance of providing all necessary facilities to needy women during surveys and disbursements, ensuring their comfort and dignity throughout the process.

Health Minister says: Punjab to launch historic Air Ambulance Service

LAHORE: Punjab's Minister for Health and Emergency Services, Khawaja Salman Rafique, has announced the imminent launch of the Air Ambulance Service, marking a significant milestone in the province's history.

During a visit to the Emergency Services Department at Thokar Niaz Baig here on Friday, the Minister disclosed plans for the introduction of the Air Ambulance Service, emphasizing its importance in providing swift medical assistance to the people of Punjab.

He underscored the department's commitment to extending services to the motorway, with rescuers stationed strategically at entry and exit points to ensure rapid response to emergencies.

Expressing concern over escalating traffic accidents, he stressed the urgent need for strict enforcement of the Road Safety Act, particularly noting the prevalence of motorcycle-related incidents. Secretary of the Punjab Emergency Services Department, Dr. Rizwan Naseer, affirmed efforts to enhance relief operations and emergency management systems, with a continuous focus on monitoring the Air Ambulance Service plan.



SKARDU: A religious scholar is giving sermon on the last Nimaz-e-Jumma of the holy month of Ramazan at Eidgah Ground.

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.

ANF seizes 170 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 170 kg drugs and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that 1 kg heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Sharjah at Islamabad Airport.

In two operations at Sialkot Airport, 1.6 kg Ice was recovered from two Qatari-bound passengers.

In fourth operation, 90 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects rounded up from Northern Bypass Karachi.

75 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects arrested near Baleli check post Quetta while 2 kg heroin was recovered from two accused netted in Hudaira Kasur.

590 grams hashish and 24 grams Ice were recovered from an accused in Chakwal and 600 grams hashish were recovered from an accused arrested in Manshra.

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

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.



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.

He said, in the meeting, marriage grants and labor colonies were also discussed during the meeting. Workers Welfare Board will be formed soon after consultation and responsible persons will be appointed as members, the Provincial Minister Fazal Shakoor Khan said.

The people have elected us to serve and everyone will be given their right, the Provincial Minister said, adding, "We will use all resources to solve public problems."



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.

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.

CM decides to establish three directorates in Excise Dept

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 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.

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.

Two bike riders killed in road crash

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Two people riding on motorbike were killed after hitting with the speeding bus near sultan colony, Mian Wali road, rescuer said.

The deceased were identified as Ghulam Yaseen, 55, s/o Haji Saleem and Qaisar, 43, s/o Muhammad Saddique, residents of Khan Pur Bagga Sher, district Muzaffargarh.

Initial enquiry suggested that the accident occurred due to negligence and over-speeding of the bus driver who escaped the scene. Police of the concerned jurisdiction was informed which held enquiry into the incident.

He made this statement during a meeting of the Health Department. The minister emphasized the importance of 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.

Additionally, assistance will be provided to reduce the harmful effects of medications through pharmaceutical vigilance and antimicrobial resistance in hospitals.



BAHAWALPUR: Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), interacts with a group of women beneficiaries who have come to receive their stipend at a payment campsite in Bahawalpur.

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.

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 Secretariaries 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.

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

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.

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 autopsy. The identification of the deceased is yet to be established.

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 Ramazan, with traditional religious sanctity like other parts of the country. Almost all the mosques of Sukkur and Larkana divisions including Khairpur, Ghotki, Shikarpur, Jacobabad, Noshetroferoz 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 Ramazan.

They called upon the people to follow the principles of Islam and forge unity among their ranks by shunning all their differences. Special prayers for integrity, solidarity, progress and prosperity of the country and success of Muslims struggling for their rights in various parts of the world and unity among the Ummah were also offered by the worshippers.

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

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.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan highlighted the evolving global trend towards insurance-based healthcare systems, noting the superiority of SLIC's facilities over traditional government-owned hospitals.

He directed for pasting rating system on the prominent place of the private hospitals registered with SLIC, aimed at empowering individuals to make informed choices regarding their healthcare providers.

SLIC's CEO, Shoaib Javed Hussain, presented an in-depth overview of the company's advanced technological capabilities.

Highlighting SLIC's role in revolutionizing healthcare service delivery through digital solutions, Mr. Hussain emphasized the integration of modern data processing tools into SLIC's operations.

SLIC's Health IT Infrastructure includes real-time Health Management Information Systems (HMIS), an E-Claim Management System, Business Intelligence Tools, AI-Based Screening Claims, and Digital Payments.

World Bank to provide 6 bln USD to support Cote d'Ivoire

ABIDJAN (Xinhua/APP): The World Bank (WB) announced Thursday a portfolio of 6 billion U.S. dollars to support the inclusive development of Cote d'Ivoire through accelerating economic growth, energy transition and finance. The package covering 62 projects was unveiled here by Hiroshi Matano, executive vice-president of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) of the WB group, after a working session with Prime Minister Robert Beugre Mamebe. Several projects are underway in the areas of digital infrastructure, transportation, medicine and climate, Matano said.

"We believe that this new guarantee platform will enable the government to mobilize private sector investments to focus resources on high-impact projects and support large-scale, transformative programs for greener and sustainable growth in Cote d'Ivoire," he added. MIGA's mandate is to facilitate inflows of foreign direct investment into developing countries, by providing cross-border investors and creditors with specific guarantees such as insurance.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors displayed watermelons attraction for customers at fruits and vegetable market sector I-11, during the Islamic holy fasting month of Ramadan, in the Federal Capital.



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 Ramazan 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 Ramazan 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 Ramazan.

Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said that thousands of people were benefiting from fair price shops.

Weekly inflation up by 0.96 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.96 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on April 4, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 326.29 points as compared to 323.20 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 29.45 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, increased by 0.83 per cent and went down to 315.95 points from last week's 313.35 points. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs. 17,732-22,888, Rs. 22,889-29,517; Rs. 29,518-44,175 and above Rs. 44,175, increased by 0.90 per cent, 0.85 per cent, 0.93 and 1.02 per cent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 16 (31.37%) items increased, 13 (25.49%) items decreased and 22 (43.14%) items remained stable.



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

Easypaisa launches QR SoundBox to revolutionize Digital Payments landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): Easypaisa, Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform, has launched the QR SoundBox, a portable device for payment alerts and notifications, to revolutionize digital financial services in Pakistan.

The QR SoundBox offers a seamless and efficient solution for merchants and customers alike said a news release.

The portable device is equipped with a speaker for payment alerts and instant payment notifications.

The device operates with a SIM for connectivity, enabling real-time communication between merchants and customers.

When a customer initiates a payment to the merchant through their easypaisa app by scanning a QR code, the device instantly notifies both parties of the successful transaction with a loud sound alert, this ensures an efficient transaction experience for the merchant while saving time by receiving instant payment notifications.

This audio voice broadcast confirms the payment status, ensuring transparency and security in every transaction.

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, glimmering jewelry, and shining 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

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 financing 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. It was unfortunate that banks were always reluctant to provide financing to SMEs as their financing continued to show negative growth.

PBF President said that the government with a view to help grow the businesses will have to take solid measures to strengthen the industry, especially the SMEs, saving the livelihood of millions of workers associated with the small industries.

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.

Increasing workers' pay came the second place, with 36 percent of the respondents expressing their concern.

However, defending national territorial integrity and promoting peace were among the least concerns for Filipinos, with 9 percent and 8 percent.



QUETTA: People are busy in Eid shopping ahead of Eid-ul-Fitar during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, at Qandhari Bazar in Quetta.

SNGPL team arrests 10 individuals involved in gas theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): As a direct outcome of these efforts, a substantial number of gas meters were seized, effectively preventing the theft of millions of rupees worth of gas.

The operation revealed 10 direct bypass connections in the Bhara Kahu area alone, highlighting the significant financial losses incurred by the department due to gas theft. In a proactive approach to safeguard gas installations and combat theft, SNGPL teams have been strategically deployed in various areas, including Taxila, Wah Cantt, Attock, Fateh Jang, Kohat, Murree, and Islamabad.

These teams, working closely with local law enforcement agencies, uncovered illegal pipelines. The crackdown was initiated following directives issued by Managing Director Amer Tufail, emphasizing the need for stringent measures against gas theft.

Shahid Akram, spokesperson for SNGPL, said that another operation was carried out at Prince Road Bhara Kahu, uncovering illegal pipelines. The crackdown was initiated following directives issued by Managing Director Amer Tufail, emphasizing the need for stringent measures against gas theft.



QUETTA: People are busy in Eid shopping ahead of Eid-ul-Fitar during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, at Liaquat Bazar in Quetta.

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.

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 displaced from the 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-



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.

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.

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.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell listen to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Brussels, Belgium.

Russia says dialogue with NATO at 'zero' but it doesn't seek open conflict

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia-NATO relations are worsening but Moscow has no intention of entering a conflict with a NATO country, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko said in an interview published on Thursday.

In comments to mark NATO's 75th anniversary, Grushko told Russian state news agency RIA that relations were "predictably and deliberately" deteriorating, and all channels of dialogue between Moscow and the alliance had been brought to a "critical zero" level by Washington and Brussels.

"Is the military bloc ready for an open conflict with Russia? You need to ask the NATO members themselves. In any case, we have no such intentions regarding the member countries of the alliance," Grushko said.

President Vladimir Putin launched what he called his "special military operation" in Ukraine in 2022 with the stated aim of preventing NATO from expanding its footprint close to Russia. But the war has served to galvanise the alliance, which has expanded to 32 members by admitting Finland and Sweden.

NATO says it is helping Ukraine fight for its survival in the face of Russian aggression, and has provided Kyiv with advanced weapons, training and intelligence.

Russia says that makes NATO de facto a party to the conflict. Putin said in February that a direct conflict between Russia and NATO would mean the planet was one step away from World War Three.

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.

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 deliberate 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.

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 more 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.

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.

Kosovo will conduct a nationwide census that includes surveying the ethnic Serb minority

Monitoring Desk
PRISTINA: Kosovo's government began Friday its first nationwide census since 2011, which will include surveying the ethnic Serb minority in the north, at a time when tensions with neighboring Serbia are high.

The Agency of Statistics is conducting the 12-million euro (\$13 million) census, originally set to take place in 2021 but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Some 4,400 surveyors will interview residents in person from April 5 until May 17 to cover demographic and socio-economic indicators that "will take Kosovo a step ahead toward integration into the European Union," according to the agency's website.

The Kosovar government, the EU's statistical office, Eurostat, U.N. organizations and the World Bank are funding the census which will tally the number of people residing in the country, family households, their education and employment, as well as the number of locals living abroad. Surveyors will also ask interviewees about damages suffered during the 1998-1999 war and if they have relatives who died or were tortured at the time.

Kosovo was a former Serbian province until a 78-day NATO bombing campaign in 1999 ended a war between Serbian government forces and ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo and pushed Serbian forces out. Belgrade does not recognize Kosovo's 2008 independence.

Magnitude 4.8 earthquake hits New York City region

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: A 4.8 magnitude earthquake struck near New York City on Friday morning, the US Geological Survey said, shaking buildings and surprising residents in an area that rarely experiences notable seismic activity.

The quake's epicentre was near Whitehouse Station, New Jersey, and occurred just after 10:20am ET (1420 GMT) at a depth of 4.7 kilometres, the USGS said.

People reported feeling tremors from Pennsylvania to Massachusetts. A New York City Police Department spokesperson said it had not received any reports of damages.

Greek judge refers nine Egyptians to trial over deadly migrant shipwreck

Monitoring Desk
GREECE: Nine Egyptian men who were aboard a migrant boat that sank off the coast of Greece last year, killing hundreds of people, are to face trial next month, accused of people smuggling, Greek judicial sources said on Friday.

The circumstances of the sinking of the Adriana in June remain a source of dispute between the Greek authorities and groups supporting the rights of survivors and migrants — meaning the trial could be the first opportunity to officially hear the accounts of some of those present at the time.

Survivors have accused the Greek coastguard of capsizing the boat. The authorities, which monitored Adriana for hours, say it overturned when a coastguard vessel was about 70 metres away. The coastguard service has denied any wrongdoing.

It remains unclear what happened in the time between the coastguard being alerted to the presence of the vessel and when it capsized. In a report in December, EU border agency Frontex — which had spotted the boat from the air before the coastguard — said that Greek authorities failed to reply to its follow-up calls and its offers for assistance.

Taiwan earthquake rescuers face threat of landslides, rockfalls as death toll at 12

Monitoring Desk
HUALIEN: Rescuers in Taiwan faced the threat of further landslides and rockfalls in their search on Friday for a dozen people still missing from this week's earthquake, as the death toll rose to 12 and some of the stranded were brought to safety.

Searchers discovered two more bodies after Wednesday's quake of magnitude 7.2 struck the sparsely populated, largely rural eastern county of Hualien, stranding hundreds in a national park as boulders barreled down mountains.

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 Britain, 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, a bitter humiliation during the holy month of Ramadan when Muslims around the world consume traditional Ramadan meals and desserts to break their fast after sunset.

Austria likely to be largely ice-free within 45 years as glaciers recede quickly, experts say

Monitoring Desk
VIENNA: Austrian glaciers receded last year at a rapid pace and the Alpine country is likely to be largely ice-free in 40 to 45 years as the process continues, experts said Friday.

The Austrian Alpine Club said that, of the 93 glaciers its volunteers measured and observed, all but one receded in 2022-2023.

The 79 glaciers measured both last year and the previous year were an average 23.9 meters (78 feet) shorter than a year earlier, it said in an annual report. That was the third-highest figure of shrinkage in both the club's 133 years of measurements and in the past seven years. The retreat of 14 other glaciers was observed less precisely, for example by comparing photos.

The biggest retreat was that of Austria's biggest glacier — the Pasterze, in the Glockner mountain group in the southern province of Carinthia — which shrank by 203.5 meters (668 feet), a record for that glacier.

Gerhard Lieb, the co-leader of the club's glacier measurement service, said Austria's glaciers can no longer be saved and their disappearance in the coming decades is "unstoppable."

The process of forming snow reserves at the upper ends of glaciers so that they can stabilize takes decades, "and the time is up," he added. "That means nothing can be done anymore."

"There might be some remnants in shadowed locations — maybe at the Glockner glacier on the north-east side, some areas in the Oetzal valley," said the service's other co-leader, Andreas Kellerer-Pirkbauer. "But de facto, in 40 to 45 years all of Austria will be pretty much ice-free."

The experts, both of whom work at the University of Graz's geography institute, said that the continued existence of Austria's glaciers is down entirely to ice reserves from the past.



A view of Ashdod port after the Israeli cabinet approved the temporary use of the port for aid deliveries into Gaza, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Ashdod.

Ukrainian forces try to hold Russians back from stronghold in east

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Fighting raged on Friday between Ukrainian and Russian forces near the town of Chasiv Yar, a Ukrainian stronghold in the east, but Kyiv denied that Moscow's troops had reached the suburbs.

Russian forces are inching forward in eastern Ukraine after capturing the bastion town of Avdiivka in February. Kyiv's soldiers are trying to dig in, facing long-term shortages of artillery shells with US aid stuck in Congress.

Ukraine has needed the US arms package for months in its fight with a much larger and better armed foe, and had hoped House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson would unveil an aid bill next week that would clear the Republican-controlled chamber. But Republican infighting has created pressure to postpone it again. A rapid Russian advance on Chasiv Yar, a heavily fortified town with a pre-war population of 12,200 situated west of the ruined, Russian-occupied city of Bakhmut, would be a grim setback for Kyiv.

Murder trial seen as test of Kazakh leader's pledge on women's rights

Monitoring Desk
ALMATY: The trial of a former government minister charged with beating his wife to death has gripped public attention in Kazakhstan, and some see it as a litmus test of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's promise to build a fairer, more equitable society. Shocking footage played in the courtroom this week showed Kuandyk Bishimbayev, a former economy minister, repeatedly kicking and punching a slender young woman wearing only a coat and boots.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the appeal of Pakistan Ulama 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.



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 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.

He said no doubt, the parents were the biggest blessings, but the Holy Prophet Muhammad PBUH was also born with no father and his mother passed away when he was only six years old.

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

Independent Report
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, Mujeebur Rehman Qambrani, 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.



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

Services of BINUQ to be improved further, says Secretary Health

Independent Report
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.



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 es-

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 Pro 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 metro-

logical 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 Baqadar.

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.

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 will not be 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 and "threatening symbols" were found in the letters sent to Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez isa, several judges of the Supreme Court, Islamabad High Court, Lahore High Court and the Punjab Chief Minister. In the latest development on Friday, Justice Baqar Ali Najafi of Lahore High Court (LHC) also received a suspicious letter which was received by his secretary.

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.

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

Independent Report
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 con-

ducted 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 has 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.



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

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.

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.



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

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

Independent Report
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.

Medicines, medical equipments dispatched to Dera Bugti by MNCH Programme

Independent Report
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, succession 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.

Provincial Ombudsman visits Trauma Center, inspects different sections

Independent Report
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.

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ANKARA: Turkish Minister for National Defence H.E. Yasar Guler, Turkish Minister for Trade H.E. Prof. Dr Omer Bolat, Ambassador H.E. Dr. Yousaf Junaid during Pakistan Day reception.

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

Independent Report
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.

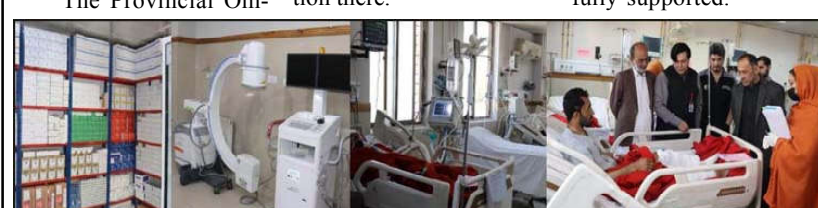
They should play their role in development and prosperity of their country, he stressed.

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.



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