



# Islamabad POST

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

**China hopes for national stability in Iranian areas**

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**Naqvi leads historic PSL auction in Isb**

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**Balochistan govt unfurls many jobs**

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## Briefs

**Three ad-hoc judges made permanent**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) recommended on Monday that three ad hoc judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) and one of the Balochistan High Court (BHC) be made permanent. The decision was taken during a meeting of the JCP – the key judicial body responsible for appointing judges to the superior judiciary – chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi. A press release issued by the Supreme Court of Pakistan after the meeting said: "The commission also recommended, by majority, the confirmation of the following additional judges as judges of the Islamabad High Court ... after due consideration of the relevant data form, antecedents and evaluation of material placed before it." The commission has recommended the confirmation of Additional Judges Muhammad Azam Khan, Muhammad Asif and Inaam Ameen Minhas of the IHC.

**CTD kills 8 terrorists**

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) has killed eight terrorists, including two key commanders, during intelligence-based operations conducted over the last 24 hours in Peshawar, Khyber and Bannu districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to CTD officials on Monday, six dangerous terrorists affiliated with Fitna al-Khawarij were neutralized in successful operations in Peshawar and Khyber. In Peshawar, three terrorists were killed near a graveyard during an operation carried out on the basis of intelligence information. In a separate action in Jamrud, CTD thwarted a planned attack on police, killing three terrorists during a timely operation. In Bannu, two key commanders, Sohail alias Sangri and Ismail alias Usman, were killed in an intelligence-based operation.

## Govt refutes 'reckless' claims US fighter jets used Pakistan

Information ministry says "blame-pushing" narrative being pushed to drag Pakistan into US-Iran conflict

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The accounts falsely claimed that the US has moved KC-135R, an aerial refuelling tanker, and surveillance aircraft to Pakistan, conducting unusual flights towards or into Iranian airspace. Further, it was claimed that Pakistan is being used as a base or launch corridor to support US stealth fighters, such as F-35 and F-22, for a possible military strike on Iran. However, the information ministry said that the US aerial activity was recorded in Europe and the Middle East amid rising tension in both regions. Citing global publications such as Reuters and The Washington Post, the ministry said that the Pentagon dispatched refuelling aircraft to European bases. "No credible outlet confirms that US KC-135R/ISR aircraft are operating in Pakistan," the ministry added. It also recalled that Islamabad had publicly condemned US strikes on Iran in June last year. The raid, "Midnight Hammer", was the "largest B-2 operational strike in

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## Ready for war and dialogue

China opposes foreign 'interference' in Iran, expresses hope for stability in oil-rich Middle Eastern nation

NEWS DESK / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The situation in Iran is "under total control" after violence linked to protests spiked over the weekend, the country's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Monday via English translation. "We are ready for war but also for dialogue," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Monday in a briefing to foreign ambassadors in Tehran via English translation. He added that Trump's warning against Tehran of action should protests turn bloody had motivated "terrorists" to

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## After much ado

## NA speaker finally gets the ball rolling on Opp. leader's appointment

*Mahmood Khan likely to be notified as the opposition leader as desired by Imran Khan*

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq on Monday sought proposals for the nomination of the opposition leader in the lower house of Parliament. The post has been vacant since August 2025, following the disqualification of PTI's Omar Ayub by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

While the opposition has accused the government of delaying the appointment despite them putting forward Mahmood Khan Achakzai's name for the role, Sadiq has maintained that the delay was because the matter was sub judice. At the outset of Monday's session, Sadiq reiterated his stance that he could not

Continued on Page 06

## Tarar: no room for terrorist narrative

Tarar lauded the role of religious scholars in safeguarding the country's ideological frontiers and promoting peace

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday reaffirmed that terrorist elements would not be allowed to advance their narrative or ideology. Addressing the Qaumi Paigham-e-Amman



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## PM directs for setting new targets for training plans

FAIZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressing satisfaction over recent performance of National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), directed to set new targets for technical and vocational training programmes to further improve outcomes in future and ensure implementation of the Apprenticeship Law.

The prime minister was chairing a review meeting on the newly introduced vocational training ecosystem in the country, during which ongoing training programmes under the NAVTTTC were reviewed in detail. The prime minister said that providing international certifications to Pakistani manpower to enhance global competitiveness was a welcome development.

He directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis to accelerate efforts to increase the absorption of Pakistani skilled labour in Gulf countries. The prime minister emphasized that Pakistani youth possessed immense potential and that a comprehensive programme had been launched through NAVTTTC to harness these capabilities.

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## 6 policemen martyred, 3 injured in attacks

APP

PESHAWAR: At least six police personnel, including a Station House Officer (SHO), were martyred and three others injured in separate improvised explosive device (IED) attacks targeting police in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tank and Lakki Marwat districts on Monday. According to police, the first incident occurred in Gomal area of Tank, about 25 kilometers from Kot Wali, where an IED struck a police armoured personnel carrier (APC). The powerful explosion completely destroyed the vehicle. According to police,

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RAWALPINDI: Defence Minister of Indonesia Lt. Gen(Rtd), Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin met with Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in Rawalpindi. – DNA

## Defence pact likely

## Indonesia keen to procure JF-17 jets, drones from Pakistan

The visit of the Indonesian Defence Minister is seen as a direct follow-up to the recent visit of the President of Indonesia to Pakistan

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Indonesia has shown keen interest in acquiring Pakistan's indigenously developed JF-17 Thunder fighter jets along with Pakistani-made drones, as defence co-operation between the two friendly countries deepens, informed sources said on Monday. The potential defence deal is being viewed as a major milestone in Pakistan-Indonesia strategic ties and could pave the way for a broader defence pact between the two sides.

According to sources, discussions gained momentum during the recent visit of Indonesia's Defence Minister, who held high-level meetings with key Pakistani officials, including the Minister for Defence Production and the Chief of the Air Staff. The talks focused on defence procurement, technology transfer, training, and long-term collaboration in the defence sector. Sources revealed that Indonesia is considering the purchase of up to 40 JF-17 Thunder fighter jets if the negotiations materialize successfully. The multi-role combat aircraft, jointly developed by Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) and

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## Pak values ties with Indonesia: COAS Munir

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin (Retd), Minister of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi. The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, evolving regional and global security dynamics, and exploration of avenues for enhancing bilateral defence cooperation.

Both sides underscored the importance of strengthening institutional linkages, training collaboration, and defence industrial cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia. The visiting dignitary lauded professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism. He also expressed Indonesia's

Continued on Page 06

## Thailand-Pakistan ties move from friendship to action

Exclusive Interview: H.E. Rongvudhi Virabutr, Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan. The first part of the interview was published on January 7, 2026

### EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Rongvudhi Virabutr, Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan has shared his vision for deepening bilateral ties through cultural diplomacy, people-to-people connections, and economic integration. The Ambassador began by reflecting on the current state of cultural relations: "The two nations already know each other, but we are not yet truly close.

The Embassy of Thailand is committed to working tirelessly to close this gap through sustained cultural exchange. Cultural diplomacy remains the foundation of a deeper and more meaningful friendship." Highlighting a successful recent initiative, he spoke about Thai Food Week in Islamabad: "This was a key effort to bring our flavors closer to the hearts of Pakistanis. We brought authentic Thai chefs who trained local Pakistani chefs in genuine Thai cooking techniques. The Pakistani chefs then prepared traditional Thai dishes, which have now been permanently added to the menus of participating restaurants. Organized in close collaboration with the Monal Group, the event was deliberately designed as a sustainable culinary bridge – ensuring the 'flavor of friendship' continues long after the festival concludes." Looking to the future, Ambassador Virabutr announced a major upcoming cultural milestone: "In 2027, we will host the historic Gandhara Civilization Exhibition in Thailand. Both governments have agreed to showcase precious Buddhist artifacts from Pakistan's rich Gandhara heritage in Bangkok.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Thailand talking to Daily Islamabad POST. – DNA

This exhibition will allow Thai audiences to directly appreciate Pakistan's ancient cultural treasures and will act as a powerful cultural magnet, attracting greater interest and investment toward Pakistan's invaluable heritage sites." On the broader goal of strengthening people-to-people contacts, the Ambassador emphasized: "This is a top priority for the Embassy. We are deploying every available tool – promoting tourism, fostering cultural exchange, and encouraging direct human interaction. The Thai Food Festival and the upcoming Gandhara Exhibition are important milestones, but we are going further. Through collaboration with UN Women, we have launched programs to upskill women entrepreneurs in Swabi and Sialkot in Beauty and

Livelihood as well as Regenerative Agriculture. Training in the beauty sector enables women to work from home, while backyard gardens are being transformed into reliable sources of income. Experts like Miss Jennifer Innes Taylor-Jane, a Thai organic farm owner, have generously shared regenerative farming practices. We firmly believe that empowering women through income generation builds confidence, independence, and lasting change." He elaborated on the early outcomes of this pilot project: "The initiative has already enabled Thai and Pakistani women farmers to interact directly, exchange knowledge, and open channels for future cooperation. Together, they are developing innovative agricultural approaches that will help Pakistani women generate sustainable income over the long term." As Chairman of the ASEAN Islamabad Committee, Ambassador Virabutr outlined his guiding strategy: "My approach is built on three clear priorities – Visibility, Tangibility, and Bring into Reality. Today, ASEAN is a \$3.6 trillion economic powerhouse with over 600 million people, while Pakistan has a population exceeding 250 million. Seamlessly integrating our economies would create a formidable combined force. We are focused on removing barriers by expanding Pakistan's Free Trade Agreements with individual ASEAN member states, promoting initiatives such as an ASEAN Trade Fair, and advancing paperless trading systems. ASEAN already operates the successful ASEAN Single Window; if Pakistan develops and connects its own system, imports and exports will become faster, more efficient, and fully transparent.

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## DC inspects Civil Hospital, Zarghoon Khel

KOHAT :Deputy Commissioner (DC), Rahimullah Mehsood on Monday paid a visit to Civil Hospital Zarghoon Khel and Basic Health Unit (BHU) Togh Bala to review facilities for the public. During the inspection, he reviewed the emergency ward and other sections of the hospitals, checking the availability of medicines, cleanliness arrangements, and overall management. The deputy commissioner also met with patients, inquired about their health, an expressed good wishes for their recovery. On the occasion, Rahimullah Mehsood directed the concerned officials to ensure timely and quality medical treatment for all patients. He emphasized that hospital staff must remain present during duty hours, treat patients with courtesy, and further improve the system of cleanliness and public service so that maximum facilities could be provided to the general public. —APP

## SALU VC stresses responsibility

SUKKUR: The Pharmacy and Botany departments of Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU) on Monday held an orientation session for new students, where Vice Chancellor Dr. Yousuf Khushk emphasized the importance of responsibility and excellence in these fields. Addressing the students, Dr. Khushk said a pharmacist plays a crucial role in saving lives and must ensure the quality, dosage, and expiry of medicines. He urged students to work hard, enhance their skills, and contribute to society. The government is spending huge funds to run this university for you. What we want is for you to be educated to play your role for society, he said. Dr. Khushk highlighted the university's investment in student development, including 13 crore rupees in scholarships, and encouraged students to seek national and international opportunities.—APP

# Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's role in Pak movement is unforgettable

OUR CORRESPONDENT

WAZIRABAD: Masood Ali Khan, grandson of the father of journalism, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, has said that Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's role in the Pakistan Movement is unforgettable and commendable. He inspired the spirit of freedom among the Muslims of the subcontinent with his pen and awakened them from their slumber. He expressed these views while exchanging gifts with the media on the occasion of offering Fateha and laying a wreath at the tomb of the father of journalism, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. His son, Moazam Ali Khan, son of former President of Pakistan Muhammad Rafiq Tarar and father of Federal Minister for Information Atta Tarar and local MNA Bilal Farooq Tarar, Honorable Muhammad Farooq Tarar, Chief Executive of Bhutta Group of Companies Muhammad Rafiq Bhutta, Chief Executive of Paragon Marquee and spirit of Wazirabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Rashid Rafiq Bhutta, President of Pakistan Journalists Council Dr. Khalid Mahmood, Secretary General Gulzar Ahmed Noshi and prominent businessman Mian Nadeem were also present on the occasion. He said that Maulana Zafar Ali Khan was not an individual but a movement. He worked on not one but many fronts. He played a great role in uprooting the feet of British imperialism from the subcontinent through his writings, passionate speeches and poetry. Masood Ali Khan further said that Maulana Zafar Ali Khan was a true lover of the Prophet and a poet of Naat. He also fought hard against the sedition of Qadianism. His role in the movement for the establishment of Pakistan is prominent and commendable. Earlier, he also visited the residence of the father of journalism, in which the office of the Wazirabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been established. He expressed his joy at



the renovation of the building by the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, its restoration to its original form and the allocation of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's bedroom for his used items and library, and recalled his memories associated with this great building. He also promised to provide Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's used items to decorate his bedroom at the request of Muhammad Rafiq Bhutta. On this occasion, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's great-grandson, Moazam Ali Khan, also expressed his happiness at seeing the restoration of the residence of the

father of journalism and grandfather and shared his childhood memories with the participants. On this occasion, Muhammad Farooq Tarar, also paid tribute to the father of journalism Maulana Zafar Ali Khan for his services towards the Pakistan Movement. In addition, Muhammad Rafiq Bhutta, Chief Executive of Bhutta Group of Companies, expressed his thoughts and paid tribute to the father of journalism and expressed his determination to restore his residence to its original condition.

## Gamblers arrested in Attock

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOK: Attock Police arrested an influential gang of twenty gamblers involved in dog fighting completion along with recovery of huge amount of money at stake, five pet dogs, precious cars, sound system, generator from their possession at the outskirts locality of Koliyar of police station Fatehjang on Mondy. Police spokesman says that on a tip off, Fatehjang police constituted a party which conducted a planned raid at the den of dog fighting organized by their ring leader Jamal Ali son of Qamar Zaman resident of village Naka of district Rawalpindi and arrested his other accomplice identified as Mohammad Zohaib, Tajamal Hussain, Zameer Anwar, Mohamad Asif, Jamil Ahmed, Muzafar Hussain, Abid Mehmood, Mohammad Ejaz, Khalid, Waqas Ahmed, Anees Ahmed, Tanvir, Afaq, Saad Anwar, Mohammad Shahzad, Kamran Javed, Abdul Jabbar, Ehtesham and Riaz on the spot. The police also took into custody money at stake Rs.183500, Five pet fighting dogs, Five vehicles, sound system and generator from their possession.

## Bugti announces merit-based online recruitment

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Monday said that online recruitment is being started on 111 government posts on 100 percent merit and paperless basis in the Finance Department for the first time in the history of the province. He said this in a message on social networking site X issued here. Balochistan Chief Minister said that his first and unequivocal promise to the people of Balochistan was that neither government jobs would be sold in the province nor could corruption or nepotism be tolerated in any way. He said that the provincial government is taking practical and effective steps to restore public trust and transparent governance. The Chief Minister said that to fulfill

this promise, the transparency system is being further strengthened in Balochistan and in this regard, online recruitment is being started on 111 government posts on 100 percent merit and paperless basis in the Finance Department for the first time in the history of the province. He said that this step is a step towards eliminating corruption and institutional reforms, it is a historic step. Mir Sarfraz Bugti clarified that under this new recruitment system, an online test would be conducted from the candidates, their qualifications and aptitude could be tested in a transparent manner. He said that the successful candidates would be issued appointment letters within an hour to ensure merit-based appointments.

The Chief Minister said that this reform system is being started from the Finance Department, which would be extended to government jobs of all other departments of the Balochistan government in a phased manner. He said that incumbent provincial government is committed to promoting good governance, transparency and accountability through the use of modern technology. The CM said that merit, transparency and promises made to the people are the basis of the governance of the Balochistan government and the provincial government would continue to take such steps at all levels that could empower the youth and give their rights to the eligible persons.—APP

## Gilani Strongly Condemns Blast

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, has strongly condemned the bomb blast targeting an armored vehicle on Gomal Bazaar Road in District Tank. The Chairman Senate expressed profound grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives. He extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families and paid rich tribute to the professional services and supreme sacrifices of the martyred police personnel. He stated that the nation will always remember and honor the sacrifices rendered by the brave police personnel in the line of duty. —APP

## Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.01 compared to the previous day's closing at Rs 280.02. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 280.75 and Rs 282.75, respectively. —APP

## PSX sheds 2,025 points to close at 182,384 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday closed bearish, losing 2,025.52 points, a negative change of 1.10 percent, to settle at 182,384.15 points compared to 184,409.67 points on the previous trading day, according to PSX data. During the session, the ready market witnessed a trading volume of 1,058.795 million shares with a traded value of Rs 48,237 billion, against 1,033.852 million shares

valuing Rs 52.924 billion in the previous session. Market capitalization declined to Rs 20.599 trillion from Rs 20.768 trillion a day earlier. Out of 481 active companies in the ready market, 161 advanced, 284 declined, while 36 remained unchanged. Fauji Foods Limited topped the volume chart with 65.616 million shares, followed by WorldCall Telecom with 51.257 million shares and Hascol Petroleum Limited with 47.261 million shares.

The top gainers included Tandlianwala Sugar Mills Limited, which rose by Rs 19.44 to close at Rs 213.82, and Pakistan Engineering Company Limited, which increased by Rs 14.99 to settle at Rs 564.98. On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited (B) declined by Rs 200.00 to close at Rs 23,000.00, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited fell by Rs 82.99 to close at Rs 28,652.01.—APP

## 494 Imams receive Rs 25,000

MUZAFFARGARH: Exactly 494 Imams of tahsil Muzaffargarh received Rs 25,000 pay orders each under the Honorarium Card Programme, a welfare initiative of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, at a ceremony held at the district council hall here Monday. The ceremony was attended by MPA Aon Hameed Dogar and Deputy Commissioner Muzaffargarh Usman Tahir Jappa as special guests. Speaking on the occasion, the DC declared mosque Imams as a source of peace, guidance, and moral values in society, and in line with

the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab government was taking all possible steps for their welfare and well-being. Additional deputy commissioner (General) Muhammad Yousaf Cheena and Assistant Commissioner Muzaffargarh Ali Sameer, said the Punjab government was implementing practical measures to improve the social status and financial stability of mosque Imams. The DC informed that pay orders were distributed among 494 deserving mosque Imams in Tehsil Muzaffargarh, adding that

from next month, this honorarium will be disbursed through ATM cards. He further said that the distribution of pay orders is also underway at Tehsil Alipur and Jatoi. Participants said that honoring mosque Imams is a social responsibility and in line with Islamic teachings. A large number of religious scholars belonging to different schools of thought from across the district attended the ceremony and appreciated the initiative of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, terming it a commendable step for the welfare of religious leaders.—APP



ISLAMABAD: General Sectary Muslim League (Q) Chaudhry Jahangir presenting winning trophy to Barsa Group on the USA Tent Pegging Championship former Deputy Mayor Syed Zeshan Shah Naqvi and others also present. DNA Photo

## Naval chief chairs BoG meeting of Bahria University

DNA


ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf NI, NI(M), T.Bt, in his capacity as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Board of Governors (BoG) of Bahria University, chaired the 55th Board of Governors (BoG) meet-

ing at Bahria University Head Office, Islamabad on 12 January 2026. The session of BoG commenced with a detailed briefing on the university's key activities, flagship programmes and strategic initiatives. During the meeting, Admiral Naveed Ashraf lauded the recent milestones achieved by

Bahria University, including its advancements in academic excellence, research output and innovative learning methodologies to cater to the needs of today's evolving digital world. During the meeting, key academic, research and institutional initiatives undertaken were reviewed

and approved. These included the re-organization of Bahria Business School and the ratification of the revised policy for Psychological Service Centers to enhance student and BU community wellbeing. In addition, amendments to University Statutes and Academic Regulations were also approved.





### GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN UTILITY STORES CORPORATION OF PAKISTAN (PVT) LIMITED

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR HIRING OF COURIER SERVICES THROUGH EPADS**

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Sr. No	Description	Earnest Money
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<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>100,000/-</b>

Sealed bids offer is invited under Rule 36 (b) "single stage two envelope" of the Public Procurement Rules, 2004, for provisioning of Courier Services.

Bids should be submitted electronically only through E-PADS. Manual submission of bids is not allowed. For registration on E-PADS or in case of any technical difficulty in using E-PADS, prospective bidders may contact Director (MIS), PPRA.

The bids prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, must be submitted on E-PADS by 27.01.2026 at 11:00 AM which will be opened on the same day at 11:30 AM through E-PADS. All interested bidders must register themselves at E-PADS at <http://eprocure.gov.pk>. No physical bid shall be entertained. In case of opening of bids falls on local/national holiday, the date of bid closing/opening shall be the next working day on the same time and venue.

The bidders are required to give their best and final prices (including all applicable taxes) as no negotiation with respect to scope of work and pricing is allowed. Bids not complying with the requirements shall be rejected being nonresponsive. Alternate/conditional/incomplete proposals shall be considered nonresponsive. Taxes will be deducted as per applicable Government Rules. NTN and Sales Tax Registrations certificates must be provided with the Bid.

Bids which are incomplete/not sealed/not signed/not stamped/late or submitted by other than specified mode will be rejected. The contract will be awarded to the most advantageous bid on a lump sum contract basis.

Bidding / Tender documents along with terms and conditions etc., for bidding can be obtained electronically and can be down loaded from USCP website i.e. [www.usc.org.pk](http://www.usc.org.pk) as well as E-PADS-PPRA website [www.eprocure.gov.pk](http://www.eprocure.gov.pk) free of cost. Bidders need to register at E-PADS PPRA to access the tender document and other relevant information.

An affidavit on legal stamp paper worth Rs.100/- to the effect that the bidder has not been blacklisted by any Govt/Semi Govt/Autonomous Organization and there is no litigation lying pending adjudication in any Court of Law.

For more information and queries, please contact the undersigned.

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**PID (I) 5727/25**



National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA  
Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Palestine  
Palestine Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Sudan  
National Day

Jan 04 / Myanmar  
Independence Day

Jan 06 / Iraq  
Armed Forces Day

Jan 12 / Tanzania  
Armed Forces Day

Jan 14 / Uzbekistan  
Armed Forces Day

Jan 15 / Nigeria  
Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Mali  
Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Laos  
Armed Forces Day

Jan 25 / Thailand  
Armed Forces Day

Jan 26 / Australia  
National Day

Jan 26 / India  
Republic Day

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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Rawal Town.....	5773343
Water Tank	
Islamabad.....	0321-5744480

# FGEHF intensifies evacuation campaign in sector G-14/1

*Residents Asked to Vacate Undeveloped Land Amid Long-Standing Delays; In recent updates, the Minister for Housing and Works directed re-tendering for development works in G-14/1, with hopes of awarding contracts and starting ground activities*

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHF) has launched a fresh door-to-door campaign in Sector G-14/1, urging residents and occupants to vacate the land starting Monday (January 13, 2026). Teams from the Foundation visited homes, informing people that failure to leave voluntarily could lead to a full-scale operation within the next

two weeks to reclaim the area for development. Sector G-14/1, part of the ambitious housing scheme launched by FGEHF in the mid-2000s for federal government employees, remains largely undeveloped after more than two decades. Despite repeated announcements, court directives, and promises of possession, the sub-sector has seen minimal progress due to challenges in land acquisition, compensation for built-up properties (BUPs), and vacation of illegally occupied or settled areas. The is-

sue has been highlighted in news reports multiple times over the years, with allottees expressing frustration over prolonged delays. Many original allottees, who were allocated plots around 2005 at subsidized rates, have either passed away while waiting or sold their plots in despair. Elderly widows, retired employees, and families have waited decades for possession, with some sub-sectors like G-14/4 seeing partial development while G-14/1, G-14/2, and parts of G-14/3 remain stalled. In recent

updates, the Minister for Housing and Works directed re-tendering for development works in G-14/1, with hopes of awarding contracts and starting ground activities. However, the core obstacle remains the vacation of densely occupied built-up properties. FGEHF has previously required significant funds (estimated Rs 6-7 billion in earlier reports) to compensate affected parties and clear the land. Surveys using GIS technology have been conducted, but progress has been slow. The current

evacuation notice emphasizes voluntary compliance, with officials stressing that the authority aims to begin phased development soon after reclaiming contiguous blocks of land. Affected residents have been advised to contact FGEHF offices for details on compensation processes or legal options. FGEHF, under the Ministry of Housing and Works, continues to face criticism for these delays, which have turned parts of G-14 into pockets of uncertainty despite the authority's mandate to provide affordable housing.



ISLAMABAD: Hasnat Ahmed Qureshi, Managing Director PPRA, accompanied by Dr Aslam Waseem, DG Legal PPRA, and Sheikh Afzaal Raza, Project Director EPADS, highlighted landmark procurement reforms while briefing journalists at PID.

## CJ inaugurates FCCCP

ISLAMABAD: The recently established Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) was formally inaugurated on Monday in a simple yet dignified ceremony, marking a historic milestone in the country's constitutional evolution. Chief Justice, Justice Amin ud Din Khan, the first head of the FCCP, formally unveiled the plaque of the newly created top constitutional court. All sitting judges of the FCCP – Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Aamer Farooq, Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, Justice Muhammad Karim Agha Khan, Justice Rozi Khan Barrech and Justice Arshad Husain Shah – were accompanying the Chief Justice FCCP in the inauguration. Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Registrar FCCP Muhammad Hafeezullah Khan, representatives of the legal fraternity, media personnel, and officials from the departments concerned were also present. The FCCP has been established in a prominent building on Constitutional Avenue, located directly opposite the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The premises were previously occupied by the Federal Shariat Court (FSC), which has now shifted to another location on the same avenue. The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan was created on November 13, 2025, through the Twenty-Seventh Constitutional Amendment. Justice Amin ud Din Khan took oath as the court's first Chief Justice the following day, November 14, 2025. The court has since been operational and has begun hearing cases from its new permanent location, marking the beginning of a new chapter in Pakistan's constitutional jurisprudence.—APP

## Railways taking measures to curb pollution

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is proactively implementing a range of measures to minimize environmental pollution and ensure safe working conditions for its workforce. "So far no Federal or Provincial Environment Protection Agency (EPA) has directed Pakistan Railways to install air quality monitoring devices or adopt additional precautionary measures," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said that no railway facility has been declared a high-risk pollution site by the provincial authorities. The official clarified that the monitoring of the Air Quality Index (AQI) falls under the mandate of the EPAs, which are fully authorized to assess air quality within the premises of Pakistan Railways, including railway stations, engine sheds and workshops. Following the directions of Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, the official said protective masks have been

provided to labourers, particularly to safeguard them from welding fumes and carbon emissions. He said that workshops and engine sheds are in the process of procuring and installing industrial exhaust fans to improve ventilation and workplace safety. Highlighting ongoing environmental initiatives, the official said Pakistan Railways has undertaken significant efforts to reduce air pollution. "These include the induction of modernized locomotives equipped with electronic fuel injection systems, regular maintenance of engines to curb harmful emissions, and measures to minimize locomotive idling," he added. He said that Pakistan Railways is promoting the use of green solar energy to reduce dependence on diesel generators. Improved dust and waste management practices, such as wet sweeping and proper disposal of scrap material, have also been introduced to enhance

air quality across railway premises. "Tree plantation drives are being carried out regularly around railway stations, workshops and engine sheds as part of broader environmental protection efforts," the official added. He said Pakistan Railways is actively participating in the Federal Government's tree plantation campaigns, while provincial governments have also been engaged to undertake linear tree plantation along railway tracks and develop green belts across the country to help improve overall air quality. Reiterating the department's stance, the official said that while AQI monitoring remains the responsibility of the EPAs, Pakistan Railways remains committed to adopting environmentally friendly practices and contributing to national efforts aimed at reducing pollution and promoting sustainable development.—DNA

## New song Premiere Salutes 75 Years of Sino-Pakistani Bond released

ISLAMABAD: A special song titled "Dosti Ka Jashan – Celebration of Friendship" has been officially released commemorating the 75th year of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. The premiere took place at a dual-themed event to celebrate this historic milestone alongside the upcoming Chinese Spring Festival, organized by the Chinese Business Council of Pakistan in Lahore. Crafted and performed by Chinese UNI International team, which has long contributed to vocational education collaboration in Pakistan, the song blends linguistic and musical traditions from both nations.—APP

## ANF seizes over 258 kg of narcotics in nationwide operations

RAWALPINDI: The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) conducted nine countrywide operations, arresting five suspects and seizing 258.94 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs244.8 million, an ANF spokesman said on Monday. He said that one suspect was arrested near Sahu Chowk in Multan, where two kilograms of crystal methamphetamine (ice) concealed in a bag were recovered. The accused confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions, the statement added. In international interdiction actions, ANF recovered 2.5kg of ice hidden inside books from a parcel bound for Riyadh at a courier office in Lahore's Gulberg area. At the cargo shed of Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore, 765 grams of ice soaked in books were seized from a parcel destined for Dubai. In another operation at a courier office on Shah Jamal Road, Lahore, 67,200 tablets weighing 6.72kg were intercepted from a parcel booked for the United Kingdom. In domestic operations, 15.6 kg of opium was recovered from a vehicle near Ring Road, Peshawar, and the suspect was arrested. Near Indus Highway, Kohat, 10.8kg of hashish was confiscated from a car, and two accused were apprehended. At a courier office on GT Road, Lahore, 20.16kg of Valium tablets were seized from a parcel arriving from Karachi. Near Western Bypass, Hazarganj, Quetta, 198kg of heroin was recovered. In an inter-provincial operation, 2.4 kg of hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Fateh Jang Toll Plaza, Islamabad, and one suspect was arrested. Cases have been registered under the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997 and further investigations are underway, the spokesman said.

## Zero-tolerance policy enforced against Railway theft

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Monday reaffirmed that a strict zero-tolerance policy is being enforced against individuals involved in the theft and sabotage of railway property. The minister lauded the timely action of SHO Railway Police Landhi Muhammad Habib Zafar and his team for successfully thwarting an attempt to steal valuable railway tracks in Karachi, said a news release. He said such criminal activities cause heavy losses to the national exchequer and damage critical public infrastructure. In line with the government's zero-tolerance policy against theft and damage to national assets, the Railway Police conducted a major operation in Karachi, recovering railway material worth millions of rupees and arresting four suspects. According to details, the Railway Police Karachi Division carried out a successful raid within the jurisdiction of Railway Police Station Landhi, near Murtaaza Chowrangi and along the Malir River. During the operation, a gang involved in stealing railway tracks and other equipment was caught red-handed while cutting railway lines using gas cutters. Initial investigations revealed that the recovered railway material was worth millions of rupees and that the criminal activity had already caused significant financial losses. The timely intervention by the Railway Police prevented further damage to vital railway infrastructure. A case has been registered against the arrested suspects at Railway Police Station Landhi, while raids are ongoing to apprehend other members of the gang involved in railway theft.—APP

## Officers of IRS visit FBR headquarter

ISLAMABAD: Nine probationary officers of the Inland Revenue Service (IRS) from the 53rd Common Training Programme (CTP), undergoing training at the Civil Services Academy (CSA), Lahore, visited the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Headquarters as part of their Inland Study Tour. The visit aimed to familiarize the newly inducted officers with the organizational structure, functions, and operational framework of FBR, said a news release here on Monday. The officers were briefed in a session chaired by Zubair Bilal, Member Inland Revenue (Operations), who highlighted the role of FBR in revenue collection and tax administration. He emphasized the professional competencies required from FBR officers, including strong expertise in taxation and accounting, along with a sound understanding of tax laws.

He also outlined the mandate of the Inland Revenue Operations Wing, focusing on revenue enhancement through taxpayer profiling, data-driven analysis, and effective sharing of actionable intelligence with field formations. Shafqat Rasool Sandhu, Secretary Inland Revenue Operations, delivered detailed presentations on FBR's revenue mobilization strategies, institutional reforms, and change management initiatives. He further briefed the officers on the cadre structure, roles, and responsibilities of officers, and their contribution to the overall functioning of the organization. The presentations were followed by an interactive question-and-answer session in which the probationary officers actively participated. At the conclusion of the visit, the faculty of the Civil Services Academy appreciated the FBR management for arranging a comprehensive and informative briefing. As a gesture of goodwill souvenirs were exchanged. The faculty and probationary officers termed the visit highly successful, noting that it provided valuable insights into FBR's role in fiscal governance, institutional reform, and public sector modernization.—APP

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## Briefs

DIG holds  
Orderly Room

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq held an Orderly Room at his office to address welfare, service and administrative issues faced by police officers. A police spokesperson told APP on Monday that officers posted in the Operations Division presented both departmental and personal matters during the session. Several issues were resolved on the spot, while the DIG issued directions to senior officers for the immediate resolution of remaining matters. DIG Tariq said the purpose of holding the Orderly Room was to ensure that police officers' concerns are addressed on priority. He emphasised that effective welfare measures for the force will continue without interruption. He said his office doors are always open for officers who face any problem, adding that a motivated, supported and well-facilitated police force is essential for maintaining peace in the federal capital. "We all have a shared responsibility to keep this city safe, and the welfare of our officers and timely resolution of their issues is my top priority," DIG Tariq added.—APP

FE&PT Secretary  
Reviews NIETE  
Teachers Initiative

ISLAMABAD: Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (FE&PT), Nadeem Mahbub, reviewed progress of the teacher development initiative under the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education (NIETE), during a meeting. The meeting was attended by the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) and Project Coordination Unit (PCU) teams. NIETE Project Director, Riffat Jabeen, highlighted the continuous professional development of FDE primary teachers through an evidence-based, technology-enabled approach, detailing structured training, certification, and progress against targets and timelines through the NIETE app. Underscoring the importance of quality teaching, the Secretary directed the team to accelerate implementation. He also interacted with the NIETE coaches and trainers, appreciating their on-ground efforts, acknowledging their role in improving classroom practices, and encouraging innovation and commitment.—APP

ICT Police  
holds anti-narcotics  
awareness walk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Monday organised an anti-narcotics awareness walk, bringing together students from leading universities and colleges under its ongoing campaign "Nasha Ab Nahi," aimed at curbing drug abuse and promoting a drug-free learning environment across the federal capital. A police spokesperson told APP on Monday that the awareness walk was held on the special instructions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, who has directed both intensified enforcement operations and community-focused initiatives to keep educational institutions safe from drugs. Students from Bahria University, Air University, and other educational institutions participated in large numbers, along with SP City Dr. Ayaz Hussain, SP Industrial Area Khalid Mehmoode Awan, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, civil society representatives, Friends of Police, and local residents. The walk began from Shaheen Chowk and concluded in front of the National Defence University (NDU), where participants highlighted the harmful effects of drug use and emphasised the collective responsibility to protect youth from addiction. The spokesperson said the objective of the awareness walk was to strengthen cooperation between Islamabad Police and educational institutions, and to directly engage students in efforts to prevent drug abuse in campuses and surrounding areas.—APP

FS opens Cyber capacity-building  
and Policy Training Program

In her keynote address at the inaugural session, Ambassador Amna Baloch highlighted the growing importance of cybersecurity for national resilience, international peace and stability, and sustainable development

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador Amna Baloch, today inaugurated the five-day Cyber Capacity-Building and Policy Training Programme in Islamabad. The Programme is organised in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), with the support of Global Affairs Canada, and aims to strengthen national capacities to address evolving cyber threats and the challenges of governance in cyberspace. In her keynote address at

the inaugural session, Ambassador Amna Baloch highlighted the growing importance of cybersecurity for national resilience, international peace and stability, and sustainable development. She underscored Pakistan's active engagement in multilateral processes on information and communications technology (ICT) security, particularly in the context of the United Nations framework on responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, including international law, voluntary norms, confidence-building measures, and capacity-building initiatives. She emphasised that inclusive international cooperation

remains essential to addressing shared cyber challenges.

Other speakers at the opening session included the Director of UNIDIR, Mr Robin Geiss; the High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan, Ambassador Tarik Ali Khan; and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, Mr. Mohamed Yahya. They emphasised the importance of international cooperation and capacity-building in the cyber domain and highlighted the value of policy-oriented training and practical exercises in enhancing States' ability to respond to cyber threats, including those targeting

critical infrastructure. The Programme brings together policymakers, technical experts and academics from relevant national institutions and features expert-led sessions, scenario-based discussions, and table-top exercises covering cyber threats, emerging technologies, cybercrime, incident response, and international cooperation frameworks.

The Pakistan-UNIDIR Cyber Capacity-Building and Policy Training Programme is being held in Islamabad from 12 to 16 January 2026 and is being coordinated by UNIDIR in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court building was inaugurated today. Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar also attended the ceremony.

Sadequain Foundation  
launches Camus L'Étranger  
book, lithograph exhibition

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Sadequain Foundation, in collaboration with Alliance Française Lahore, has hosted a book launch and lithograph print exhibition of Albert Camus' L'Étranger — Sadequain, authored by Dr. Salman Ahmad, at the AF Galerie. The exhibition featured 30 original lithographic works by the celebrated modernist Sadequain, created to illustrate Albert Camus' seminal existential novel The Stranger. Curated by visual artist Zuha Tareen, the exhibition explored the psychological and philosophical tensions embedded in Camus' text through Sadequain's stark lines, expressive forms, and symbolic intensity, said a press release issued here.

Reflecting on the curatorial approach, Zuha Tareen noted: "L'Étranger is linear in a way life is often not. Sadequain presents it as a mind-bending spar between revulsion and release. Humanity is presented as a noun, a verb, and a phenomenon; Sadequain's raw yet layered treatment of the human condition is a perfect match for the Camus." Addressing the audience, S. Izmerai Durrani, Executive Producer of the Sadequain Foundation, emphasized the importance of situating Sadequain within a broader intellectual and global context. "Sadequain was not only a visual artist but a profound thinker in conversation with global philosophical ideas," Durrani said. "This body of work reflects his deep engagement with existential thought, and the Foundation remains committed to preserving, publishing, and presenting such critical

chapters of his legacy for future generations," he added. The launch of Dr. Salman Ahmad's book offered scholarly insight into the intersection of text and image, situating Sadequain's lithographs within both art historical and philosophical frameworks. Awaiz Khan, Prof. Kanwal Khalid, S. Izmerai Durrani, and Director Sarah Tareen also spoke on the occasion, underscoring the cultural relevance of revisiting Sadequain's literary illustrations today. The exhibition and book launch drew artists, writers, academics, and students, reinforcing Alliance Française Lahore's role as a platform for cross-cultural exchange between Pakistan and France. The event affirmed the enduring resonance of both Sadequain and Albert Camus, and the capacity of visual art and literature to engage in a sustained dialogue across time and geograph.

PPRA leads  
reforms

ISLAMABAD: Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) has implemented landmark reforms in public procurement in line with the Digital Pakistan Vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and international best practices. Central to this transformation is the e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System (EPADS), which has already revolutionized procurement nationwide and is ready to enter its next phase with the launch of an upgraded version, EPADS 2.0. This was stated by Hasnat Ahmed Qureshi, Managing Director PPRA, while briefing journalists here on Monday.

He informed that, following a diagnostic review conducted by international and local consultants and the subsequent approval of the reform's roadmap by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, PPRA initiated a comprehensive reform programme in 2024, encompassing e-procurement implementation, legal, capacity building, and institutional reforms. Qureshi highlighted that the transition to e-procurement was achieved through the rollout of the EPADS in the Federal Government and three provinces. So far, 9,846 procuring agencies and 43,000 suppliers, including 600 foreign vendors, have registered on the platform. During the financial year 2024-25 alone, 526,271 transactions worth Rs. 1,408.58 billion were carried out through EPADS, he informed. EPADS is now fully integrated with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Financial Accounting and Budgeting System (FABS), Provincial Revenue Authorities (PRAS), and the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP). In addition, dedicated dashboards have been made available to oversight bodies, including the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), and the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP). "With the integration of national institutions and real-time dashboards for oversight bodies, EPADS has transformed procurement into a system where every transaction is verified, accountability is strengthened at every stage, and public trust is safeguarded through transparency, remarked MD PPRA. Hasnat Qureshi further stated that EPADS has delivered transparency, efficiency, and value for money by reducing collusive practices and enhancing competition, with an average of five to seven bidders per open competitive bidding compared to two to three bidders in manual procurement. Expenditure incurred through petty purchases and Request for Quotations (RFQs) is reflected in EPADS. The system provides an efficient grievance redressal mechanism, restricts participation of blacklisted firms, and identifies delays in procurement processes. Live transmission of bidding processes above PKR 500 million for goods and services and PKR 1 billion for works was enabled, and compliance with rules has significantly improved, he added. Presenting the future plan, the MD PPRA announced that the launch of EPADS 2.0, a more user-friendly, smart, and dynamic platform, is scheduled in January 2026 at the federal level, followed by Gilgit Baltistan and AJK in February, and provincial rollout in March this year. Monitoring and analytical reporting will commence in July, and donor funded procurements will be routed through EPADS by September 2026. The establishment of an Online Procurement Academy is scheduled for October this year, while the adoption of Open Contracting Data Standards (OCDS) is planned in December 2026.—DNA

Motorway travellers advised  
to follow official updates

ISLAMABAD: Travellers on the motorway on Monday urged to stay updated through official advisories and plan their journeys carefully, as dense fog has reduced visibility and authorities continue to assess road conditions before reopening affected stretches. The Motorway spokesperson, with various media channels, issued a special message urging motorists to avoid unnecessary travel due to dense fog. He emphasized that visibility on the roads is severely reduced and traveling under such conditions can be extremely dangerous. He further advised that if driving becomes unavoidable, motorists should use fog lights, maintain safe distances from other vehicles, and drive at reduced speeds to prevent accidents. Authorities continue to monitor the situation and provide regular updates to ensure

public safety. He further said several key motorway sections across Punjab were closed as dense fog swept the region, with authorities urging motorists to exercise caution and follow official updates. Motorway has advised motorists to use fog lights while driving and maintain a safe distance from other vehicles to avoid accidents in low-visibility conditions, adding, drivers are also urged to reduce their speed and stay alert on the roads until visibility improves. He stressed that unnecessary travel should be avoided during the fog, and motorists should follow official advisories and updates to ensure their safety. Emergency services are on high alert to respond promptly to any incidents on the affected motorway sections.—APP

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## Afghanistan under Taliban: isolation, suppression, and uncertain future

THE future of Afghanistan under Taliban rule presents a complex picture of internal challenges, strained international relations, and cautious regional engagement. Since their return to power in August 2021, the Taliban have sought to project a new image of a more pragmatic and diplomatic entity. Yet, beneath the façade of political engagement, their governance remains marked by repression, human rights violations, and decisions that further isolate the war-torn nation from the modern world.

In a move that has shocked both Afghans and the international community, the Taliban recently imposed a nationwide ban on internet services, plunging the country into an unprecedented communication blackout. The ban, which they justified on the grounds of curbing “immoral” content and foreign influence, has cut off millions of Afghans from access to information, business opportunities, education, and even contact with family members abroad. In modern times, such tactics are not only impractical but also counterproductive. The internet is a lifeline for global connectivity, trade, education, and governance. By shutting it down, the Taliban risk further alienating themselves from the rest of the world while exacerbating the daily hardships of ordinary Afghans. Businesses reliant on digital transactions have collapsed overnight, universities cannot function, and humanitarian agencies face severe difficulties in coordinating relief efforts. This blackout represents more than just a technical barrier; it symbolizes the Taliban’s desire to control thought, expression, and communication in an age where connectivity defines progress. Experts warn that such a regressive policy will deepen Afghanistan’s isolation, push its youth further into despair, and undermine any prospects for long-term economic recovery.

The Taliban’s rule continues to be defined by harsh restrictions, particularly on women and girls. Despite initial promises of moderation, they have systematically rolled back freedoms. Girls are banned from schooling beyond the sixth grade, women are excluded from most forms of employment, and their movement is tightly controlled. These restrictions, which human rights groups describe as “gender apartheid,” have robbed half the population of basic dignity and curtailed the nation’s potential for economic growth. Reports of arbitrary arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances of activists, journalists, and political opponents are widespread. The justice system has been replaced with a strict interpretation of Sharia, often enforced through public floggings, amputations, and executions. Such punishments, condemned globally, reflect the Taliban’s rigid ideology and unwillingness to align with international norms.



The internet ban will only worsen this repression by silencing dissenting voices. Previously, social media and digital platforms provided at least some space for activism, debate, and global attention. Now, with that window closed, Afghans are left voiceless in the face of mounting authoritarianism.

The Taliban’s foreign policy remains a balancing act between pragmatism and ideology. They have limited recognition on the global stage, with only a few countries like Russia taking tentative steps toward formal engagement. For most of the world, the Taliban’s human rights record and extremist policies remain an insurmountable barrier to official recognition.

Relations with Pakistan, once considered their closest ally, are now strained. Border clashes, trade disruptions, and Pakistan’s accusations that the Tehriki-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) operates freely from Afghan soil have soured ties. While diplomatic channels remain open, tensions are at their highest in years, underscoring the complex dynamics between the two neighbors.

China has adopted a pragmatic approach, engaging the Taliban out of concern for security in its Xinjiang region and to explore economic opportunities through potential extensions of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). For Beijing, stability in Afghanistan is crucial for the Belt and Road Initiative, but its engagement remains cautious, conditional, and primarily interest-driven. Iran, meanwhile, continues to clash with the Taliban over water rights, refugee flows, and ideological differences, further complicating the regional picture.

During their previous rule in the 1990s, the Taliban’s hardline policies led to international isolation and ultimately contributed to their downfall. This time, they appeared initially to recognize the importance of international engagement, seeking aid and recognition from regional powers. Yet, their internal governance has shown little sign of reform.

By banning the internet, restricting women’s rights, and enforcing medieval punishments, the Taliban risk repeating history by creating a state that is ungovernable, impoverished, and isolated. The humanitarian cost is already staggering, with millions facing food insecurity, lack of healthcare, and unemployment. The future of Afghanistan is clouded with uncertainty. Regional cooperation remains critical, but it will require the Taliban to demonstrate genuine flexibility and a willingness to address humanitarian concerns. The international community faces a dilemma: how to engage with a regime that systematically violates human rights while avoiding the complete collapse of the Afghan state.

Experts argue that cutting Afghanistan off entirely would only worsen the suffering of ordinary Afghans and create fertile ground for extremist groups to flourish. However, unconditional recognition of the Taliban would legitimize their oppressive policies. A balanced approach, combining humanitarian assistance with strict conditions on human rights, remains the most viable path.

Afghanistan today is trapped between the Taliban’s rigid ideology and the modern world’s demands for openness, rights, and connectivity. The internet ban is perhaps the clearest symbol of this disconnect—a futile attempt to suppress progress in a world driven by information. For Afghans, the blackout represents yet another betrayal by a regime that promised moderation but delivered only repression and isolation. For the Taliban, it underscores their inability to adapt to the realities of the 21st century. Unless they change course, Afghanistan risks sinking deeper into darkness, cut off from both its region and the wider world.

## “Trump’s March Toward Imperialism?”

Qamar Bashir



Executive authority has expanded at extraordinary speed. Trump’s prolific use of executive orders has narrowed legislative debate and constrained judicial oversight. Institutions designed to check power—courts, media, academia, welfare agencies—are not abolished but subordinated. Their survival becomes conditional. This is how empires govern: not by destroying institutions, but by bending them.

The global consequences are profound. Once a major power normalizes kinetic, financial, and economic imperialism, imitation becomes inevitable. Europe will feel pressure to secure resources

AS the United States crossed an invisible threshold—moving from the imperfect discipline of democracy toward the raw logic of imperial power? This question now dominates global debate as policies under Donald Trump continue to unsettle alliances, fracture long-standing norms, and force even America’s closest partners to rethink assumptions that once seemed immutable. What is unfolding is not a series of isolated decisions but a coherent shift in worldview—one that increasingly privileges domination over consent and coercion over cooperation. At the heart of this transformation lies a philosophy that treats democratic restraint as weakness. Trump’s oft-reported admiration for leaders who rule without resistance—where courts, parliaments, media, and civil institutions do not question authority but obey it—signals impatience with democratic friction. In this vision, speed replaces deliberation, command replaces consensus, and power is measured not by legitimacy but by the capacity to impose outcomes. Democracy becomes inefficient; obedience becomes desirable. This shift has coincided with a sobering realization in Washington that American dominance is no longer uncontested. Economically, China has narrowed the gap. Diplomatically, the Global South increasingly resists Western pressure. Even allies now challenge U.S. preferences in international forums. Faced with this erosion of influence, the Trump administration has pivoted away from persuasion toward compulsion. The result is a growing perception that the United States is drifting from democratic leadership toward imperial behavior, intoxicated by the belief that kinetic and financial power ultimately outweigh economic interdependence, moral authority, or international law. Classical political theory defines imperialism not simply as conquest but as a system of expansion through military force, economic extraction, political subordination, and institutional domination. Empires do not merely invade territories; they restructure economies, redirect wealth flows, and hollow out sovereignty. They justify these actions through security narratives or promises of prosperity while concentrating decision-making in a distant center of power. By this definition, imperialism can be territorial, financial, or kinetic—and often all three simultaneously. For decades, the United States claimed to be an exception. It presented itself as the architect and steward of a rules-based order anchored in institutions like the United Nations and NATO, where formal equality constrained raw power. Under Trump, these constraints have been recast as liabilities. Institutions that limit U.S. freedom of action are dismissed as hostile or irrelevant. Funding is withdrawn, commitments abandoned, and multilateralism treated as an obstacle rather than a principle.

This imperial turn has manifested first through kinetic pressure. Military strikes in Syria, operations

in Somalia, actions in Nigeria, and open threats against South Africa—including rhetoric about sanctions and even force under the pretext of protecting white-owned businesses—signal a willingness to punish states that defy U.S. narratives or strategic preferences. These actions reinforce a message long associated with empire: compliance brings tolerance, resistance brings punishment.

Yet imperialism today does not rely on military force alone. Equally powerful is what might be called financial imperialism, and it has become a defining feature of Trump’s second term. Soon after returning to office, the administration imposed sweeping tariffs on countries across the globe—friends and foes alike. Trade agreements, alliances, and shared security commitments offered no exemption. The logic was blunt: access to the vast consumer market of the United States would be weaponized as leverage.

These tariffs function as a form of economic strangulation. Countries dependent on U.S. consumers are forced to renegotiate trade on American terms, align politically with Washington’s preferences, or face severe economic pain. Unlike traditional sanctions, which are often justified through international mechanisms, these measures are unilateral and indiscriminate. They transform consumer demand into a geopolitical weapon, compelling submission not through tanks but through markets. This is economic imperialism in its modern form—control exercised through trade dependency rather than formal occupation. The effect is cumulative. Kinetic pressure establishes fear, while financial pressure ensures compliance. Together, they recreate the imperial model in a contemporary guise. This pattern is evident in Eastern Europe. During the previous administration, vast sums were transferred to Ukraine under the banner of defending sovereignty. Under Trump, that relationship has been reframed. Assistance has become transactional, aid transformed into debt. Ukraine is now pressed to repay support through access to rare-earth minerals, effectively exchanging natural wealth for protection. This is not alliance; it is tribute enforced by dependency.

Nowhere is this logic clearer than in Venezuela. American oil companies have operated there since the 1940s, extracting enormous wealth while the population remained impoverished. When Venezuela reasserted control over its resources, those companies were expelled. Under Trump, they are invited back. Closed-door meetings with energy executives have reportedly encouraged the repossession of assets, renewed extraction, and export of profits—once again enriching corporations and the imperial center while leaving Venezuelan society poorer. The state loses control; the empire gains wealth. This is classical imperial extraction dressed in modern corporate language.

Territorial ambition has also resurfaced openly. Trump’s statements regarding Greenland, suggesting it would be taken with or without consent, shattered a taboo long thought buried. The justifications—strate-

gic minerals, military positioning, and Arctic shipping routes shortened by climate change—mirror the calculations of nineteenth-century empires. Sovereignty becomes negotiable; consent optional. Utility, not law, determines ownership. Pressure on Iran, often aligned with the strategic objectives of Israel, follows the same imperial script. Sanctions designed to choke the economy, constant threats of military action, and open discussion of regime change all signal an intent to subordinate an entire nation to external will. Security is the stated rationale; domination is the method. What makes this moment uniquely troubling is that imperial practices are no longer confined to foreign policy. At home, the expansion of federal power increasingly resembles internal occupation. National Guard units and immigration agencies have been deployed across states without consent, overriding governors and local authorities. Historically, empires consolidate control by placing boots on the ground; political authority follows physical presence. Financial leverage reinforces this control. Federal funding for universities, healthcare systems, social programs, and research institutions is conditioned on political obedience—whether suppressing protests, aligning with official narratives, or endorsing favored foreign policies. Executive authority has expanded at extraordinary speed. Trump’s prolific use of executive orders has narrowed legislative debate and constrained judicial oversight. Institutions designed to check power—courts, media, academia, welfare agencies—are not abolished but subordinated. Their survival becomes conditional. This is how empires govern: not by destroying institutions, but by bending them.

The global consequences are profound. Once a major power normalizes kinetic, financial, and economic imperialism, imitation becomes inevitable. Europe will feel pressure to secure resources. Russia will justify expansion. India and other regional powers will follow suit. Smaller states, particularly those rich in minerals or strategically located, will exist in perpetual fear—not of chaos, but of orderly extraction sanctioned by power.

The world before January 2025 and the world after January 2026 no longer feel the same. The United States, once a flawed champion of democratic norms, increasingly resembles an empire rediscovering old instincts. History offers a warning that should not be ignored. Imperialism does not stabilize the international system; it militarizes it. It replaces cooperation with fear, law with force, and legitimacy with coercion. And in the end, it corrodes the democracy at its core, leaving behind power without consent and authority without trust.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)

Former Press Minister,  
Embassy of Pakistan to France  
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia  
Former MD, SRBC | Macomb, Michigan

## Russia Sets Out Positions on Global Security

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Lavrov reserved some of his strongest language for the European Union’s political leadership. He traced what he sees as Europe’s confrontational trajectory back to 2014, accusing ruling elites of cultivating anti-Russian sentiment and dismantling long-standing mechanisms for cooperation. While stopping short of declaring a permanent rupture...

IN a wide-ranging interview with TASS on 28 December 2025, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov offered a detailed account of Moscow’s reading of global affairs, touching on Ukraine, relations with the United States, Europe’s security posture, turmoil in the Middle East and rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific. The remarks provide a revealing snapshot of how Russia frames both its grievances and its priorities at a moment of continuing international strain. On Ukraine, Lavrov struck a cautiously receptive tone towards Washington while directing sharp criticism at Kyiv and European capitals. He welcomed efforts by US President Donald Trump and his team to pursue a negotiated settlement, stressing that Russia remains ready to work with American negotiators on what he described as addressing the “root causes” of the conflict. However, he argued that peace remains elusive because the Ukrainian leadership and its European backers are unwilling to engage seriously. According to Lavrov, Kyiv continues to seek military gains on the battlefield while targeting civilian infrastructure inside Russia, a claim Ukraine disputes.

Lavrov’ telling has replaced the United States as the principal obstacle to a settlement. He accused most European Union members of fuelling the war through financial and military support to Ukraine, driven by the hope that sanctions will cripple the Russian economy. Corruption scandals in Ukraine, he suggested, have been largely ignored in Brussels because of a broader determination to use Kyiv as leverage against Moscow. The recent failure of an EU initiative to transfer frozen Russian reserves to Ukraine was cited as evidence of internal unease, even if, in his view, European leaders prefer not to confront uncomfortable realities.

Lavrov noted what he described as a significant shift in the updated US National Security Strategy, which no longer labels Russia an immediate threat and instead refers to cooperation on strategic stability. He interpreted this as a sign that the United States may be reassessing its global role and moving away from an uncompromising “rules-based order”. Of particular note, he said, was the absence of explicit calls for comprehensive containment of Russia and the first public questioning of NATO’s long-standing expansionist logic. Still, he cautioned that Moscow would judge any improvement in relations not by words on paper but by concrete actions.

Lavrov reserved some of his strongest language for the European Union’s political leadership. He traced what he sees as Europe’s confrontational trajectory back to 2014, accusing ruling elites of cultivating anti-Russian sentiment and dismantling long-standing mechanisms for cooperation. While stopping short of declaring a permanent rupture, he argued that many European leaders are now invested in the idea of inflicting a “strategic defeat” on Russia, regardless of the cost to Ukrainians or their own societies. Speculation about deploying European troops to Ukraine was dismissed as reckless, with Lavrov warning that any such forces would be treated as legitimate military targets. At the same time, he insisted that Russia harbours no intention of attacking Europe, while reiterating that any assault on Russia would meet a devastating response.

In the Middle East, Lavrov portrayed 2025 as a year of dangerous escalation, particularly following Israeli and US strikes on Iranian nuclear-related facilities. He condemned the attacks as violations of international law and expressed concern over Israeli statements signalling readiness to use force again. European states, he said,

have aggravated tensions by deepening divisions rather than encouraging regional dialogue. By contrast, he praised Iran’s restraint and its stated commitment to political solutions.

On Gaza, Lavrov acknowledged that international mediation helped halt the most intense phase of violence and avert mass starvation, but warned that the situation remains fragile. Persistent ceasefire violations, restrictions on humanitarian aid and uncertainty over issues such as Hamas’s disarmament and the future presence of international forces all cloud prospects for lasting peace. He reaffirmed Russia’s support for a two-state solution, arguing that without a viable Palestinian state, durable stability in the region is unlikely.

Lavrov addressed growing anxieties in the Asia-Pacific, particularly over Taiwan. He rejected what he called selective interpretations of the One China policy by Western states and accused them of using Taiwan as a tool to contain China while profiting from arms sales and technology transfers. Russia’s position, he said, is unchanged: Taiwan is an integral part of China, and reunification is a matter for Beijing. Any escalation in the Taiwan Strait would be viewed through the lens of Russia’s treaty commitments with China, including mutual support for territorial integrity. He also warned that Japan’s accelerating militarisation risks undermining regional stability.

Taken together, Lavrov’s remarks underline a consistent narrative: Russia presents itself as open to dialogue with select partners, particularly the United States, while casting Europe as ideologically driven and destabilizing. Whether this framing gains traction beyond Moscow’s allies will depend less on interviews than on developments on the ground in the months ahead.



## Briefs

## Govt refutes 'reckless' claims US fighter...

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US history and the second-longest B-2 mission ever flown. The US struck a key underground uranium enrichment site at Fordo, along with nuclear facilities in Isfahan and Natanz. Meanwhile, the information ministry termed the claims of its airspace being used by the US military a "reckless" and "blame-pushing" narrative to drag Pakistan into a US-Iran conflict without any verifiable evidence. The ministry urged the public to refrain from sharing sensational military "breaking news" from propaganda pages unless verified through credible reporting. It advised Pakistani citizens to rely on the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), ministries and reputable defence outlets for national security and defence matters.

## Ready for war and dialogue

FROM PAGE 01  
target protesters and security forces in order to invite foreign intervention. FM Arachchi's response came after Trump said that he was considering potential military action against Iran, amid mounting mass anti-government protests in the country. "They're starting to, it looks like," Trump said, when asked by reporters aboard Air Force One if Iran had crossed his previously stated red line of protesters being killed. "We're looking at it very seriously. The military is looking at it, and we're looking at some very strong options. We'll make a determination," he said. He also said that Iran's leadership had called seeking "to negotiate" after his threats of military action. "The leaders of Iran called" yesterday, Trump said, adding that "a meeting is being set up... They want to negotiate." However, Trump added that "we may have to act before a meeting." Meanwhile, China said on Monday it hopes the Iranian government and people would be able to overcome the current difficulties the country faces and maintain stability, referring to deadly protests taking place in the oil-rich Middle Eastern nation. China opposes the use of force or the threat of it in international relations matters, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said when responding to a media question about US President Donald Trump's threat to intervene with military on behalf of the protesters.

## NA speaker finally gets the ball...

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initiate the nomination process earlier as the matter was subjudice and the NA Secretariat had been made a party in the cases. He said that as PTI's Ayub had withdrawn his petitions in the Supreme Court and high courts against his removal, the nomination process could now be formally initiated. "This issue had to head towards resolution only then. We would have done so if we had not been made a party [to the case]," Sadiq said. Addressing the opposition benches, he said proposals for nominating the opposition leader may be submitted in his chambers by 3pm tomorrow (Tuesday), as per Rule 39(ii) of the Rules of Procedures. Rule 39 confirms it is the sole prerogative of the speaker to ask the opposition at any time to submit a name, after which the opposition may present it.

## Pak values ties with...

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desire to further expand defence ties with Pakistan across multiple domains. The COAS & CDF reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering strong and enduring defence relationship with Indonesia, based on shared values, mutual respect, and convergence of strategic interests.

## Naqvi Leads PCB Historic Auction, New PSL Era

*PCB's Historic PSL Expansion Auction Under Mohsin Naqvi Signals New Era of Global Investment, Eight Teams, Record Bids, and Strengthened Future for Pakistan Cricket League Growth Fans Economy Vision Leadership*

DNA

KARACHI: n a landmark moment for Pakistan's premier cricket competition, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) under the supervision of Salman Naseer, CEO, PSL has successfully concluded a historic auction for two new teams, expanding the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) from six to eight franchises. This major development took place at the Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad on January 8, 2026, under the dynamic leadership of PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, and is widely viewed as a turning point in the league's growth and commercial evolution.

**A Strategic Expansion of the PSL:** Since its inception in 2016 with five teams and later expansion to six in 2018, the PSL has remained a cornerstone of Pakistan's sporting calendar. The 2026 auction marks its first major expansion in seven years, ushering in a new era of competition, investment and fan engagement. Under Naqvi's leadership, the PCB embarked on an extensive global outreach campaign ahead of the auction, including high profile roadshows in London and New York to attract international investors and showcase the PSL's commercial potential. Interest from across Europe,

the United States, the Middle East, and beyond contributed to making this auction one of the most eagerly anticipated events in the league's history.

**The Auction and Record Bids:** The live high stakes auction was broadcast across multiple platforms and attracted vibrant bidding from ten qualified investors, including international and local corporate groups. Two cities were eventually selected as the homes of the new franchises:

- Hyderabad — Acquired by the US-based FKS Group, led by Fawad Sarwar, with a bid of PKR 1.75 billion.
- Sialkot — Secured by OZ Developers, led by Hamza Majeed, with a record bid of PKR 1.85 billion making it the highest single franchise fee in PSL auction history.

These record breaking bids, worth a combined PKR 3.6 billion, reflect not only the strong commercial traction of the league but also growing confidence among investors in Pakistan cricket's future.

## Leadership and Vision of Mohsin Naqvi:

At the helm during this historic auction, Mohsin Naqvi has emphasized the broader strategic importance of the expansion. As PCB Chairman, he has consistently championed initiatives aimed at increasing the league's global footprint, enhancing transparency in bidding processes, and strengthening the commercial viability of the PSL as a world-class T20 competition.

Mohsin Naqvi hailed the success of the auction as a significant achievement not just for the board but for Pakistan cricket at large. He highlighted the enthusiastic participation of overseas Pakistanis and international business groups as a strong vote of confidence in the PSL's brand, signaling deeper global engagement and future growth opportunities.

**Economic and Sporting Impact:** The auction's outcome marked by unprecedented franchise fees and intense competitive bidding underscores the economic potential of the PSL. With the inclusion of Hyderabad and Sialkot, the league will now feature eight teams in its 11th edition, scheduled to run from March 26 to May 3, 2026.

*This growth carries significant benefits:*

- Stronger regional representation within Pakistan, bringing the excitement of PSL cricket to new fan bases.
- Enhanced commercial revenue for the PCB and stakeholders, supporting long-term development programs.
- Increased opportunities for domestic and international talent to compete on a global stage.

**Looking Ahead:** The expansion of the HBL PSL, facilitated by one of the most successful auctions in its history, marks a new chapter for Pakistan cricket. Under Mohsin Naqvi's leadership, the PCB has not only achieved a historic commercial milestone but has also set the stage for deeper global integration, larger investor participation, and sustained growth within the league. As fans and stakeholders prepare for the upcoming season, the addition of Hyderabad and Sialkot symbolizes both heritage and ambition blending traditional cricketing passion with modern sports business dynamics, and reinforcing the PSL's outstanding ranking among the world's leading T20 leagues.

## Abdul Javed Seals Islamabad Snooker Cup Title

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Abdul Javed Junior emerged as the champion of the Islamabad Cup Snooker Championship after defeating Shan Naimat 4-2 in the final played at the Shender 41

Snooker Academy. The week-long championship was organized by the Islamabad Billiards and Snooker Association (IBSA) under the umbrella of the Pakistan Billiards and Snooker Association (PBSA).

The final match was witnessed by the chief guest, Pakistan Muslim



League-N Member National Assembly (MNA) Malik Abrar Ahmed. Senior Vice President of IBSA Saleem Akhtar Rana, Secretary Faheem Anwar Khan, President of the Rawalpindi Billiards and Snooker Association Dr. Aamir Khan, along with other notable personalities, were also present on the occasion.

Abdul Javed Junior displayed an outstanding performance in the Senior category final against Shan Naimat, registering the highest break of the tournament with a superb 99-point break. He won the final with frame scores of 75-21, 48-61, 114-19, 81-34, 47-69, and 84-29. In the Masters category, Musaddiq Malik claimed the title with an impressive 4-1 victory over Sattar Khan.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, MNA Malik Abrar Ahmed praised Pakistani snooker players for bringing international recognition to the country through their remarkable performances. He encouraged the youth to actively participate in sports and assured that the government would provide maximum support and facilities to talented young athletes. The championship concluded with the distribution of prizes among the winners.

## Barca edge Real Madrid in thrilling Spanish Super Cup final

JEDDAH: Barcelona retained the Spanish Super Cup with an entertaining 3-2 Clasico win over Real Madrid in Saudi Arabia on Sunday. Raphinha struck twice for the Catalans with Robert Lewandowski also on target as they beat Xabi Alonso's team for a record-extending 16th triumph, despite Frenkie de Jong's late red card for a foul on Kylian Mbappe. The French forward could only feature in the final stages as a substitute after a knee sprain, with the defeat likely to bring back recent doubts around Madrid coach Xabi Alonso's future. After Raphinha sent Barcelona ahead Vinicius Junior pulled Madrid level with a fine individual goal to kick-start a frenetic end to the first half in Jeddah. Lewandowski chipped Barca back in front but Gonzalo Garcia struck deep in stoppage time to send the teams in level at the break. The battle was decided by a deflected Raphinha effort after 73 minutes, as Barca claimed the fourth trophy of coach Hansi Flick's reign. Alonso is still looking for his first after arriving in June, and Madrid's run of five consecutive wins across all competitions was brought to an end by their arch-rivals. "Whatever way you lose it hurts, but it's clear that this was a very even game, hotly competed, with a bit of everything," Alonso told Movistar. "We were very close to equalising, we fought it out until the end and I have to congratulate Barca." Barca thrashed Madrid 5-2 in last season's final, also at the King Abdullah Sports City stadium, but this was a far closer affair. — Agencies

## Bayern demolishes Wolfsburg 8-1 to go 11 points clear in Bundesliga

GERMANY: Michael Olize scored twice as Bayern Munich started the new year by routing Wolfsburg 8-1 with six second-half goals to move 11 points clear at the top of the Bundesliga. Olize, Harry Kane and Luis Diaz picked apart the Wolfsburg defense on Sunday in a display of dominance which leaves Bayern firmly on course to defend the title in only the 16th game of the 34-game season. Bayern coach Vincent Kompany was pleased his players didn't let up. "It's these moments where it's five, six, 7-1, and they keep running, they keep pressing and keep trying to score goals," he told broadcaster DAZN. "I have to say, I like that." In freezing temperatures for Bayern's first game since the winter break, Olize got a brace and Kane and Diaz one apiece, along with goals for substitutes Raphael Guerreiro and Leon Goretzka, and two Wolfsburg own-goals. Bayern only had two nervous moments all game. The first was Dzenan Pejcinovic's goal for Wolfsburg in the 13th, which leveled the score at 1-1 after right back Konrad Laimer missed an interception. The other was a brief injury scare for Kane, who needed treatment after being caught on the ankle by defender Moritz Jenz midway through the first half but was soon back in action. — Agencies

## Aston Villa leave Tottenham boss Frank on the brink with FA Cup win

*Aston Villa dump Tottenham out of FA Cup with 2-1 win as pressure mounts on Thomas Frank after woeful first-half display deepens Spurs crisis at north London club*

LONDON: Aston Villa pushed Tottenham Hotspur boss Thomas Frank closer to the sack with a 2-1 win over the troubled side in the FA Cup third round on Saturday. Frank is on the brink after Tottenham paid the price for conceding twice in a woeful first-half display in north London. Emiliano Buendia put Villa ahead, and Morgan Rogers increased the visitors' lead. Tottenham improved after the break, but although Wilson Odobert reduced the deficit, they were unable to avoid a second successive defeat. The loss ended in suitably ugly fashion for Tottenham as their frustrated players became embroiled in a clash with Villa after the final whistle, as boos cascaded from the stands. Tottenham have won just three of their past 14 games and sit 14th in the Premier League, only three places above where they ended last season under Ange

Postecoglou. If Frank can survive until next weekend, another loss at home to lowly West Ham would surely bring an end to his disastrous reign. Frank added to his problems when he drank from a cup emblazoned with the branding of Spurs' bitter rivals Arsenal before Tottenham's 3-2 defeat at Bournemouth on Wednesday. That embarrassing gaffe drew the ire of Tottenham supporters, who once again booed Frank and his players at the final whistle. Now Frank is out of the Cup following the latest damp squib in the former Brentford manager's wretched first season in charge. Hired to replace the sacked Postecoglou, who ended the north Londoners' 17-year trophy drought by winning the Europa League last season, Frank increasingly looks out of his depth at a club with Tottenham's expectations. Aston Villa, who haven't won the FA Cup since 1957, have now won twice at Tottenham Hotspur this season after a 2-1 victory in the Premier League in October. Unai Emery's team also beat Tottenham in the FA Cup fourth round last season. Desperate to buy himself some breathing space, Thomas Frank ignored the trend of Premier League managers resting their key players in the FA Cup by naming a strong line-up. To mark the 125th anniversary of becoming the first non-league side to lift the FA Cup, Tottenham wore a special commemorative kit with no player surnames on the back and the sponsors and club badge less visible than usual on the front. — APP

## Thailand-Pakistan ties move from friendship to action

FROM PAGE 1

Visibility is also being enhanced through regular joint calls with federal ministers and ongoing economic dialogues with chambers of commerce. "Addressing Pakistan's engagement with ASEAN, he stated: "Pakistan's potential to become a Full Dialogue Partner is certain, but it requires strong commitment to move from potential to performance. At present, Pakistan participates in around thirty ASEAN-related activities each year. To demonstrate truly comprehensive engagement, this number should grow closer to one hundred, covering all three ASEAN pillars — political-security, economic, and socio-cultural.

Thailand, as Chair of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad, is actively facilitating this journey. Two areas stand out as particularly promising: disaster management and peacekeeping. Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority has proven capacity and expertise; linking it with ASEAN's AHA Centre and DELSA system would create a seamless regional humanitarian framework. Similarly, Pakistan's Center for International Peace and Stability (CIPS) at NUST is already a UN-recognized hub for peace-



keeping training — connecting it with ASEAN member states would strengthen regional security cooperation and highlight Pakistan's valuable global contributions." In his concluding message to readers, Ambassador Virabutr offered an inspiring vision: "Thailand and Pakistan stand at the threshold of transformation — moving from friendly neighbors to true partners in development. Over the past year, I have seen our shared warm hospitality, profound cultural DNA, and common aspiration for prosperity. Yet friendship alone is not enough; we need concrete action to deliver results that people can see, touch, and feel. Our Prosperity Partnership aims to double bilateral trade, unlock billions through the Halal industry, advance the FTA process, and connect our peoples through tourism, culture, and food — from Thai cuisine now permanently featured on Pakistani restaurant menus to the historic 2027 Gandhara Civilization Exhibition in Bangkok.

Beyond economics, we are empowering women entrepreneurs, linking farmers through regenerative agriculture, and advancing deeper ASEAN integration. Together, we can build a brighter, more prosperous future for both our nations."

## Tarar: no room for terrorist narrative

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Committee conference in Islamabad, he said the nation stood united in its resolve to eliminate terrorism in all its forms. He stressed that the scourge would be confronted through both kinetic and non-kinetic measures. He stated that, under the leadership of the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Field Marshal, Syed Asim Munir the nation stands united and resolute against terrorism. He added that efforts are underway to reinforce the national narrative and thwart the designs of anti-state elements. Tarar lauded the role of religious scholars in safeguarding the country's ideological frontiers and promoting peace. He announced that the committee would visit different parts of the country to spread Islam's message of harmony, underscoring that terrorists have no connection with Islam, Pakistan, or humanity.

## Indonesia keen to procure...

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China, has attracted global attention due to its cost-effectiveness, advanced avionics, and combat-proven capabilities. Pakistani-made unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and drones also featured prominently in the discussions, reflecting Indonesia's growing interest in enhancing its aerial surveillance and defence capabilities. The proposed deal is not limited to hardware procurement alone. It also envisages comprehensive training programmes for Indonesian Air Force officers and technical personnel in Pakistan. This would include pilot training, maintenance support, and operational familiarization, further strengthening institutional linkages between the armed forces of the two countries. Pakistan and Indonesia enjoy excellent bilateral relations rooted in shared religious, cultural, and historical bonds. Both countries have consistently supported each other at regional and international forums and have been exploring new avenues to expand cooperation in trade, defence, education, and people-to-people contacts.

## 6 policemen martyred, 3 injured...

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six personnel were martyred in the blast, including SHO Gomal Station Ishaq Ahmed Khan, ASI Sher Aslam Khan, driver Abdul Majeed, Arshad Ali, Hazrat Ali and Ehsanullah. Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the scene and shifted the bodies and injured to nearby hospitals. In a separate incident in Lakki Marwat, an IED exploded near Dara Tang bridge within the jurisdiction of Saddar Police Station. As a result, SHO Saddar Razaq Khan and two other police personnel sustained injuries. Initial reports suggest the explosive material had been planted near the bridge. The attack occurred at a time when the District Police Officer (DPO) was on a tour of police check-posts and was expected to pass through the same route. It is noteworthy that a lawyer was reportedly abducted by unidentified armed men from the same area a day earlier.

## PM directs for setting...

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He added that, by the grace of Allah, positive results of technical and vocational training programmes under NAVTTC were now emerging. He directed that a biometric attendance system be implemented for trainees and instructors in all NAVTTC partner training institutions. Emphasising coordination with provincial institutions, the prime minister instructed that NAVTTC programmes be expanded to provide training to a larger workforce across the country. He further said that providing youth with training along with international certifications in skills that were in high global demand should remain the top priority.



## Briefs

## Australian team develops targeted therapy for rare blood cancer

CANBERRA: Researchers in Australia have developed a new targeted therapeutic approach that could improve treatment for myelofibrosis, a rare and serious form of blood cancer. Published in the journal Blood, the research focuses on finding smarter ways to treat myelofibrosis by targeting the abnormal blood cells that drive the disease using immunotherapy, rather than just managing symptoms, said a news release from the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute on Monday. Myelofibrosis disrupts the production of healthy blood cells, causing fatigue, pain and an enlarged spleen, reducing quality of life, the release said, adding that current treatments ease symptoms but cannot eliminate the disease. The research represents an important step towards more precise, disease-focused treatments and is a world-first showing Type 1 calreticulin mutations differ from Type 2 mutations in terms of treatment, according to Daniel Thomas, director of SAHMRI's Blood Cancer program, who co-led the study with Angel Lopez, head of Human Immunology at SA Pathology. The team found not just one, but two different targets that optimally remove the culprit cells.—APP

## Nationwide rallies begin in Iran to denounce riots

TEHRAN: Nationwide rallies have begun in Iran as people from diverse backgrounds demonstrate their backing for the Islamic Republic and denounce the recent foreign-backed riots, the Iranian state TV reported. According to Press TV, demonstrations kicked off in several provinces during the morning hours, with major rallies in Tehran and other regions scheduled to begin after 2 PM IST. Officials have described the nationwide gatherings as a demonstration of unity essential to the nation's resilience. The pro-government rallies follow a week of protests initially sparked by shopkeepers concerned over economic instability. Press TV reports that these gatherings escalated into violence and disorder following public statements from U.S. and Israeli figures, which were amplified by Israeli-linked Persian-language media to encourage vandalism. While Iranian authorities have acknowledged legitimate economic grievances—linking the currency's devaluation directly to unilateral U.S. sanctions on oil and the central bank—they accuse foreign elements of exploiting these concerns to incite disorder. Officials claim the latest unrest was orchestrated by the United States and the Israeli regime.—APP

## First responders enter devastated Aleppo neighborhood

ALEPPO: First responders on Sunday entered a contested neighborhood in Syria's northern city of Aleppo after days of deadly clashes between government forces and Kurdish-led forces. Syrian state media said the military was deployed in large numbers. The clashes broke out Tuesday in the predominantly Kurdish neighborhoods of Sheikh Maqoud, Achrafieh and Bani Zaid after the government and the Syrian Democratic Forces, the main Kurdish-led force in the country, failed to make progress on how to merge the SDF into the national army. Security forces captured Achrafieh and Bani Zaid. The fighting between the two sides was the most intense since the fall of then-President Bashar Assad to insurgents in December 2024. At least 23 people were killed in five days of clashes and more than 140,000 were displaced amid shelling and drone strikes. The US-backed SDF, which have played a key role in combating the Daesh group in large swaths of eastern Syria, are the largest force yet to be absorbed into Syria's national army. Some of the factions that make up the army, however, were previously Turkish-backed insurgent groups that have a long history of clashing with Kurdish forces.—APP

## Industry-aligned curriculum key to economic progress: ICCI President

Executive Members Sanaullah Khan and Zulqurnain Abbasi, along with ICCI members Dr. Usman and Aizaz Mohammad, also shared valuable insights, reiterating the need for sustained collaboration to bridge skill gaps and strengthen Pakistan's economic ecosystem

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has underscored the critical importance of the Industry-Academia linkage in accelerating economic growth, promoting innovation, and developing a future-ready skilled workforce. He reaffirmed that ICCI is fully committed to continuing its role as a proactive bridge and frontline facilitator among the stakeholders.

He expressed these views while speaking to a 11-member faculty delegation of Air University School of Management (AUSOM), which visited the Chamber under the leadership of Dr. Amir Ishaque, Chairperson and Associate Professor, Department of Business Studies.

The ICCI President emphasized the urgent need to align academic curricula with industry and market

requirements to spur industrial growth, boost exports, and generate sustainable employment. He stressed that globally recognized, demand-driven skill development is essential for enhancing competitiveness and meeting the evolving needs of businesses.

During the interaction, both sides agreed to establish a joint Think Tank to

ensure closer coordination among academia, industry, and the Chamber, aimed at achieving shared objectives of business expansion and overall economic development.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Amir Ishaque sought ICCI's cooperation in co-designing market-relevant courses, noting that such collaboration would enable

universities to deliver tailor-made human capital to industry. He also invited the ICCI leadership to visit AUSOM for direct engagement with future entrepreneurs and business leaders. Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub and Vice President Irfan Chaudhry briefed the delegation on ICCI's initiatives to foster a conducive business environment and

promote ease of doing business. They highlighted the value of inviting industry role models to universities to deliver lectures and inspire aspiring entrepreneurs.

Former ICCI President Mian Shaukat Masood stressed the importance of demand-based education and called for measures to curb the outflow of skilled

professionals from the country.

Executive Members Sanaullah Khan and Zulqurnain Abbasi, along with ICCI members Dr. Usman and Aizaz Mohammad, also shared valuable insights, reiterating the need for sustained collaboration to bridge skill gaps and strengthen Pakistan's economic ecosystem.



## Russia calls Ukraine's drone attacks a 'terrorist act'

MOSCOW: The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has strongly condemned Ukraine's drone attacks, calling them a "terrorist act." In a statement on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said that Kyiv has once again demonstrated its "ruthless and Nazi mindset," targeting Russian civilians after failures on the military front. She said Ukraine carried out 33 drone attacks on the regions of Voronezh, Kursk, Bryansk, and Belgorod, with the greatest damage reported in residential areas of Voronezh. As a result of the attacks, a woman succumbed was killed while at least three other people were injured. The Russian Foreign Ministry said the targets included more than ten residential apartment buildings, several private homes, a gymnasium, and multiple administrative buildings which "proves that the civilian population was deliberately targeted.—APP

## International law applies to everyone says German minister

BERLIN: The principles of international law apply to everyone, including the United States, German Finance Minister and Vice Chancellor Lars Klingbeil said on Sunday, in reference to President Donald Trump's threats to seize Greenland. "It is solely up to Denmark and Greenland to decide about Greenland's future. Territorial sovereignty and integrity must be respected," Klingbeil said ahead of his departure to Washington for a meeting of finance ministers from the Group of Seven advanced economies. A US military seizure of the mineral-rich Arctic island from Denmark, a long-time ally, would send shockwaves through NATO and deepen the divide between Trump and European leaders. "We increase security in the Arctic together as NATO allies, not in opposition to one another," Klingbeil said. Monday's G7 meeting will focus on access to critical minerals as Western countries seek to reduce their dependence on China given moves by Beijing to impose strict export controls on rare earths.—APP

## Bangladesh's political crossroads: An election guide

DNA

DHAKA: Bangladesh has been in political turmoil since a student-led revolt overthrew former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, ending her 15-year autocratic rule. The Muslim-majority nation of 170 million people will hold its first elections since the uprising on February 12. Here are the key players in a vote that European Union election observers say will be the "biggest democratic process of 2026, anywhere". Interim government Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, 85, returned from exile in August 2024 at the behest of protesters to lead a caretaker government as "chief advisor". He will step down after the polls. Yunus said he inherited a "completely broken" political system, and championed a reform charter he argues is vital to prevent a return to authoritarian rule. This handout photograph taken and released on June 13, 2025, by Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Office of Interim Government shows Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus (R) and acting Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairman Tarique Rahman (R) shaking hands during a meeting in London. — AFP This handout photograph taken and released on June 13, 2025, by Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Office of Interim Government shows Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus (R) and acting Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairman Tarique Rahman (R) shaking hands during a meeting in London.

don. — AFP A referendum on the proposed changes will be held on the same day. He says the reforms will strengthen checks and balances between the executive, judicial and legislative branches. The BNP, led by Tarique Rahman, 60, is widely tipped to win the election, after he returned from 17 years of self-imposed exile in December 2025. His mother, the BNP's veteran leader and former prime minister Khaleda Zia, died aged 80, days after his return. A BNP-led alliance includes both leftist and centrist parties, as well as small Islamist groups. Islamist-led alliance Jamaat-e-Islami, the country's largest and best-organised Islamist party, ideologically aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood, is seeking a return to formal politics after years of bans and crackdowns under Hasina's 15-year rule. Jamaat is leading an alliance of more than 10 smaller parties, including the National Citizen Party (NCP), formed by student leaders who spearheaded the uprising. It also includes the small Liberal Democratic Party, as well as fringe Islamist parties, most of which held only a handful of seats in previous parliaments. Bangladesh — one of the world's most populous Muslim-majority countries after Indonesia and Pakistan — is home to diverse strands of Islamic practice, including a significant Sufi community often condemned by hardline Islamists. Around 10% of Bangladeshis are not Muslim — the majority of those are Hindu and the country is also home to a small number of Christians.

## Record low homicide rates in London as mayor defends policies

LONDON: The number of homicides in London last year were the lowest since 2014, UK police data revealed Monday, at a time when mayor Sadiq Khan faces mounting criticism over criminality in the British capital. There were 97 homicides in 2025, the lowest total since 2014, and London's homicide rate per capita was the lowest since records began in 1997, according to the new figures. "Many people have been trying to talk London down, but the evidence tells a very different story," Khan said in a statement. "It's clear that our sustained focus on being both tough on crime and tough on the complex causes of crime is working," he added. Khan has faced fierce criticism from Conservative and far-right politicians in the UK, as well as international figures like X owner Elon Musk, who claim that criminality in London has increased. Some of his critics pin the accusations on the mayor's pro-immigration stance. The Labour party politician, who became London's first Muslim mayor in 2016 and regularly uses his platform to celebrate the capital's diversity, has also faced rising Islamophobic attacks on social media. "The statistics speak for themselves, London is a safe place to live, work and visit. Thanks to the work of our dedicated officers, violent crime has reduced, and homicides are at their lowest levels since 2014," the Met police said in a press release. Violent incidents resulting in injuries were down by a fifth since 2014, while National Health Service data showed that the number of people hospitalized after being stabbed in London fell by nearly 30 percent in the last five years. The police also pointed out that London's homicide rate per capita was the lowest on record despite a growing population, and claimed it was lower than other major cities like New York, Paris, Los Angeles and Berlin. However, the latest release did not include data on other types of crime including thefts and sexual offenses.—APP

## Chinese, Uzbek archaeologists discover ancient city walls in Uzbekistan

ZHENGZHOU: Chinese and Uzbek archaeologists have found early city walls constructed and modified between the 3rd century BC and the 10th century AD at the ancient city of Kuva in Uzbekistan, shedding new light on the history of a key Silk Road settlement. Located in the Fergana Valley in eastern Uzbekistan, the Kuva site, now spanning about 110,000 square meters, used to be a very important hub on the ancient Silk Road. Its historical connection to China dates back over two millennia, as it is believed to have been part of the ancient state of Dayuan, recorded by Chinese envoy Zhang Qian during the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD). A joint team from the Luoyang Institute of Archaeology in central China's Henan Province and Uzbekistan's Fergana State University has been conducting fieldwork at the Kuva site since 2023. Liu Bin, leader of the Chinese team, said remains of a palace, city gates, walls, house foundations, streets and workshops have been identified. In 2025, the team focused on excavating the northern gate and the

adjacent moat area. The team determined that the walls had undergone multiple modifications in terms of layout and function, using both adobes and mud bricks as building materials, which confirms the continuous use of these walls from around the 3rd century BC to the 10th century AD. The long-term use and repeated modifications of the walls reveal the enduring vitality, adaptability and complex functions of this key Silk Road hub, Liu said, while adding that the evolution of construction techniques provides crucial material useful for studying architectural crafts, material choices and potential cultural influences of different eras. The team has also conducted a systematic survey and exploration of the eastern part of the palace complex, discovering features such as wall foundation trenches and a surrounding moat. These findings provide crucial information for reconstructing the city's overall layout. "This year, we plan systematic excavations in the palace area to further clarify the complete layout and functional zones of the ancient city," Liu noted.—APP

## Pope receives Venezuela opposition's Machado: Vatican

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo received Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado at the Vatican on Monday, the Holy See said. There were no details about the audience, with the Vatican publishing Machado's name in a list of people received by the US pope Monday morning. The Vatican did not immediately respond to an AFP request for more information about the meeting. The papal audience came the same day as Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani announced that two Italians, Alberto Trentini and Mario Burlo, held since November 2024 in Venezuela, had been released and were on their way home. Machado, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in December, has been sidelined by Washington in the wake of the US intervention in Venezuela that toppled President Nicolas Maduro. US President Donald Trump said on Thursday he would meet Machado this week after previously saying she did not have the respect or support within Venezuela to lead. Leo, 70, called for Venezuela's sovereignty to be protected in a speech to diplomats on Friday.—APP

## Myanmar pro-military party claims Suu Kyi's seat in junta-run poll

YANGON: Myanmar's main pro-military party on Monday claimed victory in the parliamentary seat of sidelined democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi in elections being derided as a ploy to prolong junta rule. The armed forces have ruled Myanmar for most of the nation's post-independence history before a decade-long democratic thaw saw civilians assume control. But the military snatched back power with a 2021 coup, deposing and detaining Suu Kyi after claiming she won a landslide election win over pro-military party by means of massive voter fraud. The junta says the current month-long vote — which has its final phase scheduled for January 25 — will return power to the people. With Suu Kyi still held in seclusion and her hugely popular party dissolved, democracy advocates say the vote has been rigged by a crackdown on dissent and a ballot stacked with military allies. An official from the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), speaking anonymously because they were unauthorised to share results, said they "won in Kawhmu" — Suu Kyi's former seat in Yangon region. "We won 15 lower house seats out of 16 places in Yangon region," they added, after Kawhmu and dozens of other constituencies voted in the election's second stage on Sunday. The official did not say by what margin the party claimed its win and official results of the second round have yet to be posted by the junta-stacked election commission. But the USDP — described by many analysts as the military's prime proxy — won nearly 90 percent of lower house seats in the first phase, official results say. "It should surprise no one that the military-backed party has claimed a landslide victory," UN rights expert Tom Andrews said in a statement last week. "The junta engineered the polls to ensure victory for its proxy, entrench military domination, and manufacture a facade of legitimacy while violence and repression continue unabated.—DNA

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## Briefs

Mohsin Naqvi  
pays tribute  
to CTD

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has paid tribute to the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) for successfully foiling terrorism plots in Peshawar, Bannu and Khyber. He praised the CTD's professionalism in sending 8 terrorists to hell. Interior Minister said that CTD operatives, through successful operations, eliminated 8 terrorists including two most wanted commanders and brought them to a humiliating end. He saluted to the brave personnel of CTD who took part in the operations. He highlighted that the role of CTD is commendable in wiping out terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. We view the actions of the forces for establishing peace in KP with appreciation. He added that intelligence-based operations will continue until the complete eradication of terrorists.

Myanmar  
Rohingya  
genocide case  
to open at  
UN's top court

NEWS DESK

THE HAGUE: A landmark case accusing Myanmar of committing genocide against minority Muslim Rohingya will open at the United Nations' top court on Monday. It will be the first genocide case ICJ will hear in full in over a decade. The outcome will have repercussions beyond Myanmar, likely affecting South Africa's genocide case at the ICJ against Israel over the war in Gaza. Myanmar has denied accusations of genocide. "The case is likely to set critical precedents for how genocide is defined and how it can be proven, and how violations can be remedied," Nicholas Koumjian, head of the UN's Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, told Reuters. The predominantly Muslim West African country of Gambia filed the case at the ICJ — also known as the World Court — in 2019, accusing Myanmar of committing genocide against the Rohingya, a mainly Muslim minority in the remote western Rakhine state.

Who got what: Fresh  
Toshakhana records emerge

Records list models, perfumes, shields, carpets, watches, swords and other items

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: More Toshakhana records have surfaced, with the Cabinet Division issuing details for the October-December 2025 quarter that list President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi among recipients of valuable gifts. All listed personalities deposited the gifts in Toshakhana, according to the record. The recipients for the quarter also include the First Lady, IT Minister Shaza Fatima, Power Minister Awaiz Leghari, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema, Speaker of the National Assembly Ayaz Sadiq and Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, it added. Similarly, Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, President's Military Secretary, President's Spokesperson Murtaza Sol-

angi, Auditor General of Pakistan, Minister of State for Railways and Finance, Musarrat Zaidi, DG Minerals Dr Nawaz Ahmed Virk, Secretary Economic Affairs, Secretary IT, President's ADC and others also received gifts. According to the Cabinet Division data, gifts received during October-December quarter included models of Roza-e-Rasool, Khana Kaaba and Makkah Mukarramah, paintings, perfumes, shields, carpets, tea sets, swords, daggers, vases, watches, decorative pieces, Saudi coffee, books, royal caps, souvenirs, table clocks, a Metro Bus model, coffee pots, shirts, musical instruments, blankets, scarves, ties and other items. As per Cabinet Division documents, all recipients deposited their gifts in President Asif Ali Zardari: A wooden box; a pair of floral porcelain bowls; two ties; a pair of bowls; oud wood incense; perfume pack; mug; vase; decorative plate; two cups; helmet; frame; watch; wristwatch; perfume

pack; wool scarf; model of Nimrud; decorative piece; book; a box containing a robe, boat, prayer beads, etc. First Lady: Rolex watch; Kashmiri shawl; perfume pack. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif: Three mufflers; silver vase; tea set; Metro Bus model; two shields; four decorative pieces; one cup; one book; egg device; one portrait; two shirts; blanket; model of Makkah Mukarramah; a box containing silver bowl, spoon, plate, etc.; a box containing attar; a box containing perfumes. (Models of Khana Kaaba, vase, clock, crystal vase, horse model, sword, carpet and table clock have been displayed at Prime Minister's House.) Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar: Russian traditional frame; Moscow landmark; two coffee sets; Kyrgyz traditional kumis mixing set with two bowls; Egyptian statue; Bahraini perfume; carriage clock. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq: Souvenir snow leopard. IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja:

Model of Selvy Palace; cones; two multi-colour scarves; white pearl. Energy Minister Awaiz Leghari: Book. Minister of state for finance and railways: Attar (perfume). Chief of protocol: Perfume and oud incense; silver shield; mat. Secretary IT: Souvenir. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar: Perfume with oud incense; scarf. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi: Perfume with oud incense. Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi: Perfume with oud incense. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari: Shawl; Rolex watch; perfume pack; Loro Piana fabric. President's military secretary: Rolex watch. President's spokesperson Murtaza Solangi: Rolex watch. Auditor general: Framed shield; necktie; crystal shield; cup; coin. Secretary Hameer Karim: Vase. Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema: A Glass and cup set as a gift.

Trump vows  
to cut off  
Cuba oil

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump urged Cuba on Sunday to "make a deal" soon, pledging to cut off all oil and money flowing to the communist-run island after the toppling of Havana's key ally, Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro. The threatening social media post drew an angry retort from Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, who said "no one" would tell his country what to do. Washington has imposed economy-crippling sanctions on its island neighbour for decades, but Trump has ramped up the pressure in recent days. US special forces seized Maduro and his wife this month in a lightning raid that left dozens of the ousted Venezuelan president's security personnel dead — many of whom were Cuban.



KARACHI: Canadian High Commissioner Tarik Ali Khan calls on Governor Sindh Kamran Tesori in Karachi. — DNA

Gold, silver hit record highs as US Justice  
Dept probe targets Federal ReserveDollar falls around 0.2% against  
major peers, reports Bloomberg

DNA

SINGAPORE/HONG KONG: Precious metals gold and silver on Monday hit new records as investors digested news that the US Justice Department is probing the Federal Reserve, raising fears over US central bank independence. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell confirmed the "unprecedented" move late Sunday, which he blasted as part of US President Donald Trump's pressure campaign for another rate cut. Gold surged 1.6% to nearly \$4,600 per ounce, while silver approached \$85 per ounce, both records, as investors sought safe havens. The dollar fell about 0.2% against major peers, according to Bloomberg. "The threat of criminal charges is a consequence of the Federal

Reserve setting interest rates based on our best assessment of what will serve the public, rather than following the preferences of the President," Powell said in a statement late Sunday. Powell said the bank received grand jury subpoenas on Friday related to his Senate testimony in June, which had been about a major renovation project of Federal Reserve office buildings. The Fed has indicated it would hold interest rates steady in its closely watched meeting at the end of this month. "The subpoenas mark a clear break in the long-held boundary between politics and monetary policy, a line markets once assumed was untouchable," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management told AFP. "Investors are not weighing the odds of charges so much as the risk that political pressure has crept into the Fed's decision-making," Innes added. Commenting on the development, Ray Attrill, head of FX strategy at National Australia Bank in Sydney, said: "Powell has had enough of the carping from the sidelines and is clearly going on the offensive."

China hopes for  
national stability  
in Iran: Mao Ning

BEIJING: China hopes that the Iranian government and people can overcome the current difficult situation and maintain national stability, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Monday. "We have always opposed interference in other countries' internal affairs and we have always maintained that the sovereignty and security of all countries should receive full protection under international law," she said during a routine briefing held here. The spokesperson said that the Chinese side opposes the use of force or the threat of use of force in international relations. China calls on all parties to do more things that are conducive to peace and stability in the Middle East, Mao Ning stated, when asked to comment on a media question noting that the protests in Iran have resulted in deaths and that US President Donald Trump threatened if Iran uses lethal force against protesters, he might strike Iran. — Agencies

Blast was due to gas  
leakage, says report

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD:— A devastating gas leakage from an LPG cylinder triggered a massive explosion early Sunday morning (January 11, 2026) at a residential house in Sector G-7/2, turning a joyous post-wedding gathering into a scene of profound grief. The blast killed at least eight people, including the bride and groom, and injured 11-12 others, many of whom were wedding guests and family members sleeping in the house after the celebrations. Initial reports described the incident as a possible cylinder blast, but authorities, including Islamabad Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa and police officials, have confirmed it resulted from gas leakage that accumulated in the room before igniting, causing the roof to collapse and trapping victims under debris. The explosion occurred around 2:00-7:00 AM local time, damaging the house and affecting nearby residences. Rescue teams, including emergency services and detection dogs, worked for several hours to pull out the injured and recover bodies. The victims were shifted to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), where medical teams provided immediate treatment.

Govt assures  
no Ord.  
promulgated  
sans  
president's  
assent

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday assured its major ally, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), that it had not promulgated any ordinance without President Asif Ali Zardari's assent after the party staged a walkout in the National Assembly. PPP MNA Naveed Qamar, speaking on the NA floor, said that for the first time, in "Pakistan's black legislative history", an ordinance has been promulgated without the approval or signature of the president, terming it "shameful". "How can you promulgate an ordinance and put it into effect, without getting the president's approval on it? This has never happened, not even in dictatorships," Qamar said. "I don't know what the government's excuse is for doing such a thing. Under such circumstances, we cannot be a part of this parliament. I, along with my party [colleagues], will walk out." Moments after the walkout, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari — who served under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as the foreign minister in his previous tenure — summoned a high-level party meeting to discuss the concerns over the ordinance, sources told Geo News. In response, Azam Nazir Tarar said that there were actually nine or 10 bills and ordinances that were pending assent with the presidency. "Just yesterday, we were informed that the president has been pleased to grant assent to those bills, acts, and ordinances.

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