

Indian military admits losing fighter jets to Pakistan

General Chauhan revealed that after resolving key technical faults, the Indian military's jets effectively executed precise strikes on long-range targets

News Desk

SINGAPORE: In a rare admission, India's Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, has acknowledged for the first time that Indian fighter jets were indeed shot down by the Pakistan Air Force during recent military clashes. Speaking to an American magazine, General Chauhan stopped short of confirming the exact number of jets lost, but underlined that the focus should be less on the quantity and more on the reasons behind the losses.

General Chauhan explained that once the Indian military identified and addressed certain technical faults, its jets successfully carried out strikes against long-range targets. He sought to reassure that despite heightened tensions, the conflict never came close to escalating into a nuclear confrontation, noting that communication chan-



nels between India and Pakistan remained open throughout to manage the situation and avoid further escalation.

Responding cautiously to former US President Donald Trump's claim that he had helped avert nuclear war, Chauhan described the threat of nuclear weapons use as "remote." He stressed the clear distinction between conventional military operations and crossing the nuclear threshold, and highlighted that both India and Pakistan had engaged

global powers to shape international opinion during the conflict.

The Indian general reiterated that the ceasefire remains in place, and future developments will depend on Pakistan's actions. He also made it clear that India has established firm red lines that must not be crossed. This candid acknowledgement follows earlier comments from senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Subramanian Swamy, who had publicly stated on a podcast that

Pakistan had shot down Indian aircraft.

The claim traces back to 7 May, when Pakistan announced it had downed six Indian jets, including three Rafale fighters, in response to Indian airstrikes on Pakistani soil. Prior to General Chauhan's statement, Indian Air Marshal A.K. Bhardwaj had acknowledged aircraft losses as an inevitable part of combat but refused to disclose details citing operational security concerns.

This moment of transparency is notable amid an otherwise fraught and often contradictory narrative between two nuclear-armed neighbors whose relationship has been marked by suspicion, hostility, and recurring conflict. General Chauhan's remarks offer a rare glimpse into the realities behind the rhetoric and underscore the delicate balance both sides are trying to maintain to avoid further escalation.

Iran's FM says nuclear weapons not desired

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has reaffirmed Tehran's stance on nuclear weapons, stating clearly that Iran shares the United States' rejection of such arms. In remarks to international media amid ongoing nuclear negotiations, Araghchi underscored that if the core issue is the possession of nuclear weapons, Iran does not desire them and agrees with their unacceptability on the global stage.

However, Araghchi pointed to the fundamental divide between Iran and the US, which stems from Washington's insistence that Iran halt its entire nuclear



program. Iran, by contrast, asserts its right to continue peaceful nuclear activities as permitted under the global non-proliferation treaty (NPT). This distinction remains the crux of the talks, reflecting Tehran's commitment to maintaining its sovereign rights while seeking to ease international concerns.

The diplomatic backdrop remains fraught with tension, particularly as Israel continues to threaten military strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities. Meanwhile, the US administration has not ruled out the possibility of military action but appears to prioritize a negotiated resolution through renewed diplomatic efforts to revive the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Araghchi's statements highlight Iran's willingness to engage in dialogue and reach an agreement while steadfastly defending its nuclear program's peaceful aspects. As the world watches closely, the revival of the landmark nuclear deal could shape regional stability and global non-proliferation efforts in the coming months.

POL price hiked by Rs1 per liter

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: In its latest fortnightly review, the federal government has announced a modest increase of Rs1 per liter in the price of petrol, pushing the new rate to Rs253.63. The price of high-speed diesel, however, remains unchanged at Rs254.64 per liter.

A formal notification issued by the Ministry of Finance confirmed the revised prices, which will come into effect from midnight tonight. The adjustment, though minor, comes at a time when households and businesses alike continue to feel the strain of persistent inflation and volatile energy costs.

PM vows Pakistan won't allow India to weaponize water

Shehbaz Sharif accused India of exploiting the Pahalgam incident to justify aggression, praising Pakistan's armed forces under their army chief as worthy of field marshal rank

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has firmly stated that Pakistan will not allow India to use water as a weapon or suspend the Indus Waters Treaty. Addressing military officers at the Command and Staff College in Quetta, the prime minister said Pakistan not only responded to recent Indian aggression but also turned the tide, defeating India both on the battlefield and diplomatic fronts.

Shehbaz Sharif accused India of using the Pahalgam incident as a pretext for aggression but said Pakistan's armed forces, under the leadership of the army chief, proved their mettle, deserving the rank of field marshal. He praised the Command and Staff College for its outstanding services and for hosting guests from friendly countries, highlighting the strong ties Pakistan enjoys with its allies.

Shehbaz Sharif described the armed forces as the protectors of Pakistan's sovereignty and integrity,



noting that India suffered setbacks in both military and diplomatic arenas. He lauded Air Chief Marshal Zaher Baber for demonstrating professional skill by downing Indian aircraft. He said Pakistan's armed forces had performed exceptionally in all trials, including the air force's historic strikes targeting seven high-value sites.

The prime minister credited Field Marshal Asim Munir's professional capabilities for these victories and affirmed that both the government and the people stand firmly behind their armed forces. "God has blessed us with a remarkable victory," he added. He

condemned India's targeting of innocent civilians during its aggression and warned that any future provocations would be met with a strong response.

PM Sharif emphasized that Pakistan's challenges go beyond conventional warfare, requiring capabilities across multiple dimensions. On the economic front, the prime minister highlighted a successful agreement with the IMF, which has stabilized the economy. He stressed the need for grassroots reforms to sustain this progress, noting that inflation has dropped from 38 percent to single digits, improving the lives of ordinary citizens.

Interior ministry brands Balochistan militants 'Fitna-e-Hindustan'

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The federal interior ministry has officially designated all militant groups operating in Balochistan under the label "Fitna-e-Hindustan," a term that translates roughly to "foreign-backed chaos," in a move that marks a significant shift in the government's narrative on the security situation in the troubled province.

The notification, issued from Islamabad, declares that every organization engaged in terrorist activities in Balochistan will henceforth be referred to by this term, which authorities say better captures the "true ideology, intentions, and objectives" of these groups. The government argues that this rebranding aims to highlight the role of foreign powers, particularly India, in fueling unrest and separatism within the region.

By framing the militants as agents of a broader external conspiracy, the state appears to be escalating its rhetoric, seeking to consolidate public un-



derstanding of the conflict as one driven not just by local grievances but by geopolitical interference. Officials say this is intended to expose the "real face" of terrorism in Balochistan, positioning it as part of a wider campaign of destabilization.

The announcement is likely to stir debate across political and security circles. Critics warn that while such labels may serve symbolic and propaganda purposes, they risk oversimplifying a complex and deeply rooted conflict.

Questions remain whether rebranding militant outfits will translate

into tangible improvements in security or address the underlying issues that have fueled decades of unrest in the province.

As Balochistan continues to grapple with violence and instability, the government's decision to publicly define the narrative reflects ongoing efforts to shape both domestic and international perceptions. How this shift will affect future policy and on-the-ground realities remains to be seen, but the new terminology underscores the high stakes involved in the region's fragile security landscape.

Islamabad, Kabul raise envoy status to ambassador level

News Desk

KABUL: Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to elevate their diplomatic missions to ambassadorial status, marking a significant step in their often fraught relationship. The decision comes in the wake of high-level diplomatic talks held recently in Beijing, reflecting a shared desire to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed Pakistan's intention to upgrade its mission in Kabul, confirming that the Pakistani envoy would be promoted to ambassador.

In a reciprocal gesture, Afghanistan announced it would raise the status of its chargé d'affaires in Islamabad to ambassador rank, signaling mutual recognition of the importance of enhancing diplomatic channels.

The Afghan foreign ministry highlighted on so-



cial media platform X that this upgrade is expected to pave the way for deeper collaboration across a broad spectrum of areas, including trade, security, and regional stability.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar had earlier conveyed optimism about the improving relationship, following his constructive visit to Kabul in April, during which these agreements were discussed.

This development follows a trilateral meeting in Beijing involving Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, Pakistan's Ishaq Dar, and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Wang Yi expressed China's readiness to support efforts aimed at fostering stronger ties between the two neighbors, underscoring Beijing's strategic interest in regional stability.

Since the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in 2021, diplomatic relations with the new regime have remained limited and cautious, with only a handful of countries accepting Taliban-appointed envoys, and none officially recognizing the government.

This recent agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan suggests a careful but meaningful move towards more open diplomatic engagement.

Pakistani trade delegates to visit US next week, says Trump

Without going into specifics, President Trump said tensions between the two countries had reached a dangerous peak, and that US diplomacy helped pull both sides back from the brink

By Amjad Qaimkhani

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has confirmed that a delegation from Pakistan will visit Washington next week to initiate discussions on a potential trade agreement, in what appears to be a calculated move to balance Washington's engagement with both India and Pakistan amid persistent regional tensions.

Speaking to reporters at Joint Base Andrews, Trump highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen trade ties with South Asia, revealing that while a trade deal with India is close to completion, Pakistan's representatives are preparing to enter formal negotiations. The announcement marks a rare diplomatic opening for Islamabad, which currently faces steep US tariffs.

According to Trump, Pakistan is subject to a 29 percent tariff on its exports to the United States, largely due to a \$3 billion trade surplus. In comparison, India faces a 26 percent tariff rate on its own exports. These figures underscore the pressure both nations are under to renegotiate terms in a



trade landscape increasingly shaped by strategic alliances and economic realignments.

Trump's remarks took on a more serious tone when he addressed broader geopolitical concerns. In an earlier media briefing at the Oval Office, flanked by tech magnate Elon Musk, the President claimed credit for averting what he called a potential nuclear catastrophe between India and Pakistan. Without going into specifics, he said tensions between the two countries had reached a dangerous peak, and that US diplomacy helped pull both sides back from the brink.

"I want to thank the leaders of both countries," Trump said, praising their efforts in upholding a fragile

ceasefire. "But let me be clear — the United States cannot and will not trade with nations that are at war." He cautioned that any future military flare-up between India and Pakistan could derail ongoing trade discussions, reiterating that peace is a prerequisite for sustained economic cooperation.

His comments serve as both an invitation and a warning, effectively tying economic incentives to geopolitical stability in the subcontinent. Trump's overt linking of trade negotiations to regional peace efforts signals a more transactional yet high-stakes US foreign policy approach in South Asia, where diplomacy, commerce, and nuclear risk continue to intersect.

Pakistan says India's agencies targeting Muslims

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has voiced serious concern over what it describes as a coordinated campaign of discrimination against Muslims in India, warning that the escalating tide of Islamophobia threatens not only the fabric of Indian society but also the peace of the wider region.

Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan, addressing questions from the press, condemned what he termed as "collusion" among Indian state institutions in targeting Muslims. His remarks reflect Pakistan's deepening unease over the spate of hate speeches, discriminatory policies, and rising hostility faced by India's largest minority community.

"We are witnessing an alarming rise in Islamophobic incidents across India," Khan said, calling the trend unacceptable in



any democratic society. He criticized the hostile rhetoric being allowed in public discourse and the absence of effective institutional checks on those promoting religious hatred. Such actions, he warned, undermine social cohesion and send a dangerous message of exclusion and intolerance.

Khan's comments come at a time when concerns over minority rights in India have gained traction internationally, with human rights groups, journalists, and civil society

voices raising alarm over communal violence and discriminatory laws. Pakistan's Foreign Office urged the international community to break its silence and take note of the growing disenfranchisement of Indian Muslims, calling it a moral and political responsibility. "Turning a blind eye to such violations encourages impunity," Khan added. "Religious hatred has no borders, and its consequences can spill over, threatening peace in the region."

Indian Congress demands answers over fighter jet losses

News Desk

SINGAPORE: India's main opposition party, the Congress, has launched a fierce critique of the Narendra Modi government following recent acknowledgments by the Indian military that fighter jets were lost during a period of heightened tensions with Pakistan.

The admission has intensified political debate, with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge accusing the ruling party of misleading the public and demanding a full parliamentary session to address the issue.

Kharge's remarks came in the wake of the military's confirmation that aircraft were indeed downed in a skirmish involving Indian and Pak-



istani air forces—a fact previously withheld from the public.

He argued that the government's handling of the information raises serious questions about transparency and accountability.

In addition to calling for an open discussion on the military incident, Kharge pressed the Modi administration to disclose details

of the ceasefire agreement between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. His demand drew upon repeated claims by former US President Donald Trump, who asserted that he played a role in facilitating the truce.

The opposition leader did not hold back in his criticism of Prime Minister Modi, accusing him of prioritizing election cam-

paigning over providing clarity to the nation. "Rather than offering the nation transparency, Modi is busy seeking votes," Kharge said, alleging that the government was deliberately avoiding public scrutiny over such a critical matter of national security.

This revelation and the ensuing political backlash are expected to deepen the spotlight on India's management of its military engagements with Pakistan.

Calls for greater accountability and openness are mounting, as the opposition seeks to hold the government responsible for what it portrays as a lack of candor on issues that affect the country's safety and diplomatic standing.

Zardari pushes for realistic focus on public issues in PPP gathering

Zardari urged party representatives to stay closely connected with citizens, emphasizing that attentive listening is crucial for crafting policies that truly respond to their needs

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari recently held an important meeting with members of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) from the Punjab Assembly in Lahore, where he emphasized the need for a pragmatic approach in tackling the challenges confronting ordinary people.

At a time when local government elections loom, Zardari's focus was firmly on strengthening the party's grassroots presence across Punjab, underlining that success would come through sincere and consistent engagement with the public rather than empty political slogans. Throughout the discussion, he was clear that the party must reconnect with the people it serves by



understanding their everyday realities.

Zardari urged party representatives to maintain close and ongoing communication with citizens, stressing that listening attentively to their needs is vital for shaping effective policies. The president reaffirmed the leader-

ship's commitment to public service, insisting that all plans and initiatives should be rooted in a careful and honest assessment of the ground situation.

For Zardari, political work is not just about rhetoric but about delivering real and measurable improvements

in people's lives. He also called for greater cooperation from administrative bodies, highlighting that such collaboration is essential for turning political promises into concrete outcomes. The president made it clear that without the support of the bureaucracy and local officials, the implementation of policies aimed at public welfare would falter.

The call for unity and coordination points to a recognition that governance is a collective effort, requiring both political will and administrative efficiency. During the meeting, assembly members took the opportunity to raise pressing public concerns, drawing attention to persistent gaps in health services, education, infrastructure, and employment opportunities.

Zardari listened carefully to these accounts, demonstrating a willingness to address these issues through targeted, practical measures rather than broad statements. His approach suggested a deep awareness that restoring public confidence depends on addressing the everyday struggles faced by citizens across Punjab.

The gathering reflects a broader strategic shift within the PPP as it seeks to rebuild its political base in Punjab, focusing on grassroots realities and responsive governance. President Zardari's message was both straightforward and urgent: political success and the restoration of public trust hinge on honest engagement with the people and delivering tangible benefits

Israel blocks Saudi foreign minister's visit to Ramallah

News Desk

RIYADH: Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan has postponed his planned visit to Ramallah after Israel refused to grant entry to the delegation, sources close to the matter have confirmed. The visit, scheduled for Sunday, was intended to be part of a broader trip involving foreign ministers from several Arab countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

They were invited by the Palestinian Authority to hold discussions with Palestinian leadership, including a planned meeting with the Palestinian president. Saudi officials expressed their disappointment following Israel's unexpected decision to deny access to the group, which effectively blocked the foreign ministers from entering Ramallah. In a statement to a British news agency, Saudi sources confirmed



that the visit would be postponed until further notice, underscoring the impact of Israel's refusal on diplomatic efforts.

The move drew swift condemnation from Arab governments and regional actors. Arab foreign ministers jointly criticized Israel's decision, describing it as an unjustifiable obstacle to diplomatic dialogue. Jordan's Foreign Ministry also voiced strong denunciation, highlighting that the visit was intended to foster regional engagement and support for

the Palestinian cause.

The incident has added fresh tensions to an already fraught political landscape, with the blockade on the delegation symbolizing deeper disagreements over access and authority in the Palestinian territories. The postponement of this high-profile visit signals ongoing challenges for Arab states seeking to engage with Palestinian leadership amidst complex Israeli restrictions, raising questions about the future of diplomatic efforts in the region.

PTI founder signals major political upheaval with protest call

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Barrister Ali Zafar has disclosed that the party's founder has declared the launch of a nationwide protest movement against the government, signaling a new phase of political unrest across Pakistan.

Speaking to the media after meeting the PTI founder in Adiala jail, Ali Zafar emphasized that the protests will not be confined to the capital, Islamabad, but will spread throughout the country. He quoted the

instructions and directions regarding the upcoming protests will come directly from the founder, who has entrusted him with drafting a detailed plan for the nationwide agitation.

The senator revealed that consultations are underway with lawyers and party leadership to finalize the protest strategy, which is expected to be presented in the next meeting with the founder. Ali Zafar stressed that the founder is serious about the movement, describing the forthcoming protests as unprecedented and with clear objectives,



party's founder as saying that they have been pushed into a corner, leaving no choice but to take to the streets in defiance.

Despite being behind bars, the founder is reportedly committed to leading the protests personally from jail, underscoring his determination to remain at the forefront of the movement. Ali Zafar added that all in-

aimed at achieving concrete results.

While acknowledging the likelihood of obstacles and challenges, Ali Zafar expressed confidence that the party is prepared to overcome them. He anticipates that the protest blueprint will be ready within days, with responsibilities allocated by the founder during their next gathering.

Turkiye's CG praises enduring partnership with Pakistan

By Zahid Karani

KARACHI: Pakistan and Türkiye, often described as "two countries but one nation," continue to strengthen their historic and strategic relationship, a bond underscored during recent regional conflicts when Türkiye stood firmly with Pakistan. The spirit of brotherhood was reaffirmed by Cemal Sangu, Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye, during a meeting with a high-level delegation from the Pakistan Tanners Association (PTA) at the Turkish Consulate in

brotherly ties that bind the two nations.

The discussion focused heavily on the established trade relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye, especially within the leather industry. Turkish manufacturers supply Pakistan with chemicals, tanning machinery, and raw materials like double face and shearing leathers, while Pakistan exports finished and semi-finished leather products—including garments, gloves, and footwear—to Türkiye.

Both sides recognized the potential to expand bilateral



Karachi.

The delegation was led by Dr. Danish Aman, Chairman Southern Zone, and included key figures such as Central Chairman Hamid Arshad Zahur, Vice Chairmen Danish Aman and Yousuf Shafiq, alongside Murat Ozmen, Commercial Attaché of Türkiye. Dr. Aman expressed profound gratitude for Türkiye's unwavering support during the recent standoff with India and the successful Operation Bunyan Maros, highlighting the depth of the

trade through new market exploration and regular trade delegations, which could open doors to joint ventures and deeper industrial collaboration. Consul General Cemal Sangu revealed that a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between the two countries is nearing finalization. He encouraged the Pakistan Tanners Association to actively coordinate with Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce to fully utilize preferential tariffs and boost trade volumes between the nations.

METRO MATTERS

JI-led doctors march in Karachi to condemn Israeli atrocities in Gaza

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Sixteen major medical bodies, including the Pakistan Medical Association, came together on Saturday in a powerful Gaza Solidarity March organized by the Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) at Karachi's Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre. The march served as a somber protest against Israeli atrocities in Gaza and a call to action for urgent international humanitarian and political intervention.

Healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, and paramedics, participated in the demonstration, carrying 16 symbolic coffins to represent the Palestinian medics killed in Israeli strikes.

The march, deeply emotional in tone, was marked by chants, prayers, and the display of banners demanding justice for Palestinians and the protection of medical staff in conflict zones.

Addressing the rally, Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi Chief Monem Zafar condemned what he called the global community's indifference to the "genocide unfolding in Gaza." Zafar pointed to the staggering toll on healthcare professionals, noting that more than 1,400 medical workers are among the 57,000 Palestinians killed in Israeli bombardments since the escalation began. "The silence of world powers and the United Nations exposes the hypocrisy of their so-called humanitarian values," he said.

Zafar further urged Muslim nations to form a united diplomatic and military front against Israeli aggression, calling on governments to break their silence and act decisively. He also demanded the immediate resumption of humanitarian aid to Gaza, stressing that its hospitals have been "systematically obliterated" in repeated attacks.

The protest not only underscored the Pakistani medical community's solidarity with their Palestinian counterparts but also reflected a broader public frustration with the inaction of global institutions. It was both a cry for justice and a declaration of continued resistance to occupation and brutality in Gaza.

KE CEO offers conditional plan to make Karachi loadshedding free

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: K-Electric's CEO, Monees Alvi, has offered a conditional proposal to end load-shedding in Karachi, saying the utility can provide uninterrupted power if the government transfers control of 300 feeders to them.

In a video statement, Alvi explained that out of 2,129 feeders in the city, 300 suffer from an 87 percent loss, which is a major cause of load-shedding. He said K-Electric is ready to supply electricity on these feeders if the government hands them over and clears outstanding dues. He added that 70 percent of Karachi's areas are already exempt from load-shedding, and the recently introduced multi-year tariff plan will not affect ordinary consumers.

Under this plan, the city is expected to be 90 percent load-shedding free by 2030.

Alvi projected that by 2030, Karachi's electricity demand will rise to 5,000 megawatts, serving 5 million consumers. He also highlighted ongoing work on new technology to curb power theft from feeders.

Furthermore, he mentioned plans to connect captive power plants of industries to the grid to boost supply. With economic activity increasing, Karachi's electricity demand has surged, but K-Electric claims it has the capacity to provide up to 4,500 megawatts of power.

"Tea is fantastic," says Mayor Wahab in Orangi Town

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: In a brief but unexpectedly charming moment during his recent visit to Orangi Town, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab caught the public's attention with a simple yet culturally resonant comment: "The tea is fantastic."

The phrase, innocuous at first glance, instantly evoked a wave of recognition and humour across Pakistan and India, drawing on a shared pop culture moment that has become a beloved regional meme. Mayor Wahab was in Orangi Town to inaugurate a new public park when residents directed him to a local tea stall famed for its strong brew.

Taking up the recommendation, he sampled the tea, and his genuine reaction — a warm smile paired with the now-iconic phrase — quickly became the highlight of the visit.

The line originally gained prominence in 2019 when an Indian Air Force pilot, held in Pakistani custody, calmly sipped tea and remarked "the tea is fantastic," an unscripted moment that went viral across South Asia.

Since then, the phrase has taken on a lighthearted symbolic meaning, often used to underscore moments of unexpected calm or simple pleasure amid tension. Social media users quickly picked up on Mayor Wahab's comment, with many praising his approachable demeanour and ability to connect with ordinary citizens on a relatable level.

The mayor's spontaneous remark was seen as a refreshing break from typical political rhetoric, highlighting a softer, more human side to public leadership. Beyond the humour, the moment also reflected a subtle but growing trend among local politicians to engage more directly and informally with communities, using everyday experiences — like sharing a cup of tea — to bridge gaps and foster goodwill.

In a city often marked by complex challenges, such small gestures carry an outsized significance. As Karachi continues to grapple with urban pressures, Mayor Wahab's tea appreciation may serve as a reminder that sometimes, the simplest acts resonate the most deeply with the public.

SHC praises police officer during bail hearing of murder suspect

News Desk

KARACHI: During a bail hearing for a murder case in the Sindh High Court, a police officer received notable praise from the bench. The accused, Aftab, and his lawyer were absent from the hearing.

Justice Umar Siyal took a moment to acknowledge a police officer who appeared in full uniform. He asked the officer about his role and the unit he belonged to. The officer replied that he was part of the Special Security Unit (SSU), responsible for protecting key individuals and sensitive locations.

The judge showed interest in the unit's operations, particularly the use of sniffer dogs.

The officer explained that the SSU has a dedicated sniffer dog unit, with specially trained dogs brought from abroad. He clarified that these dogs are given rest periods as their ability to detect drugs diminishes after use. The officer also highlighted the care provided to the dogs, including air-conditioned kennels.

The court was further informed by the public prosecutor that the SSU has a skating unit where personnel practice using firearms while skating, demonstrating their specialized training. Justice Siyal commended the police officer for his professionalism and postponed the bail hearing indefinitely.

Revival of literary forum Bazm-e-Shamim-e-Adab

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The renowned literary forum Bazm-e-Shamim-e-Adab, originally founded in 1998 at Madinat-ul-Uloom School in North Karachi by the late Shamimur Rehman Qidwai under the patronship of Aijaz Rehmani, has been formally revived after a long hiatus. The platform, known for its regular monthly Mushairahs and deep commitment to literary culture, had held over 170 poetry sessions before coming to a halt following the demise of its founders.

In a heartfelt effort to restore its legacy, devoted disciples and admirers of the late founders organized a revival event on the night of 30th May 2025. The Mushairah was held at the Sir Syed Town Council Office in Sector 11C, North Karachi.

The session was presided over by poet and literary figure Sajid Rizvi. Homeopath and social personality Anisul Haq served as chief guest, while poet Akhter Saeedi was honored as the guest of honor.

The event drew participation from a range of established and emerging voices, including Shamsul Ghani, Syed Anwer Jawaid Hashmi, Dr Noor Saharanpoori, Aasi Sultani, Mst Fehmida Maqbool, Mehtab Alam, Zulfiqar Pereaz, Adnan Zahir, Khalilullah, and Mehmood Taban among others. Their presence and poetic contributions breathed life back into a platform that once stood as a vibrant space for literary expression in Karachi.

Attendees remembered the founders with reverence and appreciated the new generation's commitment to reviving the forum's spirit. The successful gathering marked a promising new chapter for Bazm-e-Shamim-e-Adab, reaffirming poetry's enduring place in the cultural fabric of the city.

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Trust is earned, not granted

At a recent press interaction in Bedminster, US President Donald Trump revealed that a Pakistani trade delegation is set to visit the United States next week to negotiate a new trade agreement. The talks will also cover the broader regional security situation, reflecting Washington's continued interest in stabilizing South Asia through economic engagement. Notably, Trump reiterated for the ninth time that the proposed trade deal aims to prevent any outbreak of war between Pakistan and India. At face value, such diplomatic overtures should be welcomed. After all, dialogue is always better than silence, and cooperation better than confrontation. For a region haunted by historical animosity and nuclear brinkmanship, any step away from tension deserves acknowledgement.

But beneath the surface of this high-level diplomacy lies a far more intricate web of strategic calculations, shifting allegiances, and geopolitical theatre. Pakistan, for its part, stands at a defining crossroads. With China and Russia now engaging with greater vigor than at any point in recent memory, the nation is no longer the Cold War participant it once was. Moscow's renewed interest in Pakistan Steel Mills, an industrial giant long dormant, is more than an economic gesture. It is a symbolic move, signaling that Russia, nudged by Chinese encouragement, sees Pakistan as a partner worth courting once more. For Pakistan, this demands a degree of caution. Accepting a trade deal from the US, however well-intentioned, should not come at the cost of sacrificing long-term strategic partnerships that are beginning to bear fruit.

The global chessboard has shifted. In this new game, India—once seen as Washington's rising regional favorite—finds itself increasingly isolated. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, once a darling of Western capitals, now rarely steps beyond India's borders. The reason, according to murmurs both within and beyond Delhi, is a fear of diplomatic cold shoulders. Even the once-cordial smiles in Brussels or the expected embraces in Washington are replaced by wary glances and stiff handshakes. There is a growing recognition that India's diplomatic posture—particularly its efforts to sideline and contain Pakistan—has backfired. Under Trump's watchful gaze, the United States appears to be gently nudging Modi toward acknowledgment, if not humility.

There's an unmistakable suggestion that the White House wants India to admit what many have long suspected—that the push to isolate Pakistan was ill-conceived and counterproductive. The irony is thick. The very strategy designed to project India as South Asia's unquestioned leader has instead cast it adrift, as global power centers recalibrate their allegiances. China's embrace of Pakistan, meanwhile, is no longer just economic. It is strategic, vocal, and increasingly influential. Beijing has not only pumped billions into infrastructure and energy projects across Pakistan, but has also made it clear that Islamabad is a key ally in its broader vision of regional dominance. As Chinese investments stretch across Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, their grip on South Asian affairs grows firmer.

Indian politician, like the ever-astute Shashi Tharoor, who is part of diplomatic chorus after the false flag Pahalgam operation, undoubtedly carried out by India's political establishment to go before the Bihar elections, have begun admitting this uncomfortable truth that in Columbia, their diplomacy out rightly rejected by the host and rather offering condolences to false flag Pahalgam victims, the authorities in Columbia sympathized Pakistani victims who were unfortunately targeted by India's aggression. Others, such as parliamentarian Asaduddin Owaisi, have gone further, publicly expressing frustration over the humiliations faced by Indian diplomats abroad that responsible to convey the Indian government strategy regarding the false flag terror attack on Pahalgam. These are not outbursts in isolation. They reflect a deeper sense of unease within India's political establishment—one that Pakistan should observe carefully and respond to diplomatically.

Russia, too, has made its recalculations. Despite India's acquisition of the powerful Russian S-400 air defence system, Moscow remained conspicuously silent during recent regional skirmishes. It was a silence that spoke volumes.

Once the Soviet Union had stood staunchly with India during the 1971 war between Pakistan and India, but the global order has since evolved. India's series of military and intelligence-sharing agreements with the United States, especially in 2016, 2018, and 2020—aimed explicitly at countering China—have diluted New Delhi's non-aligned credentials. Russia and Iran, traditionally close to India, now look eastward toward Beijing, and by extension, toward Pakistan.

As if the situation were not complex enough, India's decision to allow US forces access to its airbases under NATO frameworks adds another layer of unease. It is a move that risks dragging South Asia deeper into the spiraling rivalries between the US, China, Russia, and Iran. It also places Pakistan at the center of a precarious and unpredictable geopolitical vortex. When Islamabad recently responded to Indian provocations—asserting its own sovereignty and refusing to be painted into a corner—the United States responded with diplomatic urgency. And yet, just a day before, US Vice President J.D. Vance told CNN that Washington did not consider itself involved in the matter. The mixed signals could not be clearer. In such a volatile environment, Pakistan must tread with utmost care. A trade deal with the US could offer much-needed economic reprieve. But it must be negotiated from a position of strength, not desperation.

Pakistan should not be seen as a nation chasing handouts or fleeting headlines. Rather, it must present itself as a confident regional player, fully aware of its growing importance to global power dynamics. This is a moment that calls for diplomacy of the highest order. Not the kind that merely seeks short-term economic gain, but the sort that builds alliances for a generation. In a world where friendships are often transactional and fleeting, Pakistan must nurture those relationships built on mutual respect and shared interests. Trust, once lost, is hard to regain. And in a region where the ground shifts with every tweet, press conference, and handshake, Pakistan must ensure that its next step is firm and farsighted. The stakes are high, but so is the potential. The future of South Asia's stability might just hinge on how Islamabad chooses to navigate this delicate moment.

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

World's first probiotic to prevent stomach cancer

By Uzma Ehtasham



The recent breakthrough at the University of Concepción in Chile marks a remarkable step forward in the global fight against stomach cancer, a disease that has long eluded early detection and effective prevention. Scientists there have developed the world's first patented probiotic specifically designed to prevent stomach cancer by targeting *Helicobacter pylori*, a bacterium that has been identified as one of the primary triggers of this devastating illness. This probiotic, boasting an impressive efficacy rate of 93.6 percent, offers a ray of hope in combating a cancer often described as a "silent killer" due to its subtle early symptoms and notoriously late diagnoses.

Stomach cancer continues to be a formidable challenge worldwide, both because of its lethality and the difficulty in diagnosing it at a stage when treatment can be most effective. For decades, the medical community has wrestled with the fact that symptoms such as indigestion, nausea, or mild abdominal discomfort—common in everyday life—can mask the onset of this serious disease. The result is that many patients receive their diagnosis only after the cancer has progressed significantly, reducing their chances of survival.

The culprit, *Helicobacter pylori*, infects around half of the world's population and is deeply linked not only to stomach cancer but also to gastric ulcers and a rare form of lymphatic cancer known as MALT lymphoma. What makes this bacterium particu-

larly insidious is its ability to colonize the stomach lining, causing chronic inflammation and damage that can eventually lead to malignancy. In regions like Latin America, where infection rates and stomach cancer incidence are particularly high, the toll is severe. Countries such as Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia report some of the highest numbers of cases and dishearteningly low survival rates, highlighting a critical need for more effective prevention strategies. At the heart of this new development is Dr Apolinaria García, a biochemist whose expertise in biological sciences has driven the creation of this innovative probiotic. By harnessing the bacterium *Lactobacillus fermentum*, her team has engineered a treatment that works by forming a protective barrier on the stomach lining. This layer acts like a shield, preventing *Helicobacter pylori* and other harmful bacteria commonly ingested through contaminated food or water from attaching themselves to the stomach walls and causing damage. Importantly, this probiotic also functions as an immunobiotic, meaning it helps to regulate and balance the body's immune system, further enhancing its protective effects. It has been approved for use in children from the age of eight upwards, signaling its potential as a preventive measure that can be introduced early in life.

This innovation arrives at a crucial moment. The American Cancer Society estimates that nearly 30,000 new cases of stomach cancer will be diagnosed in the United States alone in 2025, with over 10,000 deaths attributed to the disease. Globally, the figures are even more stark. In many parts of the world, including Latin America and Asia, stomach cancer remains one of the most common and deadly can-

cers. Countries such as Japan and South Korea have managed to reduce mortality rates significantly through comprehensive screening and early detection programmes. Chile's National Health Network president, Dr Patricio Mardones, has pointed to these successes as models to aspire to, but warns that the disease is now appearing more frequently in younger populations, with a worrying increase in cases among those under 50. The reasons behind this rise among younger people remain under investigation, but lifestyle changes are widely believed to play a significant role. Increased consumption of salty and processed foods, coupled with a decline in fresh fruit and vegetable intake, are suspected contributors. Sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and the widespread use of acid-suppressing medications may also exacerbate risks, creating a perfect storm that makes stomach cancer an increasingly urgent public health issue.

The Chilean probiotic is a breakthrough not only because of its high efficacy but also because it represents a shift in how stomach cancer prevention can be approached. Traditional strategies have focused heavily on diagnosis and treatment, often after the disease has progressed. This probiotic, however, offers the possibility of prevention at a much earlier stage—interrupting the disease process before it can take hold. In regions burdened with limited healthcare resources and high disease incidence, such innovations are vital.

Yet, the promise of this scientific advancement should not overshadow the broader challenge that stomach cancer poses. It is a disease deeply intertwined with social determinants of health—poverty, access to clean water, nutrition, and health-

care infrastructure all influence who is most vulnerable. While the probiotic may reduce infection and the risk of cancer development, tackling stomach cancer in the long term requires a multi-faceted approach. Governments and the global health community must invest in widespread screening programs, education campaigns to encourage healthier diets and lifestyles, and ensure equitable access to medical care.

Chile's success in developing this probiotic is a proud moment for scientific innovation and a beacon for countries grappling with high stomach cancer rates. However, it must be paired with policies that address the root causes of infection and cancer risk. The global health community has a responsibility to listen, learn, and act to ensure that such advances benefit all who need them, not just those with the means to access cutting-edge treatments.

In an era where cancer prevention remains one of the most formidable challenges in medicine, this probiotic offers a glimpse of what is possible when science, determination, and public health priorities align. It reminds us that prevention is often more powerful than cure and that sometimes, the answers to complex diseases lie not just in treatment, but in understanding and protecting the body's natural defences. The fight against stomach cancer is far from over, but this breakthrough is a vital step towards a future where fewer lives are cut short by this silent and deadly disease.

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

Bangladesh stands at the brink

By Professor Dr Sheikh Akram Ali



Political wisdom is not a luxury. It is not a poetic virtue reserved for textbooks and speeches. It is the very substance of national survival, and Bangladesh's history has repeatedly shown what happens when it is absent.

From the hopeful cries of liberation in 1971 to the somber shadows of today's unrest, the country has endured decades of missteps born not from ill will, but from a chronic failure of foresight. And the cost of this failure has always been borne by the people—those who have dared to believe in promises, voted in good faith, and fought, again and again, to be heard. What has passed for leadership in Bangladesh is too often a shallow performance of power. Real political wisdom—the kind built on patience, learning, and vision—has been treated as optional, even irrelevant.

And now, as the nation stares into the eyes of uncertainty, it is clearer than ever that this wisdom is no longer something we can wait for. It is something we must demand. In the decades since independence, successive governments have come and gone. The banners have changed color, the

slogans have evolved, but the pattern has stayed disturbingly the same. Political parties have failed to nurture statesmen. They have failed to train young leaders who think beyond election cycles. With the exception of marginal voices like Jamaat-e-Islami and the Communist Party—flawed as they may be—most political forces have offered little more than power brokerage and reactive politics. Meanwhile, the people of Bangladesh have been caught in a cycle of disillusionment, forced to choose between the lesser of evils, rather than being offered genuine vision or care.

Why is it, then, that every crisis—economic, social or diplomatic—seems to come as a surprise to our leaders? Why do we continue to govern in the short term, as if the future is someone else's problem? The truth is not comforting. The truth is that political leadership in Bangladesh has too often been divorced from reality. And the result is what we now see: an exhausted public, a disoriented state, and a swelling wave of unrest that feels dangerously familiar. Today, the stakes are higher than ever. The July 2024 uprising was not a blip. It was a warning. The people are watching. They have not forgotten. And they will not sit quietly while the same mistakes are made again. They are no longer fooled by loud voices with empty plans. They want leadership that listens.

Leadership that learns. Leadership that loves the country more than it loves itself.

Yet what we see instead is a crisis at the top—a vacuum where wisdom should be. Decisions are being made not out of malice, but out of disconnection. Those who hold the reins of power seem unable, or unwilling, to see the ground beneath their feet shifting. Trust in political parties is evaporating. The national mood is one of suspicion, not solidarity. The people's faith in institutions—parliament, police, even the courts—is eroding. In its place is a gnawing fear that the country is adrift, leaderless in a storm. And this is not just a domestic matter. The world is watching, and not with kindness. India's deployment of Rafale fighter jets and the S-400 missile defence system along the Lalmonirhat border is not just a display of military readiness. It is a message—a cold and calculated show of pressure, an assertion of regional dominance cloaked in defence policy.

It challenges Bangladesh's sovereignty, not through invasion, but through intimidation. And unless met with unity and resolve, it could further destabilize an already fragile political landscape. Are we prepared for this challenge? More urgently, are our leaders prepared? The answers are not obvious. Political maturity—measured not by age but by depth of understanding—is scarce. We hear

talk of patriotism, of protecting the nation, but in practice, what we see is posturing, blame, and paralysis. The time has come to rise above the usual noise. Bangladesh must forge a path rooted in national interest, not personal ambition. The country needs leaders who can look past party flags and electoral timelines and see the whole picture—a nation yearning for stability, dignity, and justice. This is not to say revolutionaries hold all the answers either.

About recognizing that no single party or movement owns the idea of Bangladesh. The nation belongs to its people—not to bureaucrats, not to generals, not to ideologues. And if we cannot come together now, when the stakes are so clear, we may not have another chance.

The geopolitical reality is also changing fast. The region is no longer dominated by a single narrative. The US-China rivalry, Russia's renewed regional interest, and India's assertive posturing all combine to form a volatile backdrop. Bangladesh, with its strategic location and growing population, is more important than it realizes. But importance does not guarantee security. That must be earned—and protected—by smart, inclusive, and courageous leadership.

The writer is an academic in Bangladesh and can be reached at news@metro-morning.com

Ziauddin Madani: A saint's virtues endure

By Dr. Asi Khurram Jahangiri



According to verse 46 of Surah Al-Kahf, goodness is that which endures. An Arabic proverb wisely states, "Everything returns to its origin." Truly, goodness springs from the hearts of the righteous, and the lasting memory of their lives — their virtues, teachings, services, and the awe inspired by their piety — remains a testament to their elevated rank. Hazrat Sayyiduna Qutb Madinah Ziauddin Madani (may Allah sanctify his secret) was born in the year 1294 AH (1877 CE) in Kalaswala, Sialkot, Pakistan. He was a noble descendant of Hazrat Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). Among his distinguished family ties, he was the grandfather-in-law of Qibla Shah Ahmad Noorani Siddiqui and the father of Maulana Fazlur Rehman Madani. His sons, Dr Khalil Madani and Dr Rizwan Madani, hold the legacy of their esteemed lineage.

In 2022, during the Umrah, I had the honor of meeting the respected scholar Anwar Iqbal, upon his kind invitation. Maulana Rumi beautifully remarked that through divine grace, one attains noble character, and those devoid of politeness are deprived of the Lord's mercy. In my personal experience, I observed my esteemed

teacher and guide, Hazrat Syed Murtaza Hassan Ali Shah, never seated himself on anything except what was deemed respectful in religious gatherings. I later read that Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi (may Allah be pleased with him) also upheld this dignified practice. Dr Rizwan Fazlur Rehman Madani, too, preserves this tradition, and it is this reverence that inspired these reflections.

I recall an incident during an Umrah trip, perhaps in 2011, where I witnessed a Pakistani devotee searching for a spot in the Prophet's Mosque courtyard, careful not to turn his back towards the Holy Shrine. That man was Dr Hafiz Muhammad Sani, his heart overflowing with love and reverence for the Beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Deen is Adab (good manners)." Adab is the embodiment of love manifested in etiquette — in sitting, speaking, behaving, and conducting oneself with dignity. Hazrat Sheikh Saadi similarly advised, "The path is nothing but service to the people."

Hazrat Qutb Madinah Ziauddin Madani inherited the noble manners and spiritual discipline of the righteous from the great Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi and faithfully transmitted them to his descendants. It is imperative for us to preserve these golden legacies. In times when Saudi Arabia had yet to discover its vast reserves of oil and

wealth, pious souls like Haji Abdul Karim and Haji Abdul Ghani — the maternal grandfathers of Haji Hanif Tayyab — established orphanages in Madinah. These were inaugurated by luminaries like Allama Shah Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and Allama Ziauddin Madani, who left indelible marks on social welfare across the Arab world.

Our forefathers were vigilant and visionary, always mindful of the welfare of the Ummah. Those who truly love are known by their acts of service and reverence for the beloved. Today, as many Muslim countries, including Pakistan, endure severe economic hardship, it is crucial that the affluent and influential among us revive this tradition of benevolence.

An aspect of Hazrat Qutb Madinah's refined etiquette that deeply moved me was his consistent use of honorifics like "Badr Sharif", never omitting the sacred suffix, even after decades in the Arab lands. It pains the heart to hear some casually refer to "Makkah" as Mecca and "Madinah" as Medina, neglecting their honored titles. May Allah enable us to become protectors and caretakers of these beautiful traditions and of the legacies left by our righteous predecessors.

Professor Iqbal Azim poignantly expressed: "Someone with eyes will pass by from this side, I wait upon the path of Tayyaba." After the example of Imam Malik's profound

love for Madinah, Hazrat Qutb Madinah Ziauddin Madani's deep affection for the city of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) became legendary. Towards the end of his life, afflicted by an eye disease, he was advised to seek treatment in Jeddah. Yet he chose to stay, replying, "A poor man cannot leave Madinah for his eyes." The righteous have long known the spiritual healing found even in the dust of Madinah. A valuable manuscript of his, Tajal al-Yaqeen Ban Nabiyyabbana Daf al-Balaa fi al-lameen, is preserved in the libraries of Madinah, wherein he presented scholarly insights supported by ten authoritative verses and forty-one hadiths.

One of Hazrat Qutb Madinah's most lasting contributions to the world of Islam is his connection to Alami Dawat-e-Islami. Its founder, Allama Muhammad Ilyas Qadri (may Allah preserve him), is among his disciples, continuing his mission to this day. Hazrat Qutb Madinah resided in Baghdad from 1900 to 1909, and then in Madinah Munawwarah until his passing on 4 Dhu'l-Hijjah 1401 AH. He rests eternally in Jannat al-Baqi', in the blessed city of Madinah. May Allah Almighty honor us with the company of His beloved, and grant us steadfastness in preserving the radiant imprints of the Qur'an and the pious predecessors.

The writer is a religious scholar, poet and writer, has done PhD, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com

Let money be your servant, not your master

By Atiq Raja



In the relentless rush of today's world—where speed and consumption set the tempo—it often feels like money holds the reins. It shapes what we do, colors how we think, and too often becomes the measure by which we define success. Yet, if we pause and listen to the echoes of history, philosophy, and common sense, they all speak with one clear voice: money should serve you, not enslave you. At its simplest, money is just a tool. It is a means to exchange value, a way to facilitate transactions, to meet needs, and to pursue dreams. Think of it like electricity powering machines or fuel driving a car. Money's true purpose is to empower our journey through life, not to dictate the direction or speed of that journey.

But the trouble begins when money moves from being a servant to becoming an idol. When it takes center stage in our lives, it

stops serving us and instead owns us. That shift traps people in cycles of anxiety, greed, and dissatisfaction. Real happiness, deep relationships, and inner peace start to slip away, replaced by an endless chase for more—more money, more things, more validation. The culture we live in amplifies this distortion. Social media bombards us with images of luxury lifestyles, turning possessions into status symbols and equating worth with wealth. This pressure to earn more, spend more, and display more can overwhelm even the most grounded among us. People take jobs that drain their spirit, neglect their health and loved ones, or even cross ethical lines—all in pursuit of money's fleeting approval.

Yet, those who have accumulated great wealth often admit that after a certain point, more money doesn't equate to more happiness. Instead, it can deepen a feeling of emptiness. The more we let money control us, the more we become prisoners to desires that have no end. True financial mastery starts with a change in mindset—a shift from chasing money to managing money. This journey begins by earning with purpose:

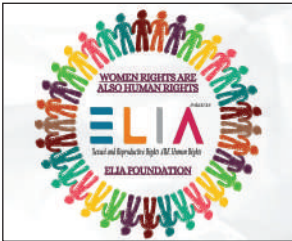
choosing work that aligns with your values, passion, and sense of meaning. When earning enriches your life, it fuels rather than depletes you. Spending, too, must be mindful. The money you part with should nurture what truly matters—your health, education, meaningful experiences, and generosity. Buying things to impress others or fill an emotional void rarely brings lasting satisfaction. Instead, it leads to a hollow cycle of consumption and regret.

Smart saving and investing are equally crucial. By planning wisely—setting aside emergency funds, building retirement savings, and making thoughtful investments—you ensure money stays a tool for your well-being in the long term, not a source of ongoing stress. Generosity is the final piece. Sharing your resources reminds you that money is a means to an end, not the end itself. Giving brings connection, purpose, and grounding. It breaks the spell of materialism and roots us in our shared humanity. Wealth, then, is not a number in a bank account. It is the freedom to live according to your values, the peace that comes from a clear con-

science, the joy that flows from relationships, and the resilience to face life's challenges. When money serves you, it enhances your life. When money masters you, it diminishes it.

Choosing to let money be your servant means saying no to overwork and yes to time with those you love. It means rejecting corrupt shortcuts and embracing honest growth. It means leading a life where money supports your dreams, not stifles them. Money, when properly managed, is a wonderful servant. It can buy comfort, security, and opportunities. But as a master, it is a cruel taskmaster—blinding, binding, and breaking those who worship it. The real art of living is learning to manage money without letting it manage you. So earn with integrity. Spend with wisdom. Save with foresight. Give with compassion. In doing this, you don't just become rich—you become free.

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



PM pledges Rs250bn for Balochistan development

The Prime Minister urged Balochistan's elders and community leaders to pinpoint urgent challenges, promising targeted funds to address the region's deepest needs

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has made a significant announcement aimed at accelerating development in Balochistan, pledging Rs250 billion for the province — a quarter of Pakistan's entire Rs1 trillion development budget. Speaking at a grand jirga in Quetta, the prime minister stressed that this substantial allocation must be handled with full transparency and accountability.

The Prime Minister appealed directly to Balochistan's elders and community leaders, urging them to identify the region's most pressing challenges so that the funds could be directed where they are needed most. In his address, he moved beyond numbers to underscore the broader social and security context in



which development must unfold. He called for efforts to bring back those who have lost their way, warning that terrorists remain a ruthless obstacle to Pakistan's progress and prosperity.

Shehbaz Sharif did not hesitate to name them as agents working against the country, representing hostile foreign interests intent on destabilizing the region. Reflecting on recent military confrontations with India, the prime minister sought to

rally national pride, declaring that Pakistan's response was decisive. He referenced the six blasts Pakistan launched in retaliation to India's five, framing the actions as retribution for the 1971 defeat.

In his words, the unity shown by the nation alongside the armed forces was unbreakable, and he vowed that India would carry the memory of this defeat "for life." At the same event, Balochistan Chief Minister

Sarfaraz Bugti joined the prime minister's call for vigilance, condemning a small but violent group of terrorists who he said are deliberately trying to derail the province's development through acts of violence.

Bugti accused these militants of acting under the influence of India, pointing to a foreign hand behind the unrest that continues to cause suffering among innocent civilians and hinder progress. Amid these stark warnings, Bugti also shared a glimpse of hope by highlighting the "Green Balochistan" initiative. The program is designed to create jobs and improve living standards across the province, signaling a commitment to sustainable development and economic upliftment for one of Pakistan's most resource-rich but historically neglected regions.

MQM-P blames KE for deepening heatwave crisis

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has launched a scathing criticism of K-Electric over extended power outages that have plunged Karachi into turmoil during a dangerous heatwave.

In a strongly worded statement from its Bahadurabad headquarters, MQM-P's provincial lawmakers expressed fury at what they termed K-Electric's persistent inefficiency and disregard for public wellbeing, accusing the company of turning an already unbearable situation into a public health emergency. The party said that while temperatures continue to soar, K-Electric has, in its routine fashion, lengthened load-shedding hours rather than easing them, intensifying the suffering of Karachi's 20-million-strong population.

Lawmakers stressed that the worst-affected were the elderly, children, and hospitalised patients who are particularly vulnerable during high temperatures. They condemned the outages as inhumane and pointed to a growing sense of desperation and frustration across the city. Areas cited in the statement include Korangi, Landhi, Malir, Shah Faisal Colony, Mehmoodabad, Burns Road, Garden, Nazimabad, Orangi Town, Baldia Town, North Karachi, New Karachi, Surjani, and the Old City.

In many of these localities, residents are enduring prolonged hours without electricity, often multiple times a day, with little to no prior notice or explanation. The lawmakers said the resulting heat exposure is not only inconvenient but dangerous, warning that Karachi is "on the verge of protest" amid mass suffering. "The performance of K-Electric is incompatible with the needs of any civilized or leading urban center," the statement read.

The MQM-P slammed the company's "hollow promises and repeated assurances," claiming they have amounted to nothing while basic electricity supply—arguably the most fundamental of urban services—remains elusive. The lawmakers reminded authorities that Karachi, which contributes the lion's share to the national economy, is now "pleading for its basic rights."

South Asia faces risks of uncontrollable conflicts, warns Gen Shamshad

General Sahir Shamshad warned that the very nations once hailed as champions of justice and democracy now betray those ideals in pursuit of power

By ISPR/
Asghar Ali Mubarak

RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman of Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, issued a sobering warning at the Shangri-La Dialogue, cautioning that unresolved conflicts in South Asia, if left unchecked, risk spiraling into a larger regional crisis. Speaking with clarity and purpose, the senior military leader drew international attention to the Kashmir dispute, identifying it as a persistent flashpoint and a symbol of deeper geopolitical instability in the region.

His remarks, delivered at one of Asia's most influential defence forums, challenged the current global order. In a pointed critique, General Shamshad said that the very powers once celebrated as custodians of global justice and democracy have drifted from their founding ideals. "Power and interests have eclipsed ethics and principles," he said, arguing that the erosion of respect for state sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights, and international law has emboldened instability rather than preventing it.

Against this backdrop, the general called for a funda-



mental shift in how international and regional actors approach conflict resolution. He rejected the notion that ideological or regional grievances can be silenced or ignored in pursuit of peace. "You cannot suppress differences to create stability," he said. "In an environment of mistrust, even the best-designed mechanisms will fail."

His emphasis was on creating sustainable frameworks for crisis management rooted in mutual tolerance, equality, and the recognition of red lines. He insisted that no process will succeed unless all parties involved feel genuinely included and respected—a sharp rebuke to selective diplomacy and exclusionary decision-making that has often plagued regional forums.

In practical terms, General

Shamshad advocated for the creation of formal crisis management protocols, including institutionalized hotlines and clearly defined methods of de-escalation. He underscored the importance of joint crisis management drills, noting that South Asia's fragile political climate demands confidence-building measures, not temporary firefighting.

His speech arrives at a time of renewed concern over militarization, deepening mistrust between regional powers, and a growing sense that South Asia's strategic fault lines are being ignored by global leadership. If stability is to be achieved, it must rest on the foundation of principled engagement, equal participation, and an international system that puts justice and peace ahead of power politics.

LPG prices to drop by Rs4.63 per kilo

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has announced a notable reduction in the prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), set to take effect from June 1. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) issued an official notification confirming the cut, which will see the cost of an 11.8-kilogram domestic LPG cylinder fall by Rs54.60.

Following this adjustment, the new retail price for a household LPG cylinder will be Rs2,838.31. In addition, OGRA reported that the price per kilogram of LPG will decrease by Rs4.63, bringing the new rate down to Rs240.53. This price reduction comes as part of broader government efforts to alleviate the growing financial strain on consumers caused by surging fuel prices.

Ex SHO, nine cops booked for looting

By Imtiaz Hussain

NAUSHAHRO FEROZE: A case has been formally registered against a former Station House Officer (SHO) of Halani and nine other police officials, following grave allegations of looting and unlawful arrests during a raid carried out in the Halani area of Naushahro Feroze district. The development has sent shockwaves through the community and renewed debate over unchecked police powers in interior Sindh.

The FIR, lodged at Halani police station, comes on the direct orders of the Additional Sessions Judge of Kandiaro. It was filed by a local woman, Momal Halipoto, who accused the police team of forcefully entering her home without a legal warrant on March 19. According to the complaint, the officers allegedly looted a significant amount of cash and gold jewelry before leaving the premises.

CM Murad sets tone for socially responsive Sindh budget

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah chaired a high-level meeting at the Chief Minister's House on Friday to discuss budget proposals for the fiscal year 2025–26, setting the tone for a development-focused and socially responsive financial roadmap. The session brought together provincial ministers, advisors, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, and key departmental secretaries as part of a consultative process directed by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Shah told the cabinet that input had been gathered from across all districts to shape the budget, reflecting the party's commitment to decentralized and inclusive planning. "I want to consult with cabinet members regarding the upcoming budget," he said, underscoring the role of grassroots feedback in identifying development priorities.

The chief minister out-



lined that the coming year's budget would prioritize core sectors such as water supply, drainage, solar energy, education, healthcare, agriculture, and industrial growth. He reminded the cabinet that the current fiscal year had focused entirely on completing ongoing projects, with no new schemes added. That strategy is now set to change.

"Under the chairman's instructions, new schemes are now being added to the budget for the coming year," Shah confirmed, noting that all departments, along with their sub-agencies and district authorities, had submitted fresh proposals. Among these, he stressed the con-

tinuation of post-flood recovery, particularly the repair and rehabilitation of schools and hospitals across affected areas.

Shah also announced new initiatives to be launched through public-private partnership (PPP) models, including efforts to uplift transport infrastructure in Karachi. He hinted that several long-awaited transport projects in the provincial capital could see completion in the new fiscal year. Crucially, the chief minister pledged increased allocations for poverty alleviation and social protection, alongside maintenance and rehabilitation of public facilities.

Uzbekistan, Pakistan explore railway link through Afghanistan

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, held a telephone conversation with Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Bakhodir Sidikov to discuss the ongoing progress of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway project. This trilateral initiative, aimed at boosting regional connectivity and facilitating trade, has been a focal point of cooperation among the three



countries. During their discussion, both leaders reviewed the current status of the railway project and consulted on the finalization of the framework

agreement that will govern its implementation. The conversation also touched upon the preparations for the upcoming signing ceremony, with a clear emphasis on

ensuring smooth coordination with Afghan leadership to move the project forward effectively.

The railway initiative is widely seen as a significant milestone in the region's efforts to strengthen economic ties and foster greater integration. By linking Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, the project promises to open new avenues for trade, investment, and people-to-people contacts, potentially transforming the economic landscape of this part of Asia.

MYC rejects new puberty, child marriage law

By Faizan Khan

LAHORE: The Mili Yakjehti Council of Pakistan has rejected the newly enacted law setting legal parameters for puberty and early marriage, calling it both un-Islamic and unconstitutional.

In a statement issued from Lahore, the Council's president, Dr Sahibzada Abul Khair Muhammad Zubair, said the law ignored religious teachings and the country's constitutional framework. He criticized President Asif Ali Zardari for signing the bill into law, claiming it violated the spirit of the Constitution and contradicted the principles laid out in the Quran and Sunnah.

Dr Zubair referred to previous objections raised by the Council of Islamic Ideology, which had also deemed the bill inconsistent with Islamic teachings and Pakistan's constitutional values. He argued that the government and the presidency had failed to consider the council's recommendations.

He warned that religious parties would now launch nationwide protests against what they see as an imposition of "non-Islamic" laws without proper consultation.

APTMA demands end to Rs100bn subsidy for other sectors

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) has called on the government to reconsider its current subsidy policies, urging a shift in focus towards the pressing challenges faced by the country's textile industry. Kamran Arshad, APTMA's chairman, made a strong appeal ahead of the federal budget, stressing the need to end the Rs100 billion subsidy extended to other sectors and redirect support to textile manufacturers struggling under rising costs.

In his detailed statement, Arshad highlighted the urgency of establishing a regionally competitive electricity tariff, proposing a rate of 9 cents per kilowatt-hour specifically for industrial consumers. He argued that the current time-based electricity pricing model should be replaced by a uniform tariff system to provide greater predictability and relief for industries. Arshad also called for a fairer calculation of the Grid Transition Levy, suggesting it be based on actual tariffs and expenses rather than arbitrary rates.



Beyond electricity pricing, the textile industry's challenges stretch into fuel supply and taxation. Arshad urged the government to permit textile manufacturers to purchase gas on a business-to-business basis and to allow them to import their own liquefied natural gas (LNG). He also pushed for the removal of the 1 percent advance tax on exports and the timely refund of export-related taxes, measures that exporters say are vital for maintaining cash flow and competitiveness in international markets.

Recognizing the importance of new investments to revive the sector, Arshad called for tax credits to encourage fresh, export-oriented projects. He further advocated for the elimination of sales tax on local raw materials like cotton and cottonseed (Banola), which he described as unnecessary burdens on an already vulnerable industry.

IAEA flags substantial increase in Iran's enriched uranium

News Desk

VIENNA, AUSTRIA: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has sounded a stark warning as it revealed that Iran has dramatically increased its stockpile of uranium enriched to 60 percent purity, edging dangerously close to the threshold needed for nuclear weapons.

This sharp rise far surpasses the limits agreed upon under the 2015 nuclear deal, commonly known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with the stockpile now exceeding



those limits by a staggering 45 times. The IAEA report underscores that Iran is unique among non-nuclear weapons states in possessing such a vast quantity of highly enriched uranium.

The development has intensified concerns across the global community, which views enrichment beyond certain levels as a clear step towards weapons capability. In response to the report, Is-

rael delivered a strong condemnation, asserting that the findings confirmed suspicions that Iran's nuclear program is far from peaceful. The Israeli government emphasized that Tehran remains resolute in its pursuit of nuclear weapons, a threat that has long troubled the Middle East and international security at large.

Israel's call to action was directed at the international community, urging urgent and decisive measures to halt Iran's nuclear advancements.

The situation has cast a shadow over ongoing diplo-

matic efforts aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, with fears growing that Iran's nuclear ambitions may be accelerating beyond the reach of negotiation.

This latest report from the IAEA brings into sharp relief the fragile state of nuclear diplomacy and the heightened tensions in a region already fraught with complex geopolitical rivalries. As Iran continues to expand its nuclear program, the world watches closely, aware that the path ahead is laden with risks that could reshape the balance of power in the Middle East and beyond.