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PM declares zero tolerance for terror on Pakistani soil

Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering stance against terrorism, vowing relentless action to safeguard national security, stability, and the country's future prosperity

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has made it clear that his government will stop at nothing to eradicate terrorism, declaring that Pakistan will go to any length necessary to root out this menace.

Addressing a high-level meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) at Parliament House, he asserted that terrorism has no place on Pakistani soil and vowed to ensure that the country is free from the scourge that has plagued it for years.

The prime minister expressed deep appreciation for the military leadership, singling out Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir for his decisive role in tackling terrorism. Acknowledging that the threat has grown into a cancer afflicting the nation,



he stressed that parliament's strategy to combat terrorism would be enforced in its entirety. The government, he assured, would leave no stone unturned in executing a comprehensive counter-terrorism framework.

Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed that Pakistan stands united against terrorism, emphasizing that national security remains a top priority. He underscored that the fight against terrorism is not just a military operation but a collective battle that requires the full backing of the people and political forces. Remembering the sacrifices of the nation's martyrs, he declared that their bravery and dedication to peace would never be forgotten. Security forces, he noted, have borne the brunt of the struggle, making continuous sacrifices to safeguard the country's stability.

Beyond the security concerns, the prime minister also took the opportunity to highlight Pakistan's improv-

ing economic trajectory, linking national security to economic progress. He assured the country that stability and prosperity go hand in hand, and his government remains committed to ensuring both. With political leadership standing firm on matters of security, Shehbaz Sharif vowed that the campaign against terrorism would continue with full force, sending a clear message that Pakistan will not waver in its resolve to defeat extremism.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) boycotted the National Security Parliamentary Committee meeting, with PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja stating that no representative from their party would attend. However, Ali Amin Gandapur, in his capacity as Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, participated in the session.

Punjab CM unveils 'Aghosh' scheme for mothers, infants

By Faizan Khan

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, has announced the launch of the 'Aghosh' Programme, an unprecedented initiative aimed at supporting pregnant women and mothers of children under two years of age. Under this programme, eligible women will receive financial assistance of Rs 23,000 to ensure better maternal and child healthcare.

According to an official statement from the Punjab government, the programme will be rolled out in 13 districts in its first phase, beginning with Dera Ghazi Khan, Taunsa, Rajanpur, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, and Kot Addu. Other districts included are Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalnagar, Bhakkar, Mianwali,



Khushab, and Lodhran.

Women registering for the first time at healthcare centres or Maryam Health Clinics will receive Rs 2,000, with additional financial support provided at regular check-ups during pregnancy. Each visit will entitle them to Rs 1,500, accumulating to Rs 6,000 in total. Upon delivery at a healthcare facility, mothers will receive a grant of Rs 4,000.

The programme also incentivises essential postnatal care. Mothers will receive Rs 2,000 for the newborn's first check-up within 15 days of birth and Rs 5,000 for registering the child's birth certificate at the health centre.

Vaccination under the initiative is also rewarded, with Rs 4,000 in total, distributed as Rs 2,000 per dose.

Pakistan warns UN of Afghan terror threat to regional stability

His remarks coincided with the UN Security Council's approval of a one-year extension for UNAMA, underscoring the global commitment to Afghanistan's ongoing crisis

News Desk



NEW YORK: Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram, has called on the UN Security Council to take decisive action against the rising tide of terrorism originating from Afghanistan, warning that such attacks are strategically designed to destabilize Pakistan and derail its economic progress.

Speaking at a UN Security Council session, Akram underscored that these cross-border terrorist activities pose a direct threat not only to Pakistan's internal security but also to regional stability.

His remarks came as the UN Security Council approved a one-year extension for the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), reaffirming the international community's continued engagement with the crisis-ridden country. While this extension signals a commitment to maintaining oversight and support for Afghanistan, Akram stressed that more concrete measures were required to prevent terrorist networks from using Afghan soil to launch attacks against neighboring states.

Of particular concern, Akram pointed out, is the impact of these security threats on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The multi-billion-dollar infrastructure and development initiative, a flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative, has repeatedly been targeted by terrorist groups seeking to undermine Pakistan-China cooperation. Akram warned that such attacks not only endanger Pakistan's economic aspirations but also threaten broader regional connectivity and development goals.

Pakistan has repeatedly raised concerns over terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan, particularly those linked to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other extremist factions responsible for attacks on Pakistani soil. While the Afghan Taliban-led government has pledged not to allow its territory to be used against any country, Pakistan insists that concrete ac-

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ons are needed to dismantle these networks.

The Security Council session further underscored growing concerns over Afghanistan's security landscape, with many nations expressing apprehension about the resurgence of militant groups in the region.

Pakistan's call for urgent international intervention aligns with its longstanding stance that regional security cannot be ensured without robust mechanisms to curb cross-border terrorism.

With CPEC remaining a strategic priority for both Pakistan and China, Islamabad is expected to intensify diplomatic efforts to rally global support for targeted counterterrorism measures.

However, the effectiveness of any UN-led initiative will depend on the willingness of all stakeholders, including the Afghan authorities, to address the issue head-on.

PTI shuns NSC meeting while KP CM attends

By Asghar Mubarak



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has boycotted the National Security Parliamentary Committee meeting, with PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja stating that the party would attend. However, Ali Amin Gandapur, in his capacity as Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, took part in the session.

Speaking at a media briefing in Islamabad, Salman Akram Raja reiterated that PTI does not support any military operation, arguing that Pakistan has faced similar crises for the past 77 years. He insisted that the party's founding leader should be released on parole to participate in such critical discussions, stressing that PTI's stance remains centered on safeguarding the rights of

marginalized communities and ending authoritarian rule.

PTI Opposition Leader Omar Ayub criticized the abrupt convening of the security committee meeting, pointing out that, despite court orders, PTI representatives had been denied access to their detained leader. He clarified that Ali Amin Gandapur's participation was solely in his capacity as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's chief minister and not as a PTI representative.

Bilawal slams PTI for skipping security meeting

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has hit back at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) over its refusal to attend the parliamentary security committee meeting without its jailed founder, Imran Khan. Dismissing the party's stance as politically motivated, Bilawal reminded PTI that during his tenure as Prime Minister, Khan had consistently ignored such high-level security meetings, even on critical issues such as terrorism, the Kashmir dispute, and Indian aggression.

Bilawal questioned the sudden urgency displayed by PTI in demanding participation, pointing out that Imran Khan is no longer a member of Parliament and that the meeting in question was a session of the National Security Committee of the Parliament—a body that operates within the framework of the elected legislature. He criticized what he saw as PTI's selective en-

gagement with parliamentary processes, arguing that political posturing should not take precedence over national security.

Expressing his disappointment, Bilawal stressed that the country's interests must come before political disputes, particularly during times of heightened security concerns. He urged all parties to adopt a responsible approach, warning that undermining national security for political point-scoring is detrimental to Pakistan's stability. In a veiled rebuke of PTI's approach, he asserted that true patriotism requires setting aside political differences and prioritizing the nation's security over party loyalty.

The remarks reflect the deepening divide between the political factions, with PTI increasingly positioning itself as a party sidelined from key national discussions due to its leader's imprisonment. As Pakistan navigates pressing security and diplomatic challenges, Bilawal's comments serve as a reminder of the government's stance—that national security must not become a casualty of political maneuvering.

Honduras passenger plane crashes into sea, seven dead

News Desk

ROATÁN, HONDURAS: A tragic aviation accident off the coast of Honduras has claimed seven lives after a small passenger plane crashed into the sea shortly after takeoff from Roatán Airport. The aircraft, operated by the local airline Lanhsa, was en route to La Ceiba late Monday night when it lost stability within minutes of departure, plunging into the waters below.

Authorities have confirmed that the aircraft was carrying 14 passengers and three crew members at the time of the crash. Despite swift rescue efforts, seven people lost their lives, while 10 survivors were pulled from the wreckage.

During the proceedings, the petitioner's lawyer openly criticized law enforcement and government authorities, pointing out that

Imran says, 'Afghanistan is not our enemy, stop trying to make it one'

His remarks come amid escalating tensions between Islamabad and Kabul, as Pakistan grows increasingly assertive over its concerns about Afghan soil harboring terrorist elements

By our correspondent

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan has sharply criticized the country's policies on Afghanistan, warning against what he described as an unnecessary confrontation with a neighboring Muslim nation. Speaking from Adiala Jail, where he remains incarcerated, Khan lamented what he sees as a misguided approach toward Afghanistan, urging the authorities to avoid entangling Pakistan in conflicts that, in his view, serve no national interest.

In a statement that underscores his continued political relevance despite imprisonment, Khan claimed that Pakistan had witnessed a significant decline in terrorism until 2021, only for the threat to resurge in 2022. Without directly attributing blame, he suggested that policy missteps had contributed to the reversal of security gains.

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Despite his imprisonment, the former prime minister remains an influential figure, with his statements continuing to resonate within political and public discourse. His lat-

est comments are likely to add to the ongoing debate over Pakistan's Afghanistan policy, particularly as the country grapples with security challenges and a shifting geopolitical landscape. Whether his remarks will sway policy decisions remains to be seen, but they reinforce the fact that, even from behind bars, Imran Khan remains a formidable voice in Pakistan's political arena.

His sister, Aleema Khan, addressed reporters after meeting him at the prison, voicing concerns over restrictions on his communication. She noted that, under prison regulations, Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, were entitled to a 90-minute family visit. However, authorities initially allowed only 30 minutes, prompting them to extend it to 45 minutes in protest.

Justice Mandokhai criticizes poor enforcement of child protection laws

Recognizing the seriousness of the issue, the court summoned a National Commission for Child Protection representative, demanding answers on the failure of enforcement mechanisms

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's latest hearing on child abductions has once again highlighted the glaring gap between legal frameworks and their enforcement, with Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhai lamenting the failure of authorities to implement existing laws effectively. Despite a structured legal system designed to protect children from abduction and exploitation, the judiciary expressed deep frustration over the lack of tangible action by law enforcement agencies.

A five-member constitutional bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, conducted the hearing on a suo motu case concerning the alarming rise in child abductions across the country. The court, acknowledging the gravity of the situation, summoned a representative from the National Commission for Child Protection for the next session, seeking clarity on why enforcement mechanisms have remained ineffective.

During the proceedings, the petitioner's lawyer openly criticized law enforcement and government authorities, pointing out that

despite the court's directive for the Attorney General to consult all provincial Inspectors General (IGs), no such meetings had taken place. However, Additional Attorney General Amir Rehman disputed this claim, insisting that the Attorney General had indeed engaged with the IGs as instructed. This contradiction further fueled concerns over the state's handling of child abduction cases, raising questions about bureaucratic inefficiencies and institutional negligence.

Justice Aminuddin Khan, while acknowledging the judiciary's role in ensuring justice, firmly stated that it is ultimately the responsibility of relevant authorities to implement laws and protect vulnerable children.

The hearing concluded with an indefinite adjournment, leaving the matter of enforcement in limbo. With no clear directives for immediate corrective action, the fate of missing children remains a pressing concern. The lack of urgency in addressing the issue reflects a broader institutional failure, where legal frameworks exist on paper, yet their practical impact remains elusive due to bureaucratic inertia and weak governance.

Curfew imposed in North Waziristan and Tank

News Desk

TANK: The authorities have imposed a curfew in the districts of North Waziristan and Tank in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as security concerns continue to mount in the region. The restrictions, confirmed through an official statement, are set to take effect immediately, underscoring the volatile situation in these areas.

According to the Deputy Commissioner's office, the curfew in North Waziristan will be enforced from Nawab Kot Bridge to Duncan, in-

cluding the Razmak area, beginning tomorrow. Movement along the route from Duncan to Melogai Bridge will also be strictly restricted between 6 AM and 6 PM, effectively limiting civilian ac-

cess during daylight hours. Meanwhile, in Tank, curfew measures will apply from Kot Qila to Manzai and from Kariwam to Jandola, though the road from Kot Qila to Gomal and Girdawi Wana

IMF allows Pakistan to borrow Rs1.25trn locally

Under a six-year roadmap to alleviate financial strain, the government aims to repay Rs 1.5 trillion through bank loans and surcharge-driven revenue

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has granted Pakistan permission to borrow Rs 1.25 trillion from domestic banks, offering the country a much-needed financial cushion as it grapples with its mounting economic challenges. The decision, reached after policy-level discussions between Pakistani officials and the IMF, comes at a critical juncture when Islamabad is struggling to manage its massive Rs 2.4 trillion circular debt in the power sector.

Under a six-year roadmap designed to ease the financial strain, the government plans to repay Rs 1.5 trillion through a combination of bank loans and ad-



ditional revenue generated from surcharges. Meanwhile, recent negotiations with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) are expected to result in savings of Rs 463 billion, offering some respite from the burden of energy sector inefficiencies. For Pakistan, the IMF's approval represents a crucial lifeline, allowing the gov-

ernment to stabilize the power sector without further increasing sovereign debt. The move provides temporary breathing room as authorities attempt to navigate the complexities of economic recovery, yet it also raises pressing concerns about long-term financial sustainability.

Despite this immediate

relief, the underlying structural weaknesses in Pakistan's economy remain unaddressed. The circular debt crisis, fueled by inefficiencies, high transmission losses, and payment defaults, continues to weigh heavily on the power sector. While borrowing from domestic banks may offer short-term liquidity, it also increases pressure on the financial system, with banks bearing a growing share of the country's economic risks.

The government's reliance on bank loans as a stopgap measure underscores the broader challenge of reforming Pakistan's energy sector, where political resistance and vested interests have long hindered meaningful

change. The IMF's willingness to accommodate Pakistan's request reflects the urgency of the situation, but the burden of implementation now falls on policymakers, who must ensure that borrowed funds are used efficiently and that long-overdue reforms are not further delayed.

As Pakistan moves forward with its financial restructuring plan, the focus will inevitably shift to how well it manages its obligations. Whether this latest IMF-backed strategy leads to a sustainable resolution of the circular debt crisis or merely postpones deeper economic turmoil will depend on the government's ability to enforce fiscal discipline and introduce much-needed structural reforms.

Three suspects remanded in lawyer's murder case

Rafia Noor Phulpoto, daughter of the slain lawyer, has pleaded for justice, calling her father's murder premeditated and accusing police of shielding suspects

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: A Khairpur court on Tuesday granted a one-day physical remand for Shahnaz Parveen and a three-day remand for two other accused, Sajid Phulpoto and Asad Lashari, in the murder case of Deputy District Attorney Liaquat Ali Phulpoto.

The A-Section Police of Khairpur presented Shahnaz Parveen before Judicial Magistrate Abdul Hakim Sangi, requesting a 14-day physical remand.

However, the court granted only a shorter period of three days remand. Following the hearing, Shahnaz Parveen was taken to the Women Police Station, while the other two accused were sent to A-Section Police Station.

Rafia Noor Phulpoto, the daughter of the slain lawyer, has pleaded for justice, insisting her father's murder was premeditated. Expressing serious concerns over the post-mortem report issued by doctors at Khairpur Medical College Civil Hospital, she alleged that crucial forensic tests, including a CT scan of the brain and viscera analysis for possible poisoning, were ignored. She accused the police of protecting

the delay in recovering the murder weapon.

An FIR (No. 72/2025) was lodged at A-Section Police Station by the victim's brother, Imdad Phulpoto. According to him, his brother Liaquat Phulpoto had married Shahnaz Parveen after the assassination of her first husband, Abdul Aziz, an ASF officer killed in Karachi in 1990. The couple had three children together. Imdad Phulpoto claimed that tensions escalated after Shahnaz pressured her husband to transfer property into her name.

Imdad alleged that when Liaquat refused, insisting the property rightfully belonged to their children, she repeatedly threatened him before finally orchestrating the murder with her brother's assistance. In her confession, Parveen claimed she had endured years of abuse at the hands of her husband. She said she had sought intervention from family elders, but no one acted.

Pakistan, Bahrain hold talks on defense cooperation

By ISPR

R A W A L P I N D I : Bahrain's National Guard Commander, General Sheikh Mohammed bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, held a crucial meeting with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

The visit underscored the deep-rooted military ties between the two na-

collaborative security frameworks.

General Asim Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to regional stability and highlighted the need for sustained cooperation to address evolving security challenges. He emphasized that strong defense partnerships were essential in tackling threats such as terrorism, transnational crime, and regional instability.

General Sheikh Mo-

hammed bin Isa expressed Bahrain's appreciation for Pakistan's professional and battle-hardened armed forces, commending their dedication to eradicating terrorism and their contributions to global peacekeeping missions. His remarks reflected Bahrain's recognition of Pakistan's military prowess and its role in ensuring regional security through strategic partnerships.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), both military leaders engaged in a comprehensive exchange of views on countering emerging threats and strengthening

METRO MATTERS

MQM-P reaffirms democratic vision on 41st anniversary

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: On the 41st anniversary of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Chairman Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui reaffirmed the party's unwavering commitment to participatory democracy, positioning it as the only viable alternative to Pakistan's entrenched feudal and hereditary political structure.

In a message marking the occasion, Siddiqui described MQM-P's political journey as one of relentless struggle and sacrifice, a legacy he termed as a "golden chapter" in the country's history. Reflecting on the party's enduring mission, he emphasized that MQM-P has remained steadfast in its pursuit of justice, democracy, and national progress.

"From Pakistan's inception to its stabilization, our mission has remained unchanged—fighting for the people's rights, democracy, and a better future," he stated, underlining the party's ideological continuity despite the shifting political landscape. Positioning MQM-P as a defender of the marginalized, he declared that the party has been the "loudest voice and strongest barrier" against ignorance, oppression, and poverty.

Siddiqui paid tribute to the sacrifices of party members, particularly those who lost their lives in political repression, asserting that their struggle remains the foundation of MQM-P's resilience. In a pointed remark, he noted, "Those who dreamt of MQM-P's demise have disappeared into history, but by the grace of Allah, MQM-P stands firm."

Asserting the party's long-term vision, Siddiqui reaffirmed MQM-P's goal of transforming Pakistan into a welfare state where the rights of all citizens are upheld. He concluded his address with a pledge that the party's struggle would continue to serve as a beacon of hope for the oppressed, signaling its determination to remain a force in Pakistan's political landscape despite the challenges it faces.

Karachi rolls out traffic plan to tackle Eid gridlock

By our correspondent

KARACHI: To tackle Karachi's worsening traffic congestion ahead of Eidul Fitr, the Karachi Traffic Police have rolled out a new plan aimed at controlling overcrowding in the city's busiest commercial hubs. The measures, designed to ease the holiday rush, include a ban on taxis and rickshaws, including on-call services, from entering key high-traffic areas already struggling with gridlock.

The restrictions cover several major locations, including Teen Talwar, Tariq Road, and Hyderi Market, with commuters encouraged to take alternative routes such as Clifton Bridge, Race Course, and Khalq uz Zaman Road. In the city's commercial heart, access to roads connecting Saddar, Fawara Chowk, GPO, Singer Chowk, Zaibunnisa Street, and Jama Cloth to Eidgah Chowk will also be restricted. Traffic coming from the Millennium area will be rerouted via Millennium Bridge towards Nipa, while commercial vehicles will be diverted towards Ship Owners College and Landi Kotal Chowranghi.

With the expected surge of shoppers and vehicles in the lead-up to Eid, the Karachi Traffic Police say these directives are necessary to prevent bottlenecks and ensure smoother movement across the metropolis.

Meanwhile, anticipation for Eidul Fitr 2025 is building, with the holiday likely to fall on March 31. According to the Ruet-e-Hilal Research Council, the Shawwal crescent moon is expected to be visible on March 30, marking Eid celebrations the following day. If the lunar calendar aligns as predicted, Pakistanis could enjoy an extended holiday period from March 29 to April 6.

The federal government is expected to officially declare a five-day holiday from March 29 to April 2, though speculation is mounting that Thursday and Friday may also be included, stretching the break to a full nine days. However, the final holiday schedule will depend on the official moon sighting announcement.

St. Patrick's School fosters religious harmony with Iftar dinar

By our correspondent

KARACHI: At a time when divisions too often define societies, St. Patrick's High School in Karachi offered a powerful counter-narrative—a celebration of faith, unity, and shared humanity. The institution, renowned for its commitment to inclusivity, marked the Feast of St. Patrick with a remarkable interfaith Iftar, bringing together students, faculty, and staff from Christian, Muslim, and Hindu communities. In an atmosphere of mutual respect and reverence, the event underscored the school's mission to foster harmony and understanding across religious and cultural lines.

The evening unfolded with a blend of sacred expressions. Students filled the hall with the melodic echoes of hymns, an homage to St. Patrick's enduring spiritual legacy. In an equally moving gesture, Muslim students responded with Naats, offering their own devotional recitations in praise of the Prophet Muhammad. It was a moment that transcended religious boundaries, binding the school community in a shared reverence for faith and tradition. The event was also marked by heartfelt prayers for Pakistan, for the school, and for the collective well-being of those gathered, a reminder that hope and unity can be nurtured even in times of uncertainty.

As the Azaan for Maghrib prayer signaled the breaking of the fast, students and teachers—irrespective of their faith—sat together, sharing a meal that was far more than just food. It was an act of solidarity, an assertion that compassion, generosity, and unity are not bound by religious affiliations. In that moment, the labels of Christian, Muslim, and Hindu blurred, giving way to something more profound—a community bound by shared values and mutual respect.

Religious, business leaders attend Quran completion event

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: A grand annual Completion of the Quran gathering was held at Sabirani House, the residence of Muhammad Kashif Sabirani, Chairman of Ali Traders Sindh Ittehad, and Amin Sabirani. The event drew a large number of prominent religious, social, and business figures from across the city. Among the distinguished attendees were Pir-e-Tariq Syed Shah Asadullah Junaydi, religious and spiritual scholar Hafiz Hamid Raza Mahrovi, Shahid Ghouri, Deputy Head of Pakistan Sunni Tehreek, Atiq Mir, a senior trade leader, and Tariq Hassan, former City Nazim Karachi and President of Pakistan Muslim League-Q Karachi.

Also present were Asif Raza Qadri, Patron-in-Chief of All Traders Sindh Ittehad, Maqsood Faraz, General Secretary, Javed Siddiqui, President of Karachi Division, Afreen Siddiqui, Finance Secretary, Muhammad Usman Sheikh, Joint Secretary, Abdullah Batra, Senior Vice President, Humair Khan, Press Secretary, Anwar Ghouri, Conciliatory Convener, Salman Rizwan, Vice President South, and Usman Ghani, Convener of the Youth Committee.

Other notable participants included Hanif Motlani, former President of All Pakistan Memnon Federation, Aftab Alam, Hussain Qureshi, Yaseen Qureshi, Rana Akram, Qais Mansoor, Amjad Kiyani, Incharge of Nazimabad Police Station, Faisal Hamid, Sheikh Muhammad Irshad, Muhammad Sadiq Sheikh, Sameer Qureshi, Abdul Rasheed Noorani, Muhammad Anwar, Younis Qureshi, Shakir Fancy, Muhammad Sohail Azeer, Kamran Fazilani, Altaf Soomro, Sheikh Muhammad Rafiq, Naeem MNA, Abdul Rehman Khan, Ismail Lalpuri, Fareed Sheikh, Haji Nasir Khan, Muhammad Irfan Wali Muhammad, Muhammad Imran Dumba, Muhammad Aftab Zakaria, Muhammad Anwar Samana, Muhammad Arif Marfani, Malik Shaukat, Abdul Qadir, Muhammad Iqbal Dumba, Muhammad Owais Iqbal, Syed Muhammad, Faizan Junaydi, Adeel A.D., Muhammad Saleem, Owais Rajput, Muhammad Yousuf, Muhammad Javed Sabirani, Waseem Khan, Muhammad Faizan, Muhammad Azeer Farooqi, Syed Rameez Raza, and compere Nadir Sheikh.

During the event, Hafiz Owais Abdul Waheed and Hafiz Ahmed Jamil were honored with floral and garlands in recognition of their contributions. The gathering also featured soul-enriching recitations of Na'ats (Islamic hymns) presented by Anees Saba Qadri, Zeeshan Qadri, and Faizan Qadri.

Pir-e-Tariq Syed Asadullah Junaydi, addressing the gathering, emphasized that the teachings of the Holy Quran serve as a guiding light for the Muslim Ummah and must be followed in all aspects of life. Former City Nazim Tariq Hassan noted that Ramadan and the Holy Quran bring blessings and mercy, adding that Pakistan was granted in this sacred month, making it the duty of every citizen to uphold its dignity and stability.

Bilawal opens Karachi's new paddle tennis facility

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is actively engaging with Karachi's evolving sports culture, visiting a newly established paddle sports facility at Bagh-e-Ibn-e-Qasim. The facility, set up under the leadership of Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab, reflects the Sindh government's broader efforts to revitalize public spaces and promote recreational activities across the city.

Accompanied by Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and other officials, Bilawal Zardari took part in a friendly paddle match alongside Mayor Wahab and CM Murad Ali Shah.

The event underscored the rising popularity of the sport in Karachi, highlighting efforts to encourage a more active lifestyle among residents. Following the match, the leaders posed for a photo, symbolizing their commitment to fostering sports culture and enhancing urban recreation opportunities.

Mayor Wahab, known for spearheading several urban development projects, expressed optimism that the facility would inspire Karachites to engage in sports and make productive use of public spaces. This initiative aligns with the Sindh government's ongoing efforts to expand recreational opportunities in the metropolis, reflecting a vision for a healthier and more vibrant Karachi.

PM to leave for Saudi Arabia today

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is set to embark on an official visit to Saudi Arabia from March 19 to 22, focusing on strengthening bilateral ties, expanding economic cooperation, and exploring new investment opportunities. The high-level visit underscores Pakistan's commitment to deepening its strategic partnership with the kingdom at a time of evolving global and

regional challenges. Accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, along with key federal ministers and senior officials, Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to meet Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman. The discussions are expected to revolve around enhancing trade relations, fostering collaboration in key economic sectors, and identifying new avenues for investment.

The Foreign Office has confirmed that talks will also cover pressing global and regional issues, including the ongoing crisis in Gaza, shifting dynamics in the Middle East, and concerns of the broader Muslim world.

This visit builds on the prime minister's last trip to Saudi Arabia in December, where he addressed the 'One Water Summit' and proposed a six-point global agenda to tackle water-related challenges.

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EDITOR: Ehtasham Anwar
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Email: news@metro-morning.com

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EDITORIAL

Dark reality of human trafficking

Human trafficking remains one of the most sinister scourges of our modern world, devastating lives and destabilizing societies across the globe. It is a crime that not only reduces people to mere commodities but also exposes the fragility of international systems meant to protect the most vulnerable. While trafficking continues to entrench itself in the shadows, it forces even the most developed nations to resort to methods that, though intended to stem the tide of human suffering, often exacerbate it in ways that defy basic humanitarian principles. A chilling reminder of this reality surfaced recently when a country ordered a boat filled with refugees, desperate for safety, to be pushed back into the open sea. Tragically, the boat capsized, resulting in the loss of precious lives. This event was a stark reminder of the moral cost of treating human beings as mere pawns in political strategies. It also raised important questions about the limits of law enforcement when it comes to safeguarding the dignity and sanctity of human life.

At the heart of the issue is the criminalization of human movement. While it is true that crossing borders illegally is typically classified as a criminal offense, the punishment for such crimes should remain firmly in the hands of a nation's judiciary. It is essential that security agencies, no matter their country of origin, respect the boundaries set by the rule of law. No law, no matter how firmly entrenched in national policy, should ever take precedence over the right to life. When enforcing such laws leads to the loss of human life, they cross the line from being just laws to instruments of injustice. Society must ask itself: if the implementation of a law causes harm on such a scale, can it still be considered just? Surely, no truly humane society can condone laws that lead to such heartbreaking tragedies.

The rhetoric surrounding immigration has become increasingly toxic, especially in countries like the United States. The words and actions of U.S. President Donald Trump, in particular, reflect an approach to immigration that is harsh, cruel, and deeply concerning. Under his leadership, the U.S. has escalated its efforts to close its doors to migrants, particularly those seeking refuge from war, violence, and poverty. Trump's rhetoric has not only vilified immigrants but also deepened societal divisions. It fosters an atmosphere where the value of human life seems negotiable, something to be bartered for political leverage. This rhetoric, unfortunately, is not unique to the United States. Across the world, nations are increasingly adopting dehumanizing stances toward immigrants, painting them as threats rather than individuals in desperate need of protection. These sentiments, if left unchecked, threaten the moral fabric of the international community.

But behind these anti-immigrant policies lies something even more troubling. The geopolitical dynamics between the U.S., China, and Russia are reshaping the global order in ways that directly impact vulnerable countries like Pakistan. The U.S. seeks to maintain its dominance over global affairs, not just economically but militarily as well. This struggle for power is playing out in distant regions, from Eastern Europe to the Middle East, and now in South Asia. It is no secret that the U.S. has long viewed Pakistan's natural resources, particularly its water, as a strategic asset. Tensions between China, Russia, and the U.S. over Pakistan's resources are palpable. The ongoing terrorism in Balochistan, which has claimed countless lives, is part of this broader struggle. By destabilizing the region, the U.S. and its allies hope to prevent China and Russia from gaining access to these crucial resources. In this political game, however, it is the innocent citizens of Pakistan who bear the brunt, caught in the crossfire of global power struggles that seem indifferent to their suffering.

Amid these global machinations, Pakistan faces its own internal crisis: human trafficking. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's commitment to eradicating this trade is a much-needed and commendable response to this deeply entrenched problem. During a recent meeting with officials from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Intelligence Bureau, who were responsible for the successful dismantling of the notorious Jaja gang, the Prime Minister took the opportunity to praise their work. Cash rewards and shields were given to the officers who had demonstrated exemplary performance in combating this heinous trade. Yet, as the government steps up its efforts, it is clear that the root causes of human trafficking remain deeply embedded in the economic struggles faced by many families, especially in the underdeveloped regions of Punjab.

It is a reality that the country's economic crisis has exacerbated this issue. As Pakistan's economy grapples with persistent challenges, including inflation, unemployment, and a crippling debt burden, more and more people are falling prey to traffickers. The promise of a better life in Europe or the United States becomes an alluring escape from the hardships of everyday life. But as we have seen time and time again, this escape is nothing more than a mirage.

The tragedy of the Mediterranean boat disaster, in which 300 Pakistani lives were lost in June 2023, is a heartbreaking reminder of the human cost of this trade. It is estimated that over 700 people were aboard the doomed boat, their hopes of a better life dashed in an instant. This tragedy galvanized both the Pakistani government and civil society to take stronger action against human trafficking.

However, eradicating human trafficking requires more than just law enforcement. It requires a concerted effort to address the root causes of trafficking: poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunity. As such, sustainable economic programs must be introduced to provide young people with viable alternatives to the dangerous promises of traffickers.

Only by creating real economic opportunities for Pakistan's youth can we hope to combat this trade in human lives. The government's recent initiatives to improve employment prospects and provide better education are a step in the right direction. But much more must be done to create a future where young people are not forced to choose between desperation and exploitation.

In the end, the fight against human trafficking is a battle for humanity itself. We must remember that at the heart of this issue lies the struggle for human dignity. It is incumbent upon governments, organizations, and individuals alike to ensure that human life remains sacred and that no law, no matter how well-intentioned, justifies the loss of life. Only then can we begin to build a world where human trafficking is not just fought, but eradicated.

Metro Morning and its policy not necessarily consensus with any writer's thoughts

By S.M. Inam



In the face of an escalating wave of violence and extremism that has once again gripped Pakistan, the national leadership—both political and military—has come together with a firm resolve to confront the growing menace of terrorism with an iron fist. In a pivotal moment, the Parliamentary Committee on National Security convened under the leadership of the Speaker of the National Assembly, bringing together some of the most powerful and influential figures in the country. The communiqué that followed the meeting was not just a formal statement; it was a solemn commitment to protect the very essence of Pakistan's sovereignty, peace, and stability.

The recent surge in terrorist attacks has thrown the country into a state of fear and uncertainty, reminding the nation of the persistent threat that insurgents and terrorist groups pose to its security. The parliamentary committee was not only responding to the immediate danger but also laying the foundation for a broader, more unified strategy to deal with terrorism in the long term. The communiqué, issued soon after the meeting, was a clear signal to both the people of Pakistan and the international community that the nation's leadership, despite political differences, had come together to take decisive action. The unity displayed in this moment of crisis was a reminder that national security transcends partisan politics.

The communiqué explicitly condemned the terrorist attacks that had rocked the country, emphasizing that such violence could no longer be tolerated. In a direct and forceful statement, the leadership made it clear that there would be no compromise on the issue of terrorism. The message was unequivocal: terrorism, in all its forms, will

not be allowed to undermine the country's security or its future. The unity of the political and military leadership was not just symbolic but a potent demonstration of the collective will to take strong action against those who seek to destabilize Pakistan through violence and extremism.

But the commitment to confront terrorism is not merely about issuing stern statements. The communiqué also outlined a detailed strategy for the future, a strategy that underscores the urgency of the situation. It was made clear that the fight against terrorism would be pursued with all available resources, meaning that no stone would be left unturned in the effort to eliminate the threat. The committee spoke about the need for a comprehensive approach that combines military action, legal reforms, and institutional support. One of the most critical aspects of the strategy is the dismantling of terrorist networks. The leadership recognized that terrorism is not just the work of individuals, but of well-organized, interconnected networks that span countries and regions. In particular, the communiqué called for a focused effort to target the facilitators and enablers of terrorism, who often operate in the shadows, providing logistical and financial support to terror groups.

Another aspect of the committee's resolve was its clear stance against any form of sympathy or support for terrorist organizations. This was particularly important in light of the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, where several extremist groups continue to operate with relative impunity. The committee's position was that any affiliation with such groups must be categorically rejected. This was a crucial moment for the leadership to send a message that Pakistan would not tolerate terrorist elements operating from any neighboring country, and that the security of its citizens would not be compromised by external threats.

The issue of social media's role in the propagation of terrorism was also high-

lighted. In today's interconnected world, the power of the internet and social media cannot be underestimated. These platforms, once a source of freedom and expression, have increasingly become breeding grounds for extremist ideologies. The committee's recommendation to tackle this issue head-on is a timely and necessary step in the fight against terrorism. The rise of online radicalization and the spread of violent narratives must be curbed, and it is clear that this will require a concerted effort from both government agencies and the private sector. The leadership's call for stronger regulation and accountability on social media platforms demonstrates an understanding of the modern challenges in the fight against extremism.

Equally significant is the committee's emphasis on strengthening Pakistan's law enforcement institutions. The communiqué underscored the importance of providing the police and intelligence agencies with the tools and resources they need to succeed in their fight against terrorism. There is no doubt that the capacity of law enforcement agencies plays a crucial role in tackling terrorism. These agencies are often the first line of defense against threats, and ensuring that they are well-equipped and well-trained is essential for any successful counterterrorism strategy. The leadership's commitment to boosting these institutions is a step in the right direction, and it reflects a recognition that terrorism cannot be defeated through military action alone.

However, the resolve of the national leadership is not just about enforcing security measures or addressing immediate threats. It also involves addressing the root causes of terrorism. The committee discussed the broader national security context, which includes economic stability, social cohesion, and political unity. These are the pillars upon which long-term peace and security must be built. While military operations and legal measures can provide short-term solutions, they are insufficient in the

face of the underlying issues that fuel extremism. Economic deprivation, social inequality, and political alienation have all played a role in fostering an environment where terrorism can thrive. The committee's acknowledgment of this broader context is an important recognition that combating terrorism requires a multi-faceted approach that goes beyond security measures.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's presence at the meeting was a testament to the government's commitment to this unified approach. The Prime Minister has consistently emphasized the need for a comprehensive and coordinated response to terrorism, one that involves not just military and law enforcement agencies but also the broader society. The absence of some opposition members during the meeting was regrettable, but it did not diminish the resolve of the leadership. The message was clear: the fight against terrorism is a national priority that transcends party lines. While differences in political opinion will undoubtedly remain, on this issue, the leadership has shown that unity is paramount.

This collective resolve signals a crucial moment in Pakistan's ongoing battle against terrorism. The country is at a crossroads. It faces both internal and external threats, and its response will shape its future. With a clear, focused strategy, the full mobilization of resources, and a unified leadership, Pakistan stands ready to confront and dismantle the terrorist networks that continue to threaten its stability. The commitment to do so with unwavering determination is a testament to the nation's resolve to protect its citizens, its institutions, and its future. The battle against terrorism is far from over, but with this new phase of leadership unity and resolve, there is hope that Pakistan will emerge stronger and more secure in the years to come.

The writer is a former government officer and a senior analyst on national and international affairs, can be reached at inam@metro-morning.com

Resolve against extremism

Pakistan army: Only pillar of national security

BY UZMA EHTASHAM



There is no question about the pivotal role the Pakistan Armed Forces play in safeguarding the country's existence. While many sectors in the country, both governmental and private, contribute to the nation's growth and prosperity, there is one sector whose absence would leave an indelible void—one that would unravel the fabric of Pakistan itself. That sector is the military. In the grand scheme of things, various industries and departments could disappear without fundamentally disturbing the nation's structure. However, the military is irreplaceable; without it, Pakistan's sovereignty, freedom, and security would be jeopardized. The peace and security we often take for granted, the quiet nights we rest, are the result of the unwavering vigilance and dedication of the armed forces. Without their tireless efforts, Pakistan would not enjoy the peace it does today. They stand as the ultimate guarantors of the nation's defense, and their bravery and sacrifice are the foundation of national pride.

The significance of their role was vividly demonstrated on the 12th and 13th of March, when a group of terrorists seized 400 passengers on a train in the Dhadar region of Balochistan. The country held its breath, fearing that the passengers would be slaughtered, or worse, that the state might be forced into making a humiliating compromise. But in the face of this dire situation, the Pakistan Armed Forces exhibited unparalleled courage, wisdom, and precision. Their swift action brought the hostage situation to a dramatic and decisive end, a moment that filled the nation with an overwhelming sense of pride. The collective breath of the country was released as the security forces neutralized the threat, demonstrating their unwavering resolve and commitment to protecting Pakistan's citizens. This was not just a victory; it was a reaffirmation of the military's critical role in defending the country against threats of all kinds.

But this is not the first time that the Pakistan Armed Forces have been called upon to rise to the occasion. From the moment the nation was conceived, the military has been the bulwark that has shielded Pakistan from both internal and external dangers. A look back at the events of September 6th, 1965, during the India-Pakistan war, provides a clear example of the valor and resilience that define Pakistan's armed forces. On that fateful night, when India launched an attack on Pakistan, General Ayub Khan addressed the nation with a speech that echoed through the hearts of millions. He reminded the country that they were a nation whose faith was rooted in the powerful words, "La ilaha illah, Muhammad Rasoolullah," igniting a wave of patriotism across the nation. Pakistanis, from the elderly to the youth, took to the streets to defend their homeland, often armed only with sticks, standing defiant against the might of the Indian military.

The war that followed, which lasted for 17 days, witnessed some of the most incredible displays of bravery. The resilience of Major Aziz Bhatti and his battalion at BRB is legendary. Despite facing overwhelming odds, Major Bhatti's battalion repeatedly withdrew tactically, giving the impression that they were facing a full brigade, holding off Indian forces for days. His eventual martyrdom added to his heroic legacy, earning him the highest military honor, the Nishan-e-Haider. Another name etched in history is that of MM Alam, who downed seven Indian aircraft in a single day, proving that Pakistan's air force was capable of countering any threat. The Battle of Chawinda became a turning point in the conflict, as the battlefield was littered with the remains of destroyed Indian tanks, a testament to the tenacity and skill of Pakistan's armed forces.

The Pakistan Armed Forces are not only known for their military prowess but also for their unwavering commitment to martyrdom and the principle of "Jihad fi Sabeelillah" (striving in the way of Allah). This dedication to self-sacrifice sets them apart from the armed forces of other nations, such as India, the United States, or Russia. Since the birth of Pakistan, thousands of soldiers have embraced martyrdom, paying the ultimate price to defend the country from both external threats and internal strife. The military's commitment spans multiple fronts—against the visible enemy, such as India, and against the invisible forces of extremism and terrorism that seek to infiltrate society. Today, as terrorists continue to rear their heads in regions like Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the brave soldiers of Pakistan's armed forces continue to fight against this internal scourge, putting their lives on the line to rid the country of terrorism and maintain peace.

When we lay our heads to rest at night, in the comfort and safety of our homes, it is easy to forget that the guardians of our borders remain vigilant, alert, and ready to defend the nation at a moment's notice. The enemies of Pakistan understand that as long as the military remains strong, the country cannot be defeated. This is why the first target of their attacks is always the armed forces. One of the most insidious weapons used against Pakistan is the vile propaganda aimed at creating rifts between the military and the people. This was the same tactic employed during the tragic disintegration of East Pakistan, where external forces, with the help of certain internal factors, sowed division between the people and their own military. This division led to attacks on military personnel and the destruction of military assets, ultimately paving the way for the country's disintegration. The painful memories of that chapter in Pakistan's history still haunt every Pakistani, serving as a constant reminder of the dangers of internal discord and the destructive power of disunity.

Despite these challenges, the nation's respect and reverence for its armed forces remain steadfast. The courage and selflessness displayed by the military should not only be acknowledged but celebrated. Their sacrifices are the bedrock upon which Pakistan's security and future are built. Without the unwavering loyalty of the men and women in uniform, Pakistan's existence would not be guaranteed. It is the responsibility of every citizen to honor and recognize the sacrifices of these brave souls who, night after night, stand guard to ensure that we can sleep soundly. In these difficult times, it is more important than ever to unite behind our military, for their continued valor ensures that the defense of our homeland remains in the safest of hands.

The writer is a public health professional and possesses expertise in health communication, having keen interest in national and international affairs, can be reached at uzma@metro-morning.com

Maturity beyond age

By Atiq Raja



Maturity is often linked to age, but in reality, it has little to do with the number of years a person has lived. Some individuals display wisdom, responsibility, and emotional intelligence early on, while others struggle with immaturity well into their later years. The ability to think critically, manage emotions wisely, and make responsible decisions defines true maturity. The question is, why do some people mature early while others do not? And how can one cultivate maturity to reap its many benefits? Life experiences play a defining role in shaping maturity. Those who face challenges, responsibilities, or hardships early in life often develop emotional and intellectual maturity faster. A child who shoulders the burden of supporting their family may quickly learn resilience and responsibility, while someone raised in a sheltered environment might not develop the same level of awareness until much later. The contrast is stark, yet it explains why some individuals navigate adulthood with grace while others struggle with even more than a mirage.

The tragedy of the Mediterranean boat disaster, in which 300 Pakistani lives were lost in June 2023, is a heartbreaking reminder of the human cost of this trade. It is estimated that over 700 people were aboard the doomed boat, their hopes of a better life dashed in an instant. This tragedy galvanized both the Pakistani government and civil society to take stronger action against human trafficking.

However, eradicating human trafficking requires more than just law enforcement. It requires a concerted effort to address the root causes of trafficking: poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunity. As such, sustainable economic programs must be introduced to provide young people with viable alternatives to the dangerous promises of traffickers.

Only by creating real economic opportunities for Pakistan's youth can we hope to combat this trade in human lives. The government's recent initiatives to improve employment prospects and provide better education are a step in the right direction. But much more must be done to create a future where young people are not forced to choose between desperation and exploitation.

In the end, the fight against human trafficking is a battle for humanity itself. We must remember that at the heart of this issue lies the struggle for human dignity. It is incumbent upon governments, organizations, and individuals alike to ensure that human life remains sacred and that no law, no matter how well-intentioned, justifies the loss of life. Only then can we begin to build a world where human trafficking is not just fought, but eradicated.

Silent epidemic

By Hadeel Awad

It has been two months since the ceasefire started in Gaza. Palestinians are still being killed by the Israeli army, but the relentless bombardment has stopped – at least for now. Much-needed aid that was allowed into the Strip was cut off two weeks ago.

What entered in the previous month and a half could hardly resuscitate the collapsed healthcare system in Gaza. So many hospitals and clinics have been destroyed, especially in the north, that humanitarian organizations have had to set up tents to provide basic care for hundreds of thousands of survivors. The medical supplies that came in are already running out.

Amid this continuing torment, the healthcare system in Gaza cannot even begin to recover, much less address the multiple health crises plaguing the civilian population. One of the worst among them is the shocking number of amputees that Israel's indiscriminate use of explosive weapons for 15 months has left behind.

According to the World Health Organization, as of September 2024, 22,500 people in Gaza had sustained life-altering injuries since October 7, 2023, including severe limb injuries, amputations, spinal cord trauma, traumatic brain injuries and major burns.

At the height of the genocidal war, aid agencies and medical organizations were reporting that more than 10 children were losing one or two limbs every day in Gaza. Many were undergoing the operation without anaesthesia and many of these limbs could have been saved had the healthcare system not been completely decimated. In December, the UN said Gaza has the "highest number of child amputees per capita in the world".

In July 2024, while on a field visit to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, I witnessed firsthand how one of the last functioning hospitals in Gaza was struggling to help those who had sustained injuries from explosive weapons. When I arrived at the hospital, there were many people injured due to several bombings.

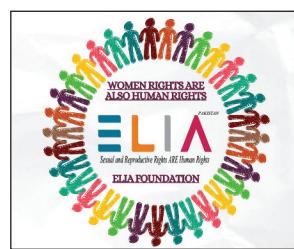
The writer is a rights activist and CEO of AR Trainings and Consultancy, with degrees in Political Science and English Literature, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com

ferent perspectives does not mean agreeing with everything but understanding that one's view is not the sole truth.

Self-discipline is another hallmark of maturity. Whether it's managing anger, resisting impulsive spending, or maintaining a healthy lifestyle, self-control leads to better decision-making. The ability to delay gratification and prioritize long-term benefits over immediate desires is a clear sign of wisdom. Strong relationships are built on maturity. Being dependable, communicating effectively, and showing empathy strengthen personal and professional bonds. Avoiding unnecessary drama and focusing on constructive, respectful interactions fosters healthier relationships. Life is unpredictable, and those who adapt to change with a positive attitude navigate it best. Instead of resisting what cannot be controlled, mature individuals find solutions and embrace new circumstances. Adaptability is, in many ways, the essence of wisdom. The benefits of maturity extend far beyond personal growth. A mature person makes better decisions, weighing pros and cons carefully rather than acting on impulse.

This leads to greater success in both personal and professional life. Stronger relationships, built on patience and emotional intelligence, become another reward. Those who exhibit maturity naturally earn respect and trust, positioning themselves as leaders in various spheres. Reduced stress and anxiety come as a natural consequence of handling situations with composure rather than panic. Ultimately, a mature individual finds greater fulfillment, seeking meaning in relationships, achievements, and values rather than superficial gratification. Maturity is not dictated by age but by mindset and experience. While some mature early due to circumstances, others must actively work towards developing wisdom and emotional intelligence. Taking responsibility, regulating emotions, and embracing lifelong learning are essential steps in this journey. The rewards of maturity—better relationships, sound decision-making, and a deeper sense of fulfillment—make it a pursuit well worth the effort for anyone seeking success and happiness in life.

The writer is a rights activist and CEO of AR Trainings and Consultancy, with degrees in Political Science and English Literature, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com



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Russia halts energy attacks in Ukraine after Trump-Putin call

Beyond these immediate steps, Washington and Moscow have also committed to technical negotiations in pursuit of a ceasefire in the Black Sea region

News Desk

KARACHI: Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump held a crucial phone call, resulting in what the White House has described as a meaningful step toward reducing hostilities. The most immediate outcome of the conversation is Russia's agreement to refrain from targeting Ukraine's energy infrastructure for the next 30 days, a temporary reprieve that could ease civilian suffering as the war drags on.

Despite this development, reports emerging from British media suggest that Moscow's broader demands for an end to the conflict remain unchanged, underscoring the complexity of the ongoing war. The Kremlin, in its statement following the call, confirmed that both Russia and Ukraine would exchange 175 prisoners of war—a move seen as a potential confidence-building measure in what has other-



wise been a deeply entrenched conflict.

During their conversation, both leaders acknowledged the immense human and economic cost of the war, with Putin and Trump expressing regret that the conflict had not been resolved sooner. There was an implicit recognition that resources spent on sustaining the war effort could have been better directed toward the welfare of their respective citizens. In what appeared to be an attempt at reframing the relationship between Washington and Moscow, the two leaders

countries willing to provide military assistance to Ukraine if an accord is reached. The statement, issued by Downing Street, outlined the broader international support being mobilized as part of the peace initiative.

Addressing Members of Parliament, Laming revealed that the G7 foreign ministers had convened last week in Canada to discuss the crisis. He emphasized that a ceasefire proposal is now on the table and that Ukraine has demonstrated a serious commitment to peace. The decision, he said, now rests with President Vladimir Putin, making it his responsibility to respond to the offer. Directing his remarks at the Russian leader, Laming posed a stark question: "Are you serious about peace? Do you want to end the fighting? If so, you must demonstrate your intentions by implementing a complete and unconditional ceasefire."

KSA deploys 200 smart screens to monitor Umrah pilgrims

News Desk

MAKKAH: Saudi authorities have significantly bolstered security in Makkah during the peak Umrah season in Ramadan, deploying more than 200 smart screens at the city's main Control Centre to monitor and manage operations in real time. The high-tech facility plays a central role in enforcing and coordinating security measures as millions of pilgrims converge for their spiritual journey.

Designed to ensure smooth entry, movement, and exit of pilgrims, the system is equipped to maintain crowd safety and enable rapid responses to any incidents. Saudi officials have confirmed that all neighborhoods and districts remain under constant surveillance, with live video feeds transmitted directly to the operations room at the Grand Mosque.

The Control Centre is fully integrated with the Grand Mosque's Security Operations Centre and the Unified Operations Centre (911), creating a seamless communication network among emergency and security services. Operating around the clock, the high-tech hub remains a vital part of the security infrastructure during Ramadan, giving authorities the ability to monitor pilgrim movements, assess crowd density, and respond swiftly to any situation that arises.

PTI's Amir Dogar protests exclusion from security committee

By our correspondent

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Amir Dogar has expressed strong reservations over his exclusion from a key security committee, stating that he has formally lodged a protest within the party.

In a statement, Dogar said he was uncertain whether PTI Chairman Imran Khan had been consulted on the matter but stressed that districts like Karak, which he represents, are grappling with critical security challenges. He argued that leaving him out of the committee at such a crucial time was unjustified. "I am tweeting this for the public record so that no one questions my stance in the future," he said, making his dissatisfaction clear.

He also took aim at PTI's Chief Whip decisions, alleging that appointments were driven by personal preferences rather than merit. "He meets all merit criteria himself but gets arrested quickly in tough times," Dogar remarked sarcastically.

His comments underscore internal discord within PTI over key appointments, revealing tensions within the party as it navigates ongoing political and security challenges.

National security is non-negotiable, asserts COAS

"If this country exists, we exist—nothing matters more than national security," Gen Asim declared, emphasizing the grave threats Pakistan continues to confront

By ISPR/Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir has delivered a resolute message on Pakistan's security, asserting that no movement, agenda, or individual takes precedence over the country's stability. Addressing the National Security Parliamentary Committee, the Army Chief made it clear that national security remains the ultimate priority, emphasizing that the survival of the state is directly linked to the well-being of its people and institutions.

"If this country exists, we exist. There is nothing more important to us than national security," he declared, underscoring the gravity of the threats Pakistan continues to face. His remarks came amid escalating security concerns, with the military intensifying operations against militant groups seeking to destabilize the nation. General Munir also urged religious scholars to confront extremist narratives that distort Islamic teachings, warning that radical elements manipulate religion to serve their own agendas.

The fight against terrorism, he stressed, is not just a military effort but a broader ideological battle that requires the active participation of all sections of society. Pakistan's resilience. "The time for political infighting must end; Pakistan's security demands a unified national stance," he asserted, in what appeared to be a pointed message to the country's fractious political landscape.

In a direct warning to those conspiring against Pakistan, General Munir declared that terrorists and their facilitators should harbor no illusions about their chances of success.

"Today sends a clear message to them—we stand united and will ensure their failure," he said, reinforcing the military's determination to crush insurgent threats. Ending his address on a note of faith and defiance, he declared, "With the will of Allah, no matter what happens, we will emerge victorious."



White House warns of consequences for attacks against Israel

News Desk

WASHINGTON: White House Press Secretary Caroline Leavitt has stated that Israel consulted with President Donald Trump's administration before launching its latest attacks on Gaza on Tuesday. According to Leavitt, the U.S. administration was aware in advance of Israel's extensive assault on the Gaza Strip.



In an interview with an American news channel, Leavitt referenced a previous statement by President Trump, in which he warned: "Hamas, the Houthis, Iran, and anyone who targets not just Israel but also the United States with terrorism will pay a heavy price. The gates of hell will be opened upon them." Trump has issued similar warnings in the past, emphasizing that Hamas must release all hostages immediately, or face devastating consequences.

The intensive Israeli assault on Gaza in the early hours of Tuesday morning came after negotiations for an extension of the ceasefire collapsed. Just hours before the attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened a meeting at the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv, where the decision to resume the war was made. This information was disclosed by Israeli sources to the newspaper Maariv.

Israel violates ceasefire, massacres 200 Palestinians in Gaza airstrikes

Eyewitnesses in Gaza recount scenes of unimaginable horror, with entire families trapped beneath the rubble, as at least 35 Israeli air raids from central Israel pounded the besieged enclave

News Desk

GAZA: Israel has launched a fresh and devastating round of airstrikes on Gaza in what marks a stark violation of the ceasefire agreement, leaving at least 200 Palestinians dead and hundreds more wounded. The attacks, which unfolded in the early hours of the morning, targeted densely populated residential areas, with women and children among the victims.

Eyewitness accounts from Gaza describe scenes of horror, as entire families were buried under the rubble of their homes. Reports indicate that at least 35 Israeli air raids were launched from central Israel, striking multiple locations across the besieged enclave. The Israeli military has claimed that the operation was aimed at Hamas-linked sites, but Palestinian officials and human rights groups argue that civilians bore the brunt of the assault.

The most severe bombings were concentrated in Deir al-Balah, where three residential buildings were reduced to debris. Khan Younis and Rafah also came under heavy attack, with Prime Minister's Office has struck timed during Suhour, raising fears of further escalation.

Meanwhile, the Israeli

homes as they prepared for the pre-dawn meal in the holy month of Ramadan. Hospitals, already overwhelmed and struggling with dwindling medical supplies, have been unable to cope with the influx of casualties. Hamas has accused Israel of unilaterally abandoning the ceasefire and resuming its offensive against civilians. The group has rejected Israeli claims that the latest escalation was in response to stalled negotiations over hostage releases, stating that Israel has chosen war over diplomacy. In retaliation, Hamas has vowed to respond with force, raising fears of further escalation.

Adding to the controversy, the White House has confirmed that it was consulted prior to the Israeli bombardment, a revelation that raises serious questions about Washington's role in enabling the attacks. The Biden administration's stance has once again come under scrutiny, as calls grow for an immediate end to the bloodshed. However, with Israel escalating its campaign and diplomatic efforts faltering, the people of Gaza remain trapped in yet another chapter of relentless devastation.



Islamic Jihad's Abu Hamza killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza

News Desk

GAZA: Islamic Jihad spokesperson Abu Hamza has been killed in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, according to reports, in a development that marks yet another escalation in the ongoing conflict. Israeli media has claimed that the attack not only killed Abu Hamza but also took the lives of several members of his family, underscoring the heavy toll on civilians as the war continues unabated.

The strike comes in the wake of Israel's unilateral decision to end the ceasefire, a move that has been met with silence from Western powers despite the rapidly rising death toll in Gaza. The latest round of airstrikes has already claimed the lives of more than 400 Palestinians, with

casualties mounting as Israel intensifies its offensive. Among those killed are Gaza's Prime Minister Issam al-Da'alais, three government ministers, and a senior Hamas official, marking one of the deadliest phases of the conflict in recent months.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has remained resolute in his government's military campaign, reiterating that negotiations were the only viable path to their safe release.



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Israeli of deliberately endangering the lives of those captives by breaking the ceasefire agreement, arguing that negotiations were the only viable path to their safe release.

Israeli hostages held by Hamas are released. His stance reflects the hardline approach taken by the Israeli leadership, which sees continued military pressure as the only way to secure the hostages' return. However, Hamas has accused Israel of deliberately endangering the lives of those captives by breaking the ceasefire agreement, arguing that negotiations were the only viable path to their safe release.

In a parallel operation, security forces also apprehended 14 Yemeni nationals accused of forcing women and children into begging, an issue that Saudi authorities have increasingly sought to curb as part of

broader anti-human trafficking measures. The arrests signal the government's continued vigilance in combating organized crime and illicit enterprises, particularly those that exploit vulnerable individuals.

This latest action follows a similar police operation

down on such violations. The kingdom's approach aligns with its broader legal and social reforms, aimed at reinforcing public order while addressing criminal networks operating within its borders.

Meanwhile, officials continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining strict regulatory oversight on businesses susceptible to such offenses, ensuring that establishments like massage parlors adhere to the country's legal framework.

As Saudi Arabia navigates its evolving socio-economic landscape, its firm stance on crimes related to prostitution, forced labor, and human exploitation remains a cornerstone of its governance strategy.

Saudi Arabia arrests 50 for prostitution, illegal activities

News Desk

RIYADH: Saudi authorities have arrested 50 individuals, including 11 women, in a sweeping crackdown on prostitution and illicit activities, underscoring the kingdom's intensified efforts to uphold its social and moral order.

According to the Financial Times, a significant number of foreign nationals were detained for operating or engaging in illegal practices within massage parlors.

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Sindh signs MoU to empower disabled community

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: The Regional Directorate of Special Education & Rehabilitation Centers, under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD), Government of Sindh, has taken a significant step toward improving the lives of persons with disabilities by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pakistan Baitul Mal Sindh.

The agreement, formalized on Tuesday at the DEPD Secretary's office in Karachi, is aimed at expanding support services for differently-abled individuals across the province. Farman Ali Tanwi, representing DEPD Sindh, emphasized that this collaboration will particularly benefit individuals in Karachi, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Mirpurkhas, Larkana, and Sukkur by ensuring greater accessibility to essential resources.

News Desk

GAZA: Islamic Jihad spokesperson Abu Hamza has been killed in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, according to reports, in a development that marks yet another escalation in the ongoing conflict. Israeli media has claimed that the attack not only killed Abu Hamza but also took the lives of several members of his family, underscoring the heavy toll on civilians as the war continues unabated.

The strike comes in the wake of Israel's unilateral decision to end the ceasefire, a move that has been met with silence from Western powers despite the rapidly rising death toll in Gaza. The latest round of airstrikes has already claimed the lives of more than 400 Palestinians, with

casualties mounting as Israel intensifies its offensive. Among those killed are Gaza's Prime Minister Issam al-Da'alais, three government ministers, and a senior Hamas official, marking one of the deadliest phases of the conflict in recent months.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has remained resolute in his government's military campaign, reiterating that negotiations were the only viable path to their safe release.



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