

S. Arabia likely to release Pakistanis jailed for petty offences

Kalbe Ali | September 26, 2018

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Interior Shehryar Afridi on Tuesday said that an accord is expected with Saudi Arabia for the release of Pakistani prisoners incarcerated there for petty offences.

Speaking at the ‘Unity of Ummah Conference’, held here under the aegis of Pakistan Ulema Council, the minister reiterated that Pakistan would not allow any country to use its soil for war against other country.

“We will continue to play the role as a mediator to reduce tension among Muslim states including Saudi Arabia and Iran,” he said.

He said providing security to all citizens and clerics irrespective of their sect was the responsibility of the state.

“Unfortunately, in Pakistan processions and prayers are held under the guns, but in western countries everybody is free to go to the mosques,” he said.

The minister said that a settlement had almost reached with Saudi Arabia for the release of petty Pakistani offenders.

He informed the conference that the Saudi government had announced that all the Pakistanis imprisoned there with fines up to 10,000 riyals would be freed without any penalty.

The conference was attended by clerics belonging to Shia, Barelvi, Deobandi and Ahle Hadith schools of thought.

Deputy ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Habibullah Bukhari stressed the need for unity of Ummah saying that it was the only way to resolve challenges confronted by Islamic world.

He termed relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia exemplary.

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noorul Haq Qadri, lauded the Haj and Umrah arrangements by the Saudi government and called upon the religious elements in Pakistan to promote harmony within their ranks.

He said people belonging to different schools of thought prayed together in Makkah and Madina but they did not offer Namaz along with each other in Pakistan.

Pir Noorul Haq said support of Ulemas and Mashaikh was essential to eliminate the menace of sectarianism.

He said the ministry of religious affairs would establish its ulema and mashaiakh council at provincial and district level to promote dialogue among various groups.

Other speakers included chairman Council of Islamic Ideology Qibla Ayaz, chairman Pakistan Ulema Council Allama Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi, Director General Islamic World League Dr Abda Ateen and President Islamic University, Islamabad Dr Ahmed Yousif Al-Draiweesh.

Published in Dawn, September 26th, 2018