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Afghan Taliban warn 'Fitna-tul-Khawarij' against cross-border terror

Commander Saeed made it clear that no individual or faction may declare or engage in jihad without explicit permission from the **Emir, the Afghan Taliban's supreme leader**

News Desk

KABUL: The Afghan Taliban have issued a stern warning to the militant group known as Fitna-tul-Khawarij, forbidding them from conducting terrorist operations outside Afghanistan, with a particular emphasis on Pak-

The warning was delivered by senior Taliban com-Taliban leadership's firm istan — without the Emir's that operate independently stance against unauthorized permission is not justified," militant activity beyond their he stated, dismissing mili- the Taliban leadership borders.

Commander thority to declare or engage true religious duty. in jihad without explicit perthe Emir's sanction, is un- orders not only break from Security experts view the nance in the region.



Saeed's message car-

The warning from the

statement as a boost to Pakistan's internal security narrative, reinforcing Islamabad's position that proxy militant groups exploiting religious rhetoric are undermining regional stability. Analysts note that by explicitly disowning groups like Fitnatul-Khawarij, the Taliban are undercutting India-backed proxies that have long used the guise of iihad to fuel unrest, thus challenging narratives that have complicated

Taliban leadership arrives amid ongoing concerns tants who carry out attacks sought to distance itself about cross-border militancy Saeed abroad as illegitimate actors from uncontrolled violence and reflects an effort to asmade it clear that no individ-ual or faction has the au-group loyalties rather than principles and state sover-tions within Afghanistan. It also strengthens Pakistan's This public denunciation diplomatic efforts to highmission from the Emir, the ried a strong religious and signals a significant shift in light the dangers posed by supreme leader of the political weight. He clarified the Taliban's posture, em-foreign-backed insurgents He that the authority to declare phasizing their intent to reg-operating under the pretext stressed that any cross-bor- or permit jihad rests solely ulate militant activity and of religious warfare, calling der fighting, especially in with the state leadership, curb unrestrained violence for a collective commitment Pakistan, carried out without and those who defy these that spills across borders. to peace and lawful gover-

Average cost of 20kg flour drops significantly

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The country has witnessed a notable decline in the average price of 20 kilograms of flour, both month-on-month and yearon-year, according to the latest data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. In April, the average price of 20 kg flour was recorded at Rs 1,642.33, marking a 6.62 percent decrease compared to March, and a substantial 31.86 percent fall from April last year.

In March, the average price stood at Rs1,758.84, while in April 2023 it was much higher, at Rs2,410.01. The price reduction offers some relief amid ongoing inflationary pressures faced by consumers. Breaking down the figures by city, the average price of 20 kg flour in Islamabad was Rs1,711.08, Rawalpindi Rs1,704.91, Gujranwala Rs1,596.84, Sialkot Rs1,625.66, and Lahore Rs1,553.83. Faisalabad saw prices at Rs1,552.51, Multan Rs1,547.68, and Bahawalpur Rs1,604.70.

In Sindh, Karachi's average price was Rs1,652.93, Rs1,760.79, Hyderabad Sukkur Rs1,501.97, and Larkana Rs1,544.22. In Khy-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, Peshawar recorded Rs1,650.92, Bannu Rs1,582.56. Quetta and Khuzdar Rs1,787.46, Rs1,864.43.

\$3.7bn loan to Pakistan next month Officials noted that Pakistan has already repaid

China to extend

\$1.3 billion to the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China in three instalments earlier this year

News Desk

BEIJING: China has assured Pakistan it will extend a trade loan worth \$3.7 billion by the end of June, including \$2.4 billion due for repayment next month. This move aims to help Pakistan maintain its foreign exchange reserves in double digits amid ongoing economic challenges. Government sources told the media that while China has previously extended loans in currencies other than its own, this time it has decided not to lend in US dollars.

The decision aligns with Beijing's broader policy to reduce Pakistan's reliance on the dollar and promote the use of the Chinese currency in bilateral trade.

The assurances followed talks held between March financing of Pakistan's maturing debts.

billion to the Industrial and nancing loan worth \$2.1 bil-gram, Pakistan has commit-Commercial Bank of China lion (15 billion RMB) in June. ted to raising its reserves to earlier this year.



granted two years ago at a RMB). loating interest rate of around 7.5 per cent. After re-tiating a three-year extension ceiving \$1 billion from the In- on repayment terms, though ternational Monetary Fund the interest rate remains un-(IMF) this month. Pakistan's decided. China has offered central bank reserves rose to Pakistan two options: either about \$11.4 billion. With the a fixed-rate or floating-rate next round of refinancing, re- loan, but not linked to the serves could climb to \$12.7 Shanghai Interbank Offered and June 2025 to secure re- billion by mid-June before Rate (Shibor). This timely re-

facing another dip. Officials noted that Pak- nese commercial banks are above double digits through istan had already repaid \$1.3 set to mature a syndicated fi- June. Under the IMF pro-(ICBC) in three instalments Pakistan plans to repay this nearly \$14 billion by the end

Bank of China (3 billion The original loan was RMB), and ICBC (3 billion The government is nego-

financing is crucial to keep-Additionally, three Chi- ing Pakistan's reserves

loan at least three days be- of the financial year

Three RAW spies disappear in Iran

News Desk

TEHRAN: Tensions are quietly simmering between India and Iran after three alleged operatives of India's external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), reportedly went missing in Iran. According | News Desk to Indian diplomatic sources, the Indian embassy in Tehran has formally requested assis- ting US inspectors to visit its authorities to locate and reached with Washington.

confirmed ongoing com-munication with Iranian of-Wednesday that while inficials, stating they are spectors from countries hosmaking "all possible ef- tile to Iran have never been spokesperson forts" to secure the return | acceptable, Tehran could re- Baghai confirmed that con-However, details about disappearance remain un-



charges or public confirbeen issued.

scape. Once seen as deal under Donald Trump in Wittkoff, who has described instate UN sanctions if Iran is close strategic partners, 2018. India and Iran have witnessed strain in their relationship, particularly follows "maximum pressure" discussed in recent talks and act between upholding Iran's lowing an inflammatory campaign on Iran, imposing should not be politicized, stated sovereignty and adcomment made by retired new sanctions. Meanwhile, pointing out that higher en- dressing global concerns Indian army officer Major | Iranian foreign ministry richment does not necessar- over nuclear proliferation. Gaurav Arya, who insulted Iran's foreign minister on national television, calling him a "pig's child". Iran raised the slur at the diplomatic level, but India's government did not condemn or disown the remarks publicly.

Analysts believe the silence from New Delhi may have deepened Iran's unease, especially given the broader context of Pakistan-India tensions. Iran has attempted to maintain | neutrality in South Asia's volatile environment and has offered mediation in past disputes. However, the perceived lack of respect from Indian public discourse may be eroding | and Muharram. The anthat position.

As of now, the fate of the three alleged RAW operatives remains unknown. The situation condiplomatic watchers are closely monitoring whether this incident will sides back to the negotiating table in the spirit of regional cooperation.

Iran signals possible allowance for US inspectors at nuclear sites

under the banner of jihad,

For years, Western powers have charged Iran with chasing the bomb, but Tehran insists its nuclear ambition is rooted in peaceful civilian intent alone

TEHRAN: Iran has indicated it may consider permitfrom Iranian nuclear facilities if a deal is safely recover the missing | According to an AFP report, the head of Iran's Atomic En-The Indian mission has ergy Organization, Mohamdemands are met.

For years, Western powclear program is solely for peaceful, civilian purposes. mation from Iran have yet live rounds of high-level talks uranium enrichment is a 2015 deal — France, Gerbetween Tehran and Wash-This incident comes at | ington — the first significant stance publicly backed by portedly considering triggera sensitive time in the re- contacts since the US with- US negotiators including ing the deal's "snapback" gion's diplomatic land- drew from the 2015 nuclear Washington's envoy Steve mechanism, which would re-



president

Tehran and Muscat.

Iranian officials have re- for nuclear weapons. Recent weeks have seen peatedly emphasized that Since taking office in Jan- Eslami added that enrich- ing diplomatic dialogue high-

Esmail ily imply military use.

Baghai reiterated that of the three nationals. | think allowing American in- sultations are underway to fi- continued uranium enrichspectors under the supervi- nalize the time and place for ment is a fundamental part the circumstances of their sion of the UN's nuclear the next round of talks, with of Iran's nuclear industry and watchdog, provided Iran's an official announcement ex- any proposal threatening this pected from Oman, Iranian right is unacceptable. Cur-Masoud rently, Iran enriches uranium ers have accused Iran of Pezeshkian expressed grat- up to 60 percent — far seeking nuclear weapons, a itude for the Gulf state's me- above the 3.67 percent limit claim Tehran has consis- diation efforts, despite long- set in the 2015 agreement tently denied, insisting its nu-standing tensions between but below the 90 percent threshold typically required

"non-negotiable" issue, a many and the UK — are reit as a red line. Mohammad found in violation. The evolv-

Azerbaijan celebrates Pakistan's victory over India: Tarar

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar has said that Pakistan's recent diplomatic and strategic triumph over ndia was not only celebrated domestically but also found strong resonance in Azerbaijan, highlighting the depth of international solidarity with Islamabad's po-

during Azerbaijan's Inde-Tarar drew attention to what he described as a remarkable show of unity among Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. His remarks came as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ioined the festivities, turning the occasion into a powerful display of trilateral harmony and regional alliance.

"These three brotherly nations will remain united in every test and trial," said Tarar, his tone confident European parties to the and resolute. His words tapped into a sentiment that has been steadily building in recent months — that Pakistan, Turkey, and Azerbaijan are forging a partnership that transcends conventional diplomacy.

It is a bond, Tarar implied, cemented by shared sacrifices, mutual respect, and a collective commitment to justice and sover-

Uranium thefts in India spark serious global security fears

News Desk

community.

NEW DEHLI: A series of uranium thefts and security lapses in India have deepened worries about nuclear safety protocols in the region. Despite being a declared nuclear power, India has repeatedly shown signiffrom the icant weaknesses in safemountainous city of Lachin | guarding its nuclear materipendence Day celebrations, alarm not only within the and californium from individ- 2.5 kilograms of uranium in country but across the global uals caught smuggling.

> cases involved the seizure of reality. highly dangerous sub-



dents involving stolen nu- clear accidents in India, but harashtra and 6.4 kilograms clear material, exceeding government inaction has in Jharkhand, alongside 250 200 kilograms in total. Many turned these warnings into grams of highly radioactive

Dumivat in November 1994. The Nuclear Threat Initia- and an attempt to smuggle Reports from security ex- tive's (NTI) 2024 report over 100 kilograms in 1998. perts and international agen- places India near the bottom Other seizures include eight cies reveal glaring flaws in of the list when it comes to kilograms from Tamil Nadu India's nuclear material han- nuclear security — ranking in 1998, 8.3 kilograms from dling, production, and over- 20th out of 22 countries Mumbai in 2000, and smaller sight. According to the South overall, and 40th out of 47 in amounts from West Bengal Asia Strategic Stability Insti- the global nuclear security between 2001 and 2018. In tute, between 1994 and index. The NTI has repeat- 2021, seven kilograms of 2021, India reported 18 inci- edly warned of potential nu- uranium were seized in Ma-

> californium recovered at Notable incidents include Kolkata airport.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan pledge enhanced defence partnership

News Desk

gion, reflecting the broader geostrategic alignment be-LACHIN, AZERBAIJAN: tween Pakistan and Azer-Field Marshal Asim Munir, baijan. Both countries, Pakistan's top military offi- which have seen a steady cer, held an important growth in military collaborameeting with Azerbaijan's tion in recent years, appear Defence Minister, Colonel keen to deepen their part-General Zakir Hasanov, nership at a time of shifting



human smuggling, and strategically located city of sions in the region. Field Marshal Munir. Lachin. In what is being described as a significant who has placed strong emdiplomatic engagement, the phasis on strategic out-

minister emphasized Pak- two military leaders dis- reach since assuming comcussed the evolving re- mand, conveyed Pakistan's tinues to develop, and interior minister Eskandar ling during these sacred the two countries agreed to ority and described serving gional security environment deep appreciation for its and explored ways to en- close ties with Baku. hance bilateral defence co-

He acknowledged the importance of solidarity beshared concerns in the re-relations.

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has issued a strong condemnation of the Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's entry into the revered Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, describing the act as a blatant provocation and a serious violation of the site's sanctity. The response from Riyadh reflects growing concern across the Muslim world over what is

widely perceived as an esca-

lation in Israeli actions at one

Riyadh condemns

Israeli minister's

entry into

Al-Aqsa Mosque

News Desk

of Islam's holiest sites. The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement backed by the kingdom's royal leadership, called the visit a desecration of Al-Aqsa and accused Israel of continuing its policy of brutal assaults in the occupied Palestinian territories. The ministry warned that such acts, particularly when carried out by high-ranking Israeli officials, risk inflaming religious tensions and further destabilizing the region. Itamar Ben-Gvir's visits to Al-Aqsa have often drawn widespread criticism, with Palestinians and Arab nations viewing them as deliberate provocations aimed at altering the status quo of the

Jerusalem site, which holds

deep religious and political

significance.

Pakistan, Iran agree to keep border open 24 hours for pilgrims

News Desk

TEHRAN: In a significant development easing travel for Pakistani pilgrims, Pakistan and Iran have agreed to keep their shared border open 24 hours during key religious events, including Arbaeen nouncement followed a productive meeting in Tehran between Pakistan's federal interior minister clock to accommodate the tion and swiftly resolve any Mohsin Naqvi and Iranian

Under remain open round the

millions of pilgrims travel- issues faced by pilgrims, occasions. Both sides discussed pledged to provide lodging line for border authorities. A related matter discussed enhancing facilities for pil- and meals for 5,000 Pak- They also planned a trilat- was the release of Iranian operation. further disrupt India-Iran grims, border manage- istani pilgrims in Mashhad eral conference before Ar- fishermen who had accirelations or push both ment, and security cooper- and make special arrange- baeen involving officials dentally entered Pakistani the ments for pilgrims journey- from Pakistan, Iran, and waters, with assurances of agreement, the border will ing from the border to Iraq. Iraq, aimed at coordinating full cooperation from both talks revolved around further cementing defence

Iran also establish a dedicated hot-pilgrims as a religious duty. To improve communica- travel, security, and serv- sides.

ices for pilgrims. Discussions included increasing flights to facilitate pilgrim travel and exploring the possibility of sea routes to Iran and Iraq. Beyond pilgrim affairs,

the meeting addressed broader border issues such drug trafficking, and improving security cooperation. The Iranian interior istan's security as a top pri-

The Inter-Services Pub- tween the two Muslim-malic Relations (ISPR) con- jority nations and reiterated firmed that the high-level Islamabad's commitment to

Israel's ex-PM accuses Netanyahu of war crimes in Gaza

Meanwhile, regional tensions flared after Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir made a provocative visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied Baitul Magdas

News Desk

OCCUPIED **BAITUL** MAQDAS: Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has made scathing remarks against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's military campaign in Gaza, denouncing it as a clear case of war crimes. In a candid interview with American media, Olmert criticized Netanyahu and his far-right mer head of government, national scrutiny of Israel's

they?" Olmert asked, dis- mitted that he could no following a provocative visit and participants account- fears within the Israeli estancing himself from any attempt to justify the Israeli actions on the international assault. His comments respectively. In the country is to the Al-Aqsa Mosque able. It is a tablishment that any nutrempt to justify the Israeli actions on the international compound in occupied actions on the international assault. His comments respectively. It is a tablishment that any nutrempt to justify the Israeli actions on the international compound in occupied able. It is a tablishment that any nutrempt to justify the Israeli actions on the international actions on the in internal dissent from a for- ther weight to growing inter- ister Itamar Ben Gvir. The dling of religious sensitivi- Israel finds intolerable.

By Imtiaz Hussain

SAKRAND: A group of

52 Afghan nationals, recently deported from

Karachi for residing in the

city without legal documen-

tation, has arrived in

Sakrand, marking a signifi-

cant phase in their forced

return journey to Afghanistan. The convoy

was received by Assistant

Raja, who personally super-

presence from Matiari dis-

medical care. This tempo-

Commissioner



coalition government, as- especially one who once military tactics in Gaza, serting that their conduct in led military operations him- which have led to wide-

visit, which coincided with tanyahu's government. the annual "Flag March"sions in the holy city.

United Arab Emirates for- ties in Jerusalem and what mally summoned the Israeli many see as deliberate ambassador to protest the provocations under Ne-

În parallel, Israel is also an ultra-nationalist event battling diplomatic fallout that frequently inflames ten- from a New York Times report alleging that Ne-According to the UAE's tanyahu threatened military official news agency, Ben action against Iran to influpresence was ence the course of ongoing marked by incendiary slo- nuclear negotiations begans and harassment of tween Washington and Palestinian residents and Tehran. The report cited US journalists by right-wing intelligence assessments Jewish demonstrators. The that Israel could launch a Gaza leaves no ambiguity. self. Olmert, who served as spread civilian casualties UAE's condemnation was strike on Iran within seven "If these are not war Israel's prime minister be- and destruction. Meanwhile, swift and direct, calling on hours, should it choose to crimes, then what are tween 2006 and 2009, ad- regional tensions intensified Israel to hold all officials do so. The story pointed to assault. His comments restage.

Jerusalem by Israel's far-reflects broader regional to preserve core elements flect a rare and significant. His statement adds fur-right National Security Min-unease over Israel's han-of its program—an outcome

Afghan deportees from | Uzbek envoy says Karachi arrive in Sakrand \$400m trade 'well

below potential'

By our correspondent

ing trade and investment be- partner in the region. Uzbekistan and Pakistan. With an eye on the lamented the current bilat-

enterprises to engage more deeply with Uzbekistan's ISLAMABAD: The Em- evolving market. "We are rebassy of the Republic of forming, transforming, and Uzbekistan in Islamabad growing. Most importantly, hosted a high-level business we are ready for you," he forum this week, placing re- said, positioning Uzbekistan newed emphasis on bolster- as an open and dynamic

The ambassador future, the event spotlighted eral trade volume of approx-



intent to manage the situa- The deportation reflects ontion with strict security going efforts by Pakistani order. Upon arrival, the on undocumented resi-

Rameez Afghanistan via Jacobabad. of irregular migration. The op-

towards socio-economic implications ing issue.

The assistant commis- eration reveals the governvised the operation along- sioner assured that the de- ment's balancing act between side a substantial police portees would be looked enforcing legal frameworks after during their stay, but and addressing the humanithe prospect of a challeng-tarian needs of vulnerable The heavy deployment ing journey ahead looms populations caught in com-underscored the authorities' large for these individuals. plex migratory flows. plex migratory flows. For many of those de-

ported, the journey back to measures while maintaining authorities to clamp down Afghanistan carries uncertainty and hardship, high-Afghan nationals were dents, particularly in major lighting the fragile realities taken to the Sakhiwo Man- urban centers like Karachi, faced by displaced people ayo camp, where they were where migrant populations in the region. While the provided with basic necessi- often live in precarious constate's emphasis remains ties, including food and ditions. Such measures come human dimension of these rary shelter serves as a amid broader regional con- returns - marked by distransit point before their on- cerns over migration manage- rupted lives and precarious ward travel, scheduled to ment, border control, and the futures - remains a press-

Two polio workers taken hostage, assaulted in Ghotki

By Imtiaz Hussain

frontline health workers in gency Pakistan, two female polio launched. The suspect, paigns remain widespread. workers were reportedly whose identity has not yet Wednesday during a routine once again highlights the lence have not ceased.

immunization campaign.

deeply rooted challenges The victims, both part of polio workers continue to incident underscoring the effort, were rescued by law or conservative areas where persistent dangers faced by enforcement after an emer- misinformation and resistresponse was ance to vaccination cam-

While the government taken hostage and subjected been made public, was ar- and its partners have intensito violence in Ghotki's Mirpur rested on the spot and a for-fied efforts to protect health under Uzbek President promise for joint R&D and Mathelo area. According to mal case has been registered staff, episodes of harasspolice, the attack occurred on against him. This incident ment, abduction, and vio-

Tukhtaev, opened the forum partnership. with heartfelt remarks that the enduring historical and where shared destiny.

Shavkat Tukhtaev invited Pakistani tion.

economic potential between scribing it as significantly the two countries, and below potential. "Together, marked a key moment in ad- we can multiply this figure vancing bilateral coopera- fivefold," he noted, encouraging both public and private Uzbekistan's Ambassa- sector actors to invest in a dor to Pakistan, Alisher more ambitious economic

The forum identified agriunderscored not only com- culture and agro-processing mercial aspirations but also as high-potential sectors, cultural kinship shared by strengths in cotton and hortithe two nations. "This is not culture can be matched with just a gathering of business Pakistan's agri-tech expert-leaders and officials – it is a ise and market reach. The GHOTKI: In a disturbing the national polio eradication confront, especially in remote gathering of hearts and textile and leather industries hopes," he said, striking a were also highlighted for futone that combined eco- ture value-added production nomic vision with a sense of ventures. In energy, there was a shared interest in re-Referring to the sweep- newables, while pharmaceuing reforms taking place tical collaboration offered Mirziyoyev, affordable medicine produc-

Sukkur Comm marks May 28 as national security milestone

By Imtiaz Hussain

Technology (DUET) Sukkur people.' Campus marked Youm-etion. The event, held on 28 addressed the gathering.

fortified our defence capability. It sent a message of SUKKUR: Dawood Uni- strength and unity, both to versity of Engineering and our adversaries and our

Standing alongside him Takbeer with a dignified were DUET Vice Chancelceremony that blended na- lor Dr. Samreen Hussain tional pride, educational as- and DIG Sukkur Faisal Abpiration, and civic reflec- dullah Chachar, who also May 2025, drew the partici- Their remarks wove topation of senior officials, gether themes of national



local citizens, underlining achievement, and the vital the symbolic weight of the role of education in sustainday Pakistan became a nu- ing both. clear power.

to external threats and it otism alive.

The event took on a Commissioner Sukkur more emotional tone as Division Fayyaz Hussain schoolchildren from the An-Abbasi set the tone for the gels of Fairy Home and commemoration by de-other institutions presented scribing the 1998 nuclear patriotic tableaus and tests as a decisive chapter speeches. Their performin the country's defence ances were applauded for history. "Youm-e-Takbeer evoking both nostalgia and is not merely a commemo- hope, and Commissioner ration—it is a national Abbasi commended the thanksgiving," he said. "It young participants for was our dignified response keeping the flame of patri-

METRO MATTERS

MQM-P honors nuclear milestone, links it to founders' vision

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: A solemn ceremony was held at the park adjacent to the MQM-P Center in Bahadurabad, Karachi, to commemorate Youm-e-Takbeer. Addressing the gathering, MQM-P Chairman Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that May 28 symbolizes the fulfilment of the promise made at the time of Pakistan's creation. He noted that the descendants of the founders not only attained freedom but also contributed significantly to building and strength-

Emphasizing Karachi's pivotal role, he said the city is not just "Mini Pakistan" but a representation of the entire subcontinent. Dr. Siddiqui highlighted the historical importance of Pakistan's nuclear program, recalling how after the tragic events of 1971, a dedicated Pakistani, living a comfortable life in Europe, returned home and helped shape Pakistan into an

Without naming Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan directly in that instance, he reinforced the notion that nuclear deterrence is not about destruction but about ensuring balance and peace. He added that Pakistan is gradually returning to its rightful custodians and expressed pride that a national hero like Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan was the son of Karachi.

Senior MQM-P leader Dr. Farooq Sattar, also speaking at the ceremony, said that the changing regional dynamics in May 2025 have brought renewed attention to the historical importance of May 28. He described Pakistan's emergence as a nuclear power in 1998 not only as a military milestone but as a cornerstone for long-term regional peace. Reflecting on the sacrifices made during the country's creation, Dr. Sattar acknowledged the vision of Zulfigar Ali Bhutto and the scientific genius of Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan in realising Pakistan's nu-

JI observes May 28 as Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan day

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The JI Karachi chapter officially observed May 28 as "Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan Day" to honor the father of Pakistan's nuclear program. Commemorative camps were established and banners displayed throughout various union councils and towns across the

JI Karachi Ameer Monem Zafar Khan visited one such camp in Saeedabad, Kemari district, where he received a warm welcome from JI workers, leaders including Fazal Ahad Hanif, and many local residents, among them women and children. Zafar paid rich tribute to the late Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, acknowledging his pivotal role in making Pakistan an undefeatable nuclear power.

JI chief noted that despite efforts by some rulers to tarnish Dr Khan's reputation, history would remember his sacrifices and contributions fondly, as he remains alive in the nation's collective heart. Addressing the current geopolitical climate, Monem Zafar highlighted Pakistan's emergence as a strong and sovereign state following recent tensions with India. He called for sustained national unity to solidify Pakistan's stature on the world stage

Emphasizing the need to bolster Pakistan's strength to effectively counter aggressions like those witnessed in Kashmir and Gaza, Zafar described Pakistan's nuclear arsenal as the nation's most potent defense deterrent. He expressed deep gratitude to Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan for this invaluable gift, which has fortified the country's security. JI Kemari district chief Fazal Ahad Hanif also addressed participants and media, reinforcing the message of national pride, unity, and resilience in the face of ongoing regional challenges.

Wahab hails Youm-e-Takbeer as most defining moment

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab has hailed May 28 as the most significant day in Pakistan's history, celebrating it as the realization of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's vision of an invincible national defence. Speaking to the media after leading a commemorative rally at Frere Hall to mark Youm-e-Takbeer, Mayor Wahab paid tribute to those who enabled Pakistan to emerge as a nuclear power in 1998.

He described the day as a powerful message to Pakistan's adversaries, particularly India, asserting that Pakistan's armed forces have made it clear that any attempt to threaten the country's sovereignty would be met with firm resistance. "Our armed forces made it clear to Modi that he cannot harm this country," said Wahab, referring to the former Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his track record in Gujarat and Kashmir.

The rally saw participation from Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad, Municipal Commissioner Áfzal Zaidi, senior KMC officials including Mumtaz Ahmed Tanoli, elected union council representatives, political figures, and a large number of citizens. The gathering was not just a show of public solidarity but also a symbolic reaffirmation of Pakistan's national re-

Mayor Wahab described Youm-e-Takbeer as a milestone of national pride and resilience, a day that marks Pakistan's emergence as the world's seventh and the Muslim world's first nuclear-armed nation. He paid glowing tribute to Pakistani scientists, praising their courage and intellect, and reflected on the name "Youm-e-Takbeer" as the echo of "Allahu Akbar"a symbol of defiance and dignity.

Over Rs3bn worth of drugs sold annually in Karachi

By our correspondent

KARACHI: It has come to light that Karachi's drug trade generates over 30 billion rupees annually, with vast networks operating openly across universities, colleges, tea stalls, hookah bars, massage parlors, and rented flats.

The widespread narcotics activity thrives under the shadow of corruption, with drug dealers reportedly operating fearlessly by paying bribes to police and excise officials in the jurisdictions of 107 police stations citywide. Sources reveal that despite repeated recommendations by the police Special Branch for the immediate arrest of habitual drug traffickers, local police often dismiss these reports after accepting bribes. The deep-rooted corruption allows drug networks to flourish unchecked. Residents voice growing concern, noting that amid ongoing crises like water and electricity shortages, the escalating drug epidemic is devastating Karachi's youth. Additionally, rented bungalows are reportedly being misused as short-term guest houses facilitating kidnappings, compounding public insecurity.

Senior police officers acknowledge the scale of bribe collections across various police stations and admit that some officials prioritize personal gain over public duty, severely undermining the department's effectiveness. Nevertheless, pockets of police personnel remain dedicated, and departmental measures have been taken against corrupt "black sheep."

Karachi scorches as K-Electric apathy sparks public fury

By our correspondent

KARACHI: As Karachi endures a severe heatwave, residents in several neighborhoods most notably in Korangi — are reeling under power outages that last up to 18 hours a day. In a city already scorched by unrelenting temperatures, the crisis is deepening with a lack of clean drinking water, especially in areas where residents insist they have always paid their electricity bills on time. The brunt of these compounding issues is being borne by ordinary citizens with no clarity, no relief, and no answers. In Korangi's P&T Society, a neighborhood previously free from any major load-shedding

due to its full bill recovery record, the situation has dramatically worsened. Residents now face a deeply frustrating pattern: an hour and a half of power is followed by three hours of darkness. "We used to be exempt from load-shedding because of our consistent payments," said one resident. "Now we are being punished like the defaulting areas. What's the logic?"

Neighboring localities such as Bhittai Colony and Allahwala Town are not only struggling with power shortages but also with an acute water crisis. Allegations are surfacing that some staff members within the Water Corporation, allegedly backed by political interference, are deliberately cutting water connections in collusion with local mafias. These claims, if true, reflect a disturbing nexus between state-run institutions and unlawful profiteering.

"People are fighting for every drop of water," said a resident. "Our taps are dry, our children are sick, and the authorities are missing in action." In areas where temperatures are soaring above 40°C, the inability to access clean water has transformed daily survival into a

Female teacher assaulted after punishing student

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: In a deeply troubling incident in Karachi's Jamshed Quarters, a female teacher at a private school was allegedly assaulted after reprimanding a student for a minor disciplinary issue. The situation escalated when the student's family—specifically her uncle—stormed into the school premises in an aggressive confrontation that has since drawn wide-

According to the teacher, the student's uncle entered the school wielding a pistol and falsely identified himself as the Station House Officer (SHO) of Kalakot Police Station. Not only did he reportedly abuse and physically assault the teacher, but other female staff members were also subjected to verbal and physical harassment during the incident. A video capturing the altercation quickly went viral across social media platforms, igniting condemnation and raising serious concerns about the safety of educators and the misuse of power.



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Tax justice is due in budget

In a departure from the typical platitudes that surround pre-budget commentary, Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb delivered a speech that did not try to mask hard truths behind soft language. His address in Islamabad was unusually forthright—a sign that the government may finally be willing to grapple with the root causes of Pakistan's fiscal dysfunction, rather than continue patchwork solutions that merely delay inevitable reckonings. Pakistan, having just emerged from the edge of a financial precipice, finds itself at a critical juncture. The economy, though still fragile, has absorbed some painful shocks—subsidy cuts, rupee devaluation, IMF-led austerity—and survived But survival is not enough.

Aurangzeb's tone suggested that the government is preparing to move beyond crisis firefighting and into a phase of structural reform, one that prioritizes integrity over inertia. At the heart of this reform agenda lies taxation. For far too long, Pakistan's tax system has functioned as a theatre of evasion and exemption, where privilege replaces principle and compliance is optional for the powerful. Aurangzeb's blunt message was that this status quo can no longer continue. The notion that only a fraction of citizens—largely salaried workers and indirect consumersbear the tax burden, while vast segments of wealth remain untouched, is unsustainable and unjust. This is not a radical idea; it is the norm in functioning economies.

Around the world, tax systems serve not only to fund governments but to build trust in public institutions. In Pakistan, however, tax collection has too often been seen as political suicide rather than public responsibility. Successive governments have tiptoed around entrenched interests—feudal landlords, powerful retailers, and politically connected industrialists—allowing them to operate outside the formal economy. The result is not only a revenue shortfall, but also a deeply broken social contract. When only the honest are punished and the connected are rewarded, governance collapses into cynicism. Aurangzeb's remarks, delivered with an uncharacteristic frankness, suggest that the state may finally be ready to address this imbalance.

And it is doing so not just for internal reasons, but because the world is watching. Encouragingly, there appears to be a growing alignment between Pakistan's reform signals and the expectations of international lenders and investors. The mention of a GDP now crossing the \$400 billion mark—though modest by global standards—reflects a measure of recovery. But more importantly, there is movement on longstanding priorities: privatization of loss-making state-owned enterprises, institutional reform, and a commitment to financial transparency. These are the benchmarks upon which global confidence is built. But words are not reforms. They are merely the prelude. The true test of this government's resolve will come in the form of the federal budget, where rhetoric must translate

Expanding the tax base means taking on powerful lobbies. It means asking those who have long been shielded from responsibility to contribute their fair share. It also means protecting the vulnerable from further burdens. ensuring that reform does not become another word for regression. Security, too, remains a non-negotiable priority. Aurangzeb's recognition of the armed forces' role in stabilizing the country is more than a political nod—it reflects the reality that economic growth cannot take root in an environment riddled with insecurity. But supporting defence must be done within the framework of fiscal discipline, not as an excuse to avoid difficult trade-offs. For the Pakistani public, the memory of broken promises is fresh. Reforms have been announced before—many times. many governments.

What makes this moment different is not the boldness of the words, but the starkness of the context. There is simply no more room for delay. The global economy is shifting, climate vulnerabilities are rising, and geopolitical uncertainties are intensifying. Pakistan cannot afford the luxury of dysfunction any longer. Aurangzeb's candor is welcome. But what Pakistan now needs is not just a clearer diagnosis—it needs a cure. Fixing the tax system is a necessary first step. Rebuilding trust in institutions, rebalancing spending priorities, and ensuring accountability will require sustained effort and political courage. The stakes are not just economic—they are existential. This is not a time for routine budgets or recycled rhetoric. It is a time for decisions that may be difficult today but are essential for tomorrow. If the minister's words are to mean anything, they must be followed by action that redefines not just the balance sheet, but the very relationship between citizen and state.

India's proxy must no longer go unnoticed



Fasaad—the Modi-led In- ings of the Indian state. dian regime has lost its

bility, revealing something more dangerous than denial—a state openly dabbling in terror sponsorship. There was a time when India's involvement in destabilizing Balochistan operated under the veil of plausible deniability. Whispers of covert operations, discreet fundformed the basis of Pakistan's long-standing allegations

But that time has passed. India has moved

fits, whose names appear on global terror campaign, one that is increasingly difficult for should be allowed to weaponise terror and fter suffering what watchlists, are not only finding sanctuary the world to ignore. Pakistan, for its part, has walk away unchallenged. And no international can only be de- within Indian borders but are also receiving scribed as a historic structured support. Arms, training, funds, lodefeat in the battle for gistics—the scaffolding of an insurgency is truth—Operation Radd-ul- now being openly constructed with the bless-

Even more chilling is the provision of offiway. But what followed cial medical aid to wounded militants, revealhas been more disturbing ing a formalized infrastructure of terror aid, than disoriented governance. In its despera- masquerading as humanitarian concern. tion to reassert control and rewrite a narrative Meanwhile, Indian media—once a platform for slipping from its grasp, New Delhi has begun democratic discourse—has transformed into ambiguity remained. shedding the final threads of diplomatic credial propaganda machine, blurring the lines between journalism and jingoism.

chors make brazen proposals: give terror groups office space in Delhi, legitimize their cause, and elevate their operatives to the status of freedom fighters. Such statements ing channels, and unnamed sympathizers would be unthinkable in any nation that truly of silence—a silence that emboldens rather For every child in Balochistan who wakes to believes in peace. Yet in India today, they draw applause.

The implications of these policies are far from the shadows to the spotlight, with a from rhetorical. In Balochistan, the impact is brazenness that reflects not just a moral col- brutally real. Blood has been spilled, lives lapse but a calculated geopolitical gamble. shattered, communities uprooted—all under Delhi's entanglement with banned militant the watchful eye of an Indian strategy that groups, especially those aimed at disrupting sees instability as leverage. Every attack, peace in Pakistan's Balochistan region, is no every ambush, every act of terror carries the a local affair. When it spills across borders, terest in national and international affairs, longer a secret. It is a strategy. The nature of fingerprints of this deliberate interference. fuels proxy wars, and sows discord across re- can be reached at uzma@metro-morn-

dossier to the evidence submitted at the UN in 2015, the case has been built brick by brick.

Then came the defining proof—the arrest in 2016 of Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, statecraft. an active-duty Indian naval officer operating as a RAW agent. His confessions, backed by digital and material evidence, destroyed whatever

The world could no longer pretend this was On prime-time television, influential anter of fact. And yet, despite the damning clarthan restrains. Global powers that pride theming terrorism elsewhere have tiptoed around India's transgressions.

In doing so, they have helped legitimize a world must find its voice. new kind of violence: one that wears the suit of diplomacy but carries the dagger of subverthis alliance has grown from indirect encour- These are not one-off events. They are the gions, it becomes a global threat. No state, no ing.com

spent over two decades documenting this order that claims to value peace can afford to hostile campaign. Its warnings have not been ignore the smoke simply because the fire is idle claims. From the 2009 Sharm El Sheikh politically inconvenient. This is not about diplomatic rivalries or partisan politics. It is about a principle as old as civilization itself: that no nation has the right to use terror as a tool of

Pakistan has laid bare the truth. It has dared to speak when silence was easier. Now, it falls upon the global community to decide what it will do with that truth. Will it act, or will it remain complicit through inaction? Time has a matter of Pakistani paranoia. It was a mat- run out for ambiguity. If the world remains silent, it will not just be complicit-it will be culity of the evidence, much of the international pable. The choice is not between Pakistan community remains reluctant to call India out. and India. The choice is between truth and du-Strategic alliances, economic interests, and plicity, between justice and hypocrisy. In this regional power dynamics have created a fog moment, neutrality is not virtue. It is betrayal. the sound of gunfire, for every family that has selves on promoting democracy and oppos- lost a loved one to a terror attack orchestrated across the border, and for every citizen who still believes in a future free from violence, the

The writer is a public health professional, journalist, and possesses expertise sion. But state terrorism, by its nature, is never in health communication, having keen in-

Insecurity, our most human companion

By Atiq Raja



word has an uncanny ders of fear, or quietly nested between compari-

rooms, walk the school corridors, linger on of where we seem to fall short. red carpets, and curl up next to us when we close our eyes at night. They are not reserved for the hesitant or the unsure. Even those who stride with confidence, speak with conviction, or glow with accomplishment are not immune. In truth, we all carry them.

We are taught from an early age to polish our strengths and camouflage our flaws. doubt. It might whisper that we are not good enough, not attractive enough, not successful enough, not loved enough. Insecurities

cietal pressure, and a few handed down like Not with shame, but with honesty. Why do I being shaken—and still choosing to stand? unwanted heirlooms by those who once feel this way? What made me believe this? What if the real triumph was not in being nsecurities. The very feared they were not enough themselves.

come, riding on the shoul- pected too much, or a love that left a wound. Others are more subtle, shaped by a world son and silence. Yet, in- unattainable ideals. In the mirror, on social to our humanity as the air we breathe. They measured in titles, followers, or possesdo not discriminate. They sit quietly in board-sions—we are reminded, again and again,

> The tragedy is not that we feel insecure perts at distraction, experts at overcompenworthy enough. The charming socialite who grown too weary to show feeling. To hide our insecurities, we often overcorrect-some of ile protection. These shadows do not fade in darkness; they recede only in light.

To confront insecurity is not weakness dress in many clothes—some stitched from it is one of the bravest things we can do. The being 'unbothered' or 'unshaken.' But what if Literature, can be reached

does not always announce itself with fire- silent worry. works. Sometimes, it comes in the form of a that constantly offers curated perfection and small act—a voice that finally speaks, a composed may fear that one misstep will unheart that opens again, a step taken despite ravel it all. And you—reading this now—persecurities are as intimate media, in conversations where worth is fear. In these moments, we do not become haps you, too, are tired of trying to appear flawless. We become real.

Real confidence is not the absence of insecurity. It is the decision to act in spite of it. often lies a quiet, sometimes deafening never be hurt again. But pretending is a frag-does not demand that we never doubt our-ready, take its hand and dance. selves. It asks that we stop abandoning ourselves the moment we do.

the threads of our past, others tailored by so- first step is not to conquer it but to name it. strength looked different? What if it meant news@metro-morning.com

Is this doubt a truth-or simply a lie I've fearless, but in dancing with fear, and still Some of these doubts have roots we can learned to believe? When we ask such moving forward? Every person you pass is way of stirring unease. trace—perhaps to a schoolyard taunt, a fail-questions, we begin the quiet process of recarrying a weight you cannot see. That friend It often arrives unwel- ure we could not forget, a parent who exclaiming ourselves. And it is quiet. Growth who laughs the loudest may be nursing

That colleague who seems endlessly whole while feeling anything but.

Let us then be kinder to ourselves. Let us allow the cracks to be visible, and the gues-To walk onstage even when your hands tions to remain open. For life is not a perit is that we learn to mask it. We become ex- tremble. To share your thoughts even if your formance for others, but a journey to better voice cracks. To love when your heart re- understand and accept the truth of who we sating. The high achiever who never feels members every break. The people we most are. Perfection is not the goal—wholeness admire often are not the most polished, but is. And wholeness does not come from sisilently dreads rejection. The stoic who has the most sincere. Their vulnerability be- lencing insecurities but from learning to live comes their strength. There is power in em- with them, gently and courageously. So the bracing imperfection. To admit uncertainty, next time fear visits you, do not scold it or But underneath the surface of every confius become perfectionists, others retreat into dent smile and well-crafted image, there silence, and a few turn cold in an effort to strength, but an evolution of it. Wholeness what it has to say. And then, when you're

> The writer is a rights activist and CEO of AR Trainings and Consultancy, with Our culture often glorifies the idea of degrees in Political Science and English

Youm-e-Takbir, nation's pride and gratitude

By Asghar Ali Mubarak



leadership, armed forces, fence invincible. As the na-

with patriotic fervor and national enthusiasm. The day began with Quran recitations in mosques and prayers for Pakistan's safety and sovereignty. Religious scholars led special gatherings, offering prayers for the counthat 28 May stands as a defining moment in Pakistan's history—a day when the nation emerged stronger and more secure, and when the collective pride of its people soared

Karachi and Lahore. Prime Minister Shehbaz their congratulations to the people.

Sharif congratulated the nation on Youm-epeople, istan's nuclear program. He reaffirmed his saying that even after 27 years, the nation re- Agriculture and Biology in Faisalabad is pro-

scientists and engineers and mercy of Allah, Pakistan emerged victorifor making Pakistan's de- ous in the conflict from May 6 to 10, overcom- Maryam Nawaz reflected that the echo of the that the peaceful use of nuclear technology will ing the war imposed by India. He recalled that tion marked 27 years since becoming a nu- on 28 May 1998, India challenged Pakistan's that day still resonates across the homeland, clear power, Youm-e-Takbir was celebrated security, defence and sovereignty by carrying and the nation remains grateful to the leader out five nuclear tests. In response, Nawaz of the Pakistan Muslim League (N), Muham-Sharif made Pakistan a nuclear power with six mad Nawaz Sharif. explosions, reflecting the aspirations and interests of the nation. Shahbaz Sharif noted that Nawaz Sharif disregarded economic country's geographical borders forever.

The Prime Minister paid tribute to the nation, former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, and the scientists and engineers who made immense sacrifices for On 28 May 1998, Pakistan restored the the nuclear program. He also honored the em diagnostic and treatment facilities, benefitmountains of Chagai as Pakistan emerged as armed forces for fully protecting the country's the world's seventh nuclear power and the first nuclear assets. He described Youm-e-Takbir in the Islamic world. Youm-e-Takbir was as a day to reaffirm that there will be no commarked across the country with special events promise on the unity, freedom and sovereignty honoring the guardians of the homeland. Ral- of the nation. On the occasion, the armed lies and ceremonies took place in cities large forces, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff and small, including Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Committee and the service chiefs extended

Takbir, paying tribute to the architects of Pak- the Pakistani nation and the Muslim Ummah, cial crop varieties. The Nuclear Institute for filled with joy and government's unwavering commitment to the pride on Youm-e-Takbir, paid tribute to the spirit of victory on this day continues to grace and mercy of Allah, Pakistan has been ternational Atomic Energy Agency. PIAS Unicountry's civil and military strengthen the resolve and pride of the nation. honored as the first Muslim nuclear power in versity and other educational institutions are The Prime Minister said that by the grace the world. He added that the foundation for the providing education that meets international victory of May 10 was laid on 28 May 1998.

> ment to the peaceful use of nuclear technolis a day to celebrate Pakistan's nuclear status. alongside significant progress in the peaceful application of nuclear science in health, energy and agriculture. According to the PAEC, 20 cancer hospitals nationwide provide modmegawatts of affordable and environmentally friendly electricity. The Chashma Nuclear generating electricity continuously for 400 days.Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit-5, currently under construction, is expected to completed. Four agricultural centers are sup-

The Chief Minister of Punjab congratulated porting food security by developing 159 spestandards. The announcement emphasized Takbir raised in the mountains of Chagai on continue to play a vital role in promoting sustainable development.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Nagvi. while congratulating the nation on Youm-e-Takbir, said that Pakistan's nuclear tests on 28 On Youm-e-Takbir, the Pakistan Atomic May 1998 sent a clear message to the world Energy Commission reaffirmed its commit- that the country is always ready to respond decisively to any enemy's aggression. Presitry's progress and prosperity. They remarked sanctions, pressure and threats, securing the ogy. The commission highlighted that 28 May dent Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif issued special messages on Youm-e-Takbir, saying that the nation's joy in victory has only grown stronger. The President reiterated his commitment to safeguarding the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, describing the acquisition of nuclear power as balance of power in the region by conducting Pakistani Armed Forces, national institutions ing around 80 percent of the country's cancer a wise decision for maintaining peace. Paksix nuclear tests in response to India's five. and the architects who contributed to this patients. The announcement also noted that istan's nuclear capability remains a guarantee The call of "Allah o Akbar" echoed from the achievement, adding his gratitude to the six nuclear power plants generate 3,530 of peace, ensuring the nation's sovereignty and security. In his message, President Zardari extended heartfelt greetings to the Power Plant Unit-1 set a national record by people, recalling how on 28 May Pakistan demonstrated its nuclear strength and achieved strategic defence power.

The writer is a senior journalist covergenerate 1,200 megawatts of electricity once ing various beats, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com

Growth hopes dim as budget tightens grip

By Zainab Shabbir and Ayesha Malik





ing, influencing various aspects of the econpolicies play a crucial role in shaping the counsuch as inflation, employment and investment, which in turn influence the overall standard of can stimulate economic growth, improve living standards and reduce poverty by allocating resources effectively and encouraging development. Conversely, a poorly designed budget can deepen economic challenges, hamper etary decisions remains essential-not only for policymakers but also for businesses and individuals aiming to make informed choices

and support sustainable economic growth.

lic debt. The effects of fiscal deficits remain de- cate balance between fiscal discipline and dehe impacts of deficit-financed expansionary policy during covery is anticipated, with the United Nations budgetary decidownturns, Neo-classical thinkers warn of the projecting a growth rate of 2.3% in 2025. sions on Pak- crowding-out effect that can stifle private ineconomic vestment. The Federal Budget for 2024–25 sets a target of 3.6% real GDP growth, backed Sector Development Program. Yet the budsparked concern, particularly over the 62% rehealth expenditures. Such sharp declines in social sector investment risk undermining living and poverty levels. A well-crafted budget long-term productivity and economic re-

Furthermore, Pakistan's tax system remains heavily reliant on regressive indirect constrain the growth of the formal economy. progress and worsen poverty, underlining the The country's tax-to-GDP ratio remains trouimportance of prudent fiscal management. As blingly low, while financial intermediation con-Pakistan continues to navigate its economic tinues to lag. For Pakistan to pursue sustainlandscape, understanding the effects of budg- able and inclusive growth, meaningful tax reforms are needed—alongside a renewed focus on strategic investments in human capital, innovation and grassroots entrepreneurship. The upcoming budget for FY2025-26 a foundation for long-term productivity and Pakistan's economy has experienced fluc- must also seek to reduce the primary deficit tuations, with fiscal policy choices often priori- and align with the IMF's roadmap for macro- be central to driving economic advancement tizing short-term macroeconomic stabilization economic stability. The success of these in Pakistan. To unlock its potential, the govover meaningful structural reform. The country measures will rest on their effective imple- ernment must foster an enabling environ-

bated: while Keynesian economists support velopment goals. A moderate economic re-

World Bank projects growth may strengthen eted and far-reach- by a 30% increase in allocations for the Public to 3.1% in FY2026, provided that macroeconomic stabilization efforts continue and critical omy and society as a whole. Budgetary get's emphasis on infrastructure spending has economic reforms are implemented. The gov- able economic growth and development, the ernment's fiscal strategy in the forthcoming try's economic trajectory, affecting factors duction in education funding and a 35% cut to budget will be central to shaping the country's economic path. A key challenge will lie in balancing the urgency of fiscal consolidation with the imperative for development spending. Strategic investments in education, healthcare and infrastructure must be prioritized, even as accountability, and promote education and fiscal discipline is upheld. Alongside these eftaxes, which distort consumption patterns and forts, structural reforms will be essential to fos- Pakistan can lay the foundation for a stable ter economic resilience. This includes improving the business climate, enhancing tangible benefits to its citizens and fosters ingovernance and ensuring greater transparency—measures that remain vital for sustainable growth and long-term stability.

The government must also give greater priority to investment in human capital, particularly in education and skills development, as sustained growth. The private sector's role will persistent budget deficits and mounting pub- and the government's ability to strike a deli- tling regulatory hurdles and encouraging newss@metro-morning.com.

healthy competition. These steps are vital to spur entrepreneurship, nurture innovation and generate employment, all of which are cornerstones of sustainable growth. Achieving a stable and prosperous economy will depend on the implementation of a comprehensive and coherent economic strategy—one that confronts Pakistan's structural vulnerabilities and The Asian Development Bank forecasts a promotes inclusive development. Such a stratslightly higher growth rate of 2.5%, while the egy demands coordinated action, bringing together government, the private sector and civil society in a shared effort to drive progress and reduce poverty. In order to promote sustaingovernment should prioritise policy reforms that support private sector expansion, strengthen governance and boost investment in human capital.

This will require steps to improve the business environment, enhance transparency and skills development. Through such reforms, and prosperous economy—one that delivers clusive, long-term development. As the Budget 2025–26 approaches, the government would do well to consider a series of strategic measures aimed at accelerating growth. Increasing funding for education and healthcare can significantly strengthen human capital, helping to build a more skilled and productive

workforce. The writers are students of the BSS-V Department, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Bahria University Karachi continues to grapple with fiscal imbalances, mentation, the continuity of political stability ment-improving access to finance, disman- Campus. They can be reached at

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



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PM condemns India's water cut threat as unacceptable

Opening with warm greetings on Azerbaijan's Independence Day, the prime minister lauded the nation's brave fight for freedom and its esteemed standing worldwide

News Desk

LACHIN, AZERBAIJAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif delivered a firm rebuttal to India's recent threats to cut off Pakistan's water supply, declaring water as the lifeline of Pakistan that no external force could ever sever. Speaking at the trilateral summit of Pakistan, Turkey, and Azerbaijan held in the Azerbaijani city of Lachin, Sharif underscored the vital importance of water for Pak- strategic ties binding Pak- dressing rising tensions in India's violations of the Indus istan's 240 million citizens, warning that attempts to dis- jan, calling the summit a reafrupt this essential resource firmation of their shared rounding the recent Pahal- gotiable for the wellbeing of would be met with resilience commitment to deepen coand resolve.

Opening his remarks with friendship. heartfelt greetings on Azerbaijan's Independence Day, mism about the future of this investigations. the prime minister praised trilateral alliance, highlighting the country's courageous President Recep Tayyip Erstruggle for freedom and its doğan's firm stance on the dent as a pretext for aggres- dressing the core grievances respected place on the PKK issue as a testament to sive posturing and lauded of the Kashmiri people.

Missing youth

found safe after

Karachi police

operation

Deputy Inspector General

(South), Asad Raza, has

confirmed the safe recovery

of Hasan Javed Solangi, the

son of an intelligence

According to Asad Raza,

gone treatment at a rehabili-

confidence in the police's re-

sponsiveness to such cases.

Bangladesh sees

fresh protests calling

for swift polls

News Desk

Karachi's

By Aziz Khatri



istan, Turkey, and Azerbaioperation and strengthen

global stage. He reflected on their collective determination the historic, cultural, and to combat terrorism. Ad- ever, he sharply criticized the region, Shehbaz Sharif Waters Treaty, underscoring dismissed India's claims sur- that water security is non-negam incident, pointing out millions. He called on the in-

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir along with the Pakistani armed forces for their professional leadership and decisive response. "The entire nation stands united behind our military," he emphasized, highlighting the solidarity and resolve within

Despite these challenges,

the prime minister reiterated Pakistan's unwavering desire for peace in the region. How-New Delhi's failure to present ternational community to credible evidence or accept support a just resolution of Sharif expressed opti- Pakistan's offer for impartial the Kashmir issue in accordance with United Nations The Prime Minister ac- resolutions, insisting that lastcused India of using the inci- ing peace hinges on ad-

NEPRA mulls electricity price increase for April supply

The CPPA's April data highlights mounting cost pressures in electricity generation as 1.051 billion units were produced, with 1.019 billion units supplied nationwide

By our correspondent

agency officer, following a police operation in Pak Colony. Hasan Javed, a resident of the Darkshan area, ISLAMABAD: Pakistan was traced by South District police after going missing faces the prospect of yet anamid reports that initially other increase in electricity sparked fears of kidnapping. prices as the national requlator, the National Electric the young man had left his home voluntarily due to per-Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), prepares to hold a sonal family issues. It was hearing tomorrow on a realso revealed that Hasan quest to raise electricity rates for the month of April. Javed had previously under-The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA), respontation center. Despite these circumstances, a kidnapping case was registered at Darkshan police station at the request of his father, reflecting a rate increase of Rs 1.27

the family's concerns during | per unit. The successful location of Hasan Javed has brought relief amid the initial anxieties surrounding his disappearance. Authorities conto stress the importance of addressing sensitive family matters with care while ensuring public

cost has prompted the re-



The CPPA's data for ergy portfolio, but one in- that these could lead to a April reveals the growing creasingly burdened by heavier financial burden on cost pressures on electricity costly fuel sources. Hy- electricity consumers across generation. A total of 1.051 dropower accounted for Pakistan. billion units of electricity 21.94 percent of generation, were produced during the while local coal contributed Laghari highlighted the Minmonth, of which 1.019 billion 14.51 percent and imported istry of Energy's strong units were supplied to power coal 10.02 percent. Other reservations about NEPRA's companies across the coun- sources included furnace oil rulings, which risk affecting The average cost per gas at 8.01 percent, im- amid an already strained enunit stood at Rs 8.95, no- ported liquefied natural gas ergy sector. He pointed out tably higher than the refer- (LNG) at 20.52 percent, and that key generation tariff is-

ing Agency (CPPA), responsible for buying electricity on behalf of distribution compasions and side for buying electricity on behalf of distribution compasions and side for a price hike, which ergy, Owais Laghari, has voiced serious concerns regarding several recent decigarding several recent deci-An analysis of the elec-sions taken by the National

In an official statement, at less than 1 percent, local federal subsidies and tariffs ence cost of Rs 7.68 set by nuclear power provided a sues, pending since Decemthe regulator. This gap in significant 17.91 percent. ber 2024, remain unre-Federal Minister for En- solved and under review.

Netanyahu claims brother of Hamas's Yahya Sinwar killed

News Desk

GAZA: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Ne-tanyahu has claimed that Muhammad Ibrahim Hassan Sinwar, the brother of senior Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in News Desk Gaza earlier this month, marking what he described as a major blow to Hamas's military struc-

parliament on Wednesday, Netanyahu told lawmakers that Muhammad Sinwar—considered senior Hamas military commander—was elimiduring Israeli operations in the besieged Palestinian territory.

According to reports from Gaza, his body was



Sinwar had long been Hamas's most elusive and strategically influential figures, often described by also revealed plans to introthreshold of live hidrided ment heastles, the livin's goods, will the sales tax of thousand rupees to as much advocating for a broadening such items expected to rise as five million. Officials have of the tax base by calling for above the current 25 perures, often described by Israeli officials as someone who operated "from the shadows.

His military experience, coupled with close ties to the group's leadership. positioned him as a critical asset in Hamas's armed resistance.

Born in a Gaza refugee camp, the 50-year-old had spent decades within By Asghar Ali Mubarak Hamas's ranks, eventually rising to a key command

An analysis of the elecsions taken by the National tricity production mix for Electric Power Regulatory April shows a diversified en-Authority (NEPRA), warning deadly conflict that In response, Hassan Ali continues to devastate bowled brilliantly, taking five four sixes and two fours.

> military campaign, with re- tain Salman Ali Agha won and five fours. lentless airstrikes and the toss and opted to bat ing severe humanitarian louder, but Israel insists tively. its operations will continue until Hamas's leadership and infrastructure are dis-

IMF calls for tough measures to boost tax collection

Central to the IMF's proposals is a push to strengthen tax authorities, granting them greater powers to act decisively against defaulters

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has put forward a series of stringent recommen-Speaking during a spe- dations aimed at reshaping cial session of the Israeli Pakistan's budget for the fisdations aimed at reshaping cal year 2025-26, signaling a clear push for stronger fiscal discipline amid the couna try's ongoing economic difficulties. According to insiders familiar with the discussions, the IMF is urging the Pakistani government to take a tougher stance on tax collection, particularly by crack- evasion. ing down on evasion and the board

> tems, with fines potentially able tax environment. rising from the current



nology form another key pil-At the heart of the IMF's lar of the recommendations, them to take more robust system to better track rev- agriculture in Pakistan's action against defaulters. enue flows and plug loop- economy. This includes a marked in-holes exploited by evaders. Furthermore, the fund crease in penalties for those The use of digital tools is recommends increasing feddiscovered on May 18 in a found evading taxes through seen as essential to create a eral excise duties on agriculturnel system targeted by point-of-sale (POS) sys-more efficient and account-tural inputs and equipment,



for serious offenders, under- those granted on solar panlining a move towards a els, a sector previously enzero-tolerance policy on tax couraged under green energy policies. There are also Transparency and the suggestions to impose an 18 boosting compliance across adoption of advanced tech- percent general sales tax (GST) on agricultural essentials such as fertilizers, pesproposals is a call for ex- as the IMF stresses the ticides, and machinery. This panding the powers of tax need to modernize Pak- marks a significant shift authorities, empowering istan's tax administration given the sensitive nature of

Furthermore, the fund In addition to enforce- posing hikes on luxury regarded as one of threshold of five hundred ment measures, the IMF is goods, with the sales tax on

Pakistan start series strong with 37-run win

LAHORE: On Youm-e-Takbir, Pakistan defeated His brother, Yahya Sin-war, widely known as the first T20I to take a 1-0 Hamas's top leader in lead in the three-match se-Gaza, is also believed to ries. The match, played at have been killed in an ear- the Gaddafi Stadium, saw lier Israeli strike, though Pakistan post 201 runs for Hamas has not confirmed the loss of seven wickets in his death publicly.

The reported killing of San Nawaz and Shadab

Ayub and Fakhar Zaman,

order showed responsibility and



runs off 22 balls, including dismissed for four. wickets and bundling out the Vice-captain Shadab Khan Liton Das fought hard to Thousands have died visiting team for 164 runs in played an innings of 48 runs score 48 runs, supported by since the start of Israel's the final over. Pakistan cap- off 25 balls, hitting two sixes Zakir Ali with 36, Tanzeed

eleven runs respectively. For Rashad Hussain Mohammad, Tanzeem Has- runs respectively. For Pak-56 runs off 34 balls, while wicket at 14 runs when one wicket.

Hassan with 31, and Tohid Khushdil Shah and Fa- Hardoi with 17. Parvez Husground operations trigger- first. Both openers, Saim heem Ashraf added five and sain, Shamim Hussain, and concerns. International | failed to make an impact, re- Bangladesh, Shariful Islam added four runs, while Hascalls for restraint and a turning to the pavilion for took two wickets, while san Mahmood and Shariful ceasefire have grown zero and one run respec- Mehidy Hassan, Hassan Islam scored nine and five However, the middle san Saqib, Rashad Hossain, istan, Hassan Ali was the Shamim Hossain standout bowler, taking five and aggression, with Mo- claimed one wicket each. wickets. Shadab Khan took hammad Haris scoring 31 Chasing 202, Bangladesh two, while Faheem Ashraf, runs off 18 balls. Captain suffered an early blow in the Salman Ali Agha, and Salman Ali Agha contributed second over, losing their first Khushdil Shah each claimed

Fazl hails Pakistan's nuclear milestone in Muslim world

DHAKA: Protests have | By our correspondent erupted once again across

ISLAMABAD: Maulana Bangladesh, with demonstrators demanding imme-Fazl ur Rehman, the leader diate elections amid a of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), tense political atmosphere. voiced deep pride in Pakistan's distinction as the first In Dhaka, crowds are pressing the current innuclear power in the Muslim world during his message on terim government to hold Youm-e-Takbeer, the day polls without further delay, marking Pakistan's nuclear underscoring widespread frustration with ongoing tests. He underscored the political uncertainty. nation's commitment to Dr Muhammad Yunus, who heads the interim govfence capabilities, warning unequivocally that no threat would be tolerated against the country's security.
In his address, Maulana

ernment, is currently on an official visit to Japan. He assumed office in August 2024 after then-Prime Min-Sheikh Hasina Fazl ur Rehman urged Pak-Wajed fled to India following mass protests the prepowerful voice in support of oppressed Muslims around



emphasis on the plight of JUI-F chief reiterated his of Muslims worldwide. His Palestinians. He highlighted party's ongoing commitment message reflects a broader the critical need for solidarity to the vision of transforming narrative within Pakistan's with Muslim communities Pakistan into an Islamic wel- political discourse, where facing injustice and persecu- fare state founded on jus- national security, faith, and tion, framing this support as tice, equity, and the princiistanis to raise a united and both a moral and religious ples of Islam. He reminded deeply intertwined and seen

Beyond defence and in- of Pakistan was forged tion's identity.

through the sacrifices of millions of Muslims and insisted that defending the country remains a sacred duty, inseparable from religious

Maulana Fazl ur Rehman's remarks weave together religious conviction and political determination, urging Pakistanis to unite not only to safeguard the country's sovereignty but also to champion the rights global Muslim solidarity are the nation that the creation as essential pillars of the na-

Azerbaijan pledges \$2bn investment in Pakistan

News Desk

LACHIN: Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has unveiled a landmark \$2 billion investment plan for Pakistan, highlighting the growing strategic partnership between Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Speaking at the recent trilateral summit attended by leaders from all three nations, Aliyev emphasized the enduring historical and cultural bonds that unite them. He also paid tribute to the vital support extended by Pakistan and Turkey during the 2020 and Planning, Syed Nasir marked. conflict, describing it as a testament to their shared commitment and solidar-

This ambitious investment initiative signals a new phase in regional cooperation, with economic deepen alongside existing The announcement not that these countries are

British delegation praises Sindh's investor-friendly framework

By Zahid Karani

ter for Energy, Development, the government," he re-

cies for creating an environment of confidence among KARACHI: A high-level both local and foreign in-delegation from the British vestors. "Investors are engag-High Commission, led by ing here without fear or hesi-Head of Development Jo tation, owing to the security Moir, met with Sindh's Minis- and incentives provided by



Hussain Shah, at Ali House in Karachi to explore expanding which included Noam Roseninvestment hancing UK-Pakistan eco- Program,

the province's potential. Minister Nasir Shah described Sindh as a land of Department of Energy, Devel-He credited Chairman Bilawal Bhutto's forward-looking lead- stable ment's investor-friendly poli- vestment.

opportunities baum, Second Secretary at across Sindh's economic sec- the British Deputy High Comtors. The meeting, seen as a mission in Karachi, and the significant step toward en- Senior Political Advisor to the nomic collaboration, reflected Sindh's efforts in establishing collaboration expected to growing international interest a robust framework for investor facilitation. They acknowledged the

abundant opportunity, particu- opment, and Planning's key role in fostering regional ecoment, agriculture, and energy. nomic growth and underlined the importance of secure and ership and the Sindh govern- attract long-term foreign in-

Polio drive continues as 56pc of children vaccinated and Kashmir have shown ensure that their children re-

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's third national polio vaccination campaign of the year has now reached its third day, with authorities reporting that just over half of the targeted children have received the vaccine so far. According to the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), 56 percent first two days of the drive.

the country's provinces and only 47 percent of children Baltistan and Azad Jammu vaccination teams and to outbreaks.



of children under five have regions. Punjab and Khyber vaccinated. Balochistan health officials emphasized reflecting Pakistan's longbeen vaccinated during the Pakhtunkhwa have reported stands at 53 percent, while the ongoing risk it poses, standing commitment to points to a shared vision ment, agriculture, and energy. the highest coverage, each Islamabad reports 46 per- particularly to young chil- eradicating polio — a goal of prosperity and stability The campaign's progress reaching 60 percent. In con- cent coverage. The more re- dren. Parents have been that remains urgent as the varies significantly across trast, Sindh trails behind with mote regions of Gilgit- urged to cooperate fully with country battles persistent striving to achieve to-

promising results, achieving ceive polio drops in every percent coverage.

drive in Afghanistan, under- tional responsibility, appealscoring the critical need for ing to families across Pakcoordinated cross-border efistan to participate actively in forts to halt the spread of the the fight against this pre-

campaign.
The NEOC framed im-The NEOC highlighted that this campaign is running concurrently with a similar health measure but as a na-

ventable disease. Despite political and cultural ties. Given the virus's persist- challenges, the campaign ence in the environment, continues to push forward, only reinforces the trilat-