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Editor: Asim Khan.

QUETTA VOICE



Former levies Personnel During Passing Out Parade in Quetta. Photo By Balochistan Police

Balochistan Police Launch Training Program for 772 Former Levies

Syed Ali Shah, News Desk

QUETTA: Balochistan Police has started efforts to professionally equip former Levies personnel who were merged from "B-Area" into "A-Area" policing, introducing improved training standards, upgraded residential facilities, and modern welfare services at the Police Training Services (PTS) Quetta.

Officials say the initiative is aimed at strengthening law

enforcement, restoring public trust, and promoting a policing culture based on professionalism, transparency, accountability, and public service.

According to police authorities, 772 former Levies officers are currently undergoing training and using residential facilities at PTS Quetta.

The three-month training program, which began on January 1, 2026, focuses on physical fitness, use of weapons, marksmanship, counter-terror operations, investigation tech-

niques, and legal awareness. The goal, officials added, is to ensure uniform protection of life and property across all districts.

To improve crime prevention, and build stronger cooperation between police and communities through intelligence-led and community-based policing.

Commandant Police Training College, Shahzad Akbar, said significant upgrades have been made to improve the living and learning environment for trainees. Resi-

dential blocks have been modernized, a newly built mess hall provides hygienic meals, and strict food safety standards are enforced.

To support physical fitness, a new futsal ground has been established, while the parade ground has been resurfaced to meet training needs.

Decorative fountains and landscaping have also been added to improve the overall environment of hostels and training areas.

"These measures are de-

signed to enhance the quality of life of our trainees and their professional training more effective," Commandant Akbar said.

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DG ISPR says Afghans involved in major terrorist incidents in Pakistan in 2025

NEWS DESK:

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General (DG) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Tuesday that Afghans were involved in major "high-impact" terror incidents in Pakistan.

At the outset of the press conference, the military's spokesperson said that the purpose of the briefing was to give a comprehensive overview of counter-terrorism measures taken in the past year.

This "is the only purpose of this press conference, and I would request that we remain focused on counterterrorism as terrorism is the biggest threat that is being faced by the people of Pakistan right now," he added.

The DG ISPR said 2025 was a "landmark and consequential year in our fight against terrorism", adding there were four reasons for this.

Saying that the fight against terrorism was the entire nation's and was being fought for more than two decades, the DG ISPR further stated that the year witnessed "unprecedented intensity in counter-terrorism efforts".

In 2025, he continued, the state of Pakistan, as well as the people, gained "complete clarity on terrorism".

"The state already had this clarity, which permeated slowly and gradually down[ward] that these terrorists are khawarij [and] they have no relation with Islam. They are Fitna-al-Hindustan and have no relation with Pakistan or [the people of] Balochistan," he elaborated.

Fitna-al-Kharjari is a term that the state has designated for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and it uses Fitna-al-Hindustan, Balochistan-based terror groups to highlight India's alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan.

Lieutenant General General Chaudhry further highlighted that in 2025, the world accepted and acknowledged Pakistan's stance and narrative regarding terrorism.

"Once formally inducted into the Balochistan Police, they will be better prepared to serve the public, uphold the law, and contribute to lasting peace in the province."

He added that upgrades at the Police Training College will continue as part of a broader effort to modernize policing in Balochistan.

Ambiguity Ended, No More A, B Area: CM Balochistan



Senate panel refers ministers' absence to privileges committee

NEWS DESK:

Absence of the federal and state ministers at a meeting angered the Senate Panel and forced it to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee.

It also decided to take up the issue with the Senate Chairman Syed Younus Raja Gilani if the ministers concerned failed to attend the next meeting.

A meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Senate Functional Committee on Problems of Less Developed Areas had been convened at the Senate House to review matters relating to the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), including the collection of revenues, expenditure mechanisms, relevant policies, and details of board's assets.

Senate Chairman Kamar chaired the meeting. The committee expressed serious concern over the absence of the Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and the Minister of State for Religious Affairs. In a post, the committee decided to defer the agenda.

The convener Senator Dinesh Kumar along with Committee Member Senator Nadeem Bhutto, observed that meaningful discussion.

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that long-standing administrative ambiguity over law enforcement in the province has now come to an end, with the introduction of a unified system across all districts.

In a post on social platform X,

Bugti announced that the A

and B area categorization has

been abolished and the Levies

force is being formally merged

into the Balochistan Police under law.

According to the chief minister, the move is aimed at establishing a single, clearer chain of command and ensuring consistent enforcement of law across the province. He said the decision will make state responsibility more accountable while strengthening public safety.

Bugti termed the development an important step toward improving coordination, enhancing response capacity, and reinforcing the rule of law in Balochistan.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Modern Policing Training for Former Levies Is No Longer Optional — It Is Urgent



Editorial: Balochistan's decision to train 772 former Levies personnel under the Balochistan Police is not merely an administrative reform — it is a historic correction. For more than a century, security in large parts of the province relied on a tribal policing system introduced by Sir Robert Sandeman nearly 142 years ago — effectively one and a half centuries back. That system was designed around the principles of collective responsibility, and informal dispute resolution, not contemporary law enforcement. While the Levies force earned respect within local communities, it was never equipped — nor trained — for the complex issues of today's crime, terrorism, digital threats, and urban policing. Many of these officers have never undergone structured, professional police training. Expecting them to perform modern policing duties without proper

preparation is unfair to them — and unsafe for the public.

This is why the ongoing program at Police Training College Quetta is critically important. It must go beyond parade drills and weapons handling, to provide law enforcement personnel with comprehensive training in investigation standards, human rights, evidence preservation, intelligence-led policing, community engagement, and the ethical use of authority.

Equally important is training in First Information Reports (FIRs), complaint handling, victim support, and documentation — the backbone of justice. Without accuracy at the first point of contact, the entire legal chain collapses.

Upgraded hostels, mess facilities, sports grounds, and structured welfare support are welcome steps. A secure, dignified environment produces confident officers — and confident officers

make better policing decisions. However, modernization must remain continuous, not symbolic.

Training must be supported with modern equipment, digital crime management tools, body cameras, forensic support, and performance accountability.

Most importantly, officers should learn that policing today is not simply force — it is law, service, and trust.

Balochistan stands at a turning point.

Transforming former Levies into professional, community-oriented police officers can rebuild public confidence, improve crime prevention, and strengthen rule of law.

But success depends

on sustained investment and a mindset shift — from tribal guardianship to professional policing. Reform is never easy.

But in this case, it is necessary — and long overdue.

In the global battle against climate change, Balochistan is a stark reminder of the urgent need for climate resilience. The province is experiencing increasingly severe weather events, a consequence of human-induced climate change.

However, the climate challenges in Balochistan extend beyond relentless heat waves. The province grapples with flooding, droughts, and flash floods, all of which wreak havoc on homes and infrastructure. The floods of 2010 and 2022 left nearly 4 million people displaced, disrupting lives and triggering food shortages and price spikes due to their impact on the agriculture sector.

The 2022 flood in Balochistan underscores the looming climate change threat

The 2022 flood underscored the looming threat of climate change, and even fatalities. In

2017, Turbat recorded a scorching 53.5°C (128.3°F), setting a record for Pakistan. Unfortunately, forecasts suggest that temperatures will continue to rise.

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Climate change also decimated the economy

through the loss of

livestock. Between 2010 and 2022, 1.5 million livestock were lost, costing over \$1 billion and displacing over 100,000 people, particularly in districts like Quetta, Pishin, Turbat, Paigur, and Khuzdar.

However, it exposed the province's vulnerability and highlighted the urgent need for effective management strategies.

Balochistan's annual rainfall of just 200 mm barely meets the needs of its parched population. This water scarcity adversely affects food production, access to drinking water, and livestock numbers, exacerbated by climate change.

The severe droughts of 1997-2003 and 2014-2017 forced migrations to water-rich areas.

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Procurement of JF-17 aircraft comes under discussion during meeting between air chief, Bangladeshi counterpart

NEWS DESK: Pakistan and Bangladesh air chiefs held detailed discussions on the "potential procurement" of JF-17 Thunder aircraft, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday.

The JF-17 Thunder multi-role fighter was jointly developed by China and Pakistan. The fighter has proved its combat capabilities during military conflicts with India in 2019 and 2025.

The press release issued by ISPR said Bangladesh Air Force Chief Marshal Md. Mahfuz Khan called on Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air Chief Marshal Zahoor Ahmed Babar Siddiqui in Islamabad.

The Bangladeshi air chief checked delivery of four MiG-21 and MiG-29 aircraft, along with a complete training and long-term support eco-

operational cooperation system, it added.

Air Chief Marshal Sidhu briefed his Bangladeshi counterpart on the comprehensive training framework basic to advanced flying, and PAF institutions, and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to supporting Bangladesh Air Force's ageing fleet and radar systems to enhance surveillance," the statement said.

After detailed discussions were also held on the procurement of JF-17 Thunder aircraft," it said, adding that the delegation also visited key PAF facilities to ensure that all its provisions fully com-

"The visit underscored the strong historical ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh and reflected a shared resolve to deepen defence cooperation and build a long-term strategic partnership," it added.

"He also assured fast-tracked delivery of four MiG-21 and MiG-29 aircraft, along with a complete training and long-term support eco-

Ex-nazim injured in IED blast outside his office in Bannu

NEWS DESK: The former nazim of Bannu district Fida Muhammed Khan Wazir was injured in a bomb blast outside his office on Tuesday.

Asif Hassan, the Bannu police spokesperson, confirmed the incident, saying that a pre-installed improvised explosive device (IED) was detonated at the office gate in the Domel bazaar area.

Soon after it was reported, a heavy contingent rushed to the scene, cordoned off the area and formally initiated an investigation.

Police and local sources said the explosion occurred outside the main gate of the former nazim's office in Domel.

At the time of the blast, Wazir was present in his vehicle and sustained minor injuries.

Faisal Karim Kundi calls for dialogue without preconditions

NEWS DESK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, Momin Khan and other PTI leaders talked about negotiations, the party's incarcerated founder, Imran Khan, was pushing the country towards instability.

Addressing a news conference at his residence here, the governor said that political issues could only be resolved through dialogue, but talks couldn't be held on preconditions.

He said that even the prime minister had expressed willingness to engage in talks with him.

Mr Kundi, however, maintained that meaningful negotiations required seriousness and responsibility from all

area.

On Tuesday, an important gathering of tribal elders was expected to be held at the same site.

The former nazim was on his way to attend the meeting when the incident occurred.

Meanwhile, tribal elders gathered on the streets and announced a strong protest and harsh response by gathering at the scene of the incident.

On Tuesday, an important gathering of tribal elders was expected to be held at the same site.

The former nazim was on his way to attend the meeting when the incident occurred.

Meanwhile, tribal elders gathered on the streets and announced a strong protest and harsh response by gathering at the scene of the incident.

The governor said that the repatriation of Afghan nationals was a firm government decision and that Afghans were welcome to return to the country by observing proper rules for business or employment.

He reiterated that the government's stand on illegal immigrants was final.

Commenting on inter-provincial matters, Mr Kundi said that the recent visit of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi to

Punjab was wrongly portrayed by both sides.

He said that Afghan nationals were found to be involved in attacks on the Police Training School in Dera Ismail Khan and FC Headquarters.

The governor said that the repatriation of Afghan nationals was a firm government decision and that Afghans were welcome to return to the country by observing proper rules for business or employment.

He said the law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was deteriorating and there was need for an operation to restore peace.

Mr Kundi praised the KP police, particularly Dera Ismail Khan's, for their sacrifices.

Amnesty says 27th Amendment part of 'sustained attack' on judicial independence, calls for 'urgent review'

NEWS DESK: Human rights group Amnesty International on Tuesday said the 27th Constitutional Amendment was the "crescendo of a concerted and sustained attack on the independence of the judiciary, right to fair trial and the rule of law in Pakistan", calling for an urgent review of the legislation.

The 27th Amendment, passed by Parliament after five days of heated debate, opposition protests, and last-minute changes, was widely criticised for eroding judicial independence through the formation of a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) and for "upholding the leadership structure by rewriting Article 243 of the Constitution (command of the armed forces)."

A statement issued on Tuesday by the rights body said the Amendment was a "crescendo of a concerted and sustained attack on the independence of the judiciary, right to fair trial and the rule of law in Pakistan".

It called on authorities to conduct an urgent review of the Amendment to "ensure that all its provisions fully com-

ply with Pakistan's international human rights law obligations and commitments".

The Amendment also removes the president and heads of the naval, armed and air forces from account-

ability.

The Pakistani authorities must immediately take all necessary measures to uphold their international human rights obligations, effectively protect the human rights of everyone in the country, and ensure access to justice and remedy for victims, as well as respect the separation of powers and the rule of law."

Amnesty maintained that the 27th Amendment had en-

tered into force for any reason," the rights body said.

It noted that the Amendment violated "international human rights law, potentially undermining the independence of the judiciary, right to fair trial and justice and accountability".

The Pakistani authorities must immediately take all necessary measures to uphold their international human rights obligations, effectively protect the human rights of everyone in the country, and ensure access to justice and remedy for victims, as well as respect the separation of powers and the rule of law."

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sured the establishment of the FCC, which "lacks independence, erodes judges' security".

It noted that despite the Amendment's far-reaching consequences, it was passed through Parliament with "no consultation with civil society and opposition parties".

It resulted that on the day the Amendment was signed into law, two senior judges of the Supreme Court — Justices Mansoor Ali and Syed Mohammad Mirza — had resigned. It added that two days later, a Lahore High Court had also resigned, referring to judge Shams Mahmood Mirza. The rights body said the 27th Amend-

"erodes judicial independence," which it maintained had been "already weakened" by the 26th Constitutional Amendment, which was passed in 2024. It noted that the 26th Amendment was "passed with similar haste, in less than 24 hours in October 2024".

It added that the commission of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) — the body responsible for the appointment of judges of the Supreme and high courts — was established under the 26th Amendment. Members of Parliament were added to the commission and judicial members were reduced to a majority, the statement said. It said that the "change in composition through the legislature of the JCP risks politicisation" of the appointment of judges.

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More markets, shops sealed across Karachi as drive against 'encroachments' continues

NEWS DESK: After sealing the entire motorcycle market on Alker Road, authorities on Monday sealed the automobilespareparts market off M.A.Jinnah Road, near the Central Bazaar as well as hundreds of shops in the bazaar of the metropolis.

The expansion of the drive against encroachments — from the Central Bazaar to the market off M.A.Jinnah Road — has led to most mechanics and repairmen who worked on the roadside in front of the sealed shops were hired by shop owners, seeking to grow their business by shifting to the side parking of vehicles, the road became too congested, affecting the flow of traffic, he said.

Officials claimed that as many as 80 shops in the Central Bazaar market were sealed because vehicles parked in front of the shops for repairs encroached on the main road, causing traffic snarls.

A similar reason was given by the authorities for sealing as many as 115 shops in the Akbar Road motorcycle market, which remained shut on Monday, as well as dozens of other shops in the city's business district.

Deputy Commiss-

ioner South Javed Nabi Khoso said that the shopkeepers at Tibet Centre had been given a warning three times to remove encroachments in front of their shops.

He said that most mechanics and repairmen who worked on the roadside in front of the sealed shops were hired by shop owners, seeking to grow their business by shifting to the side parking of vehicles, the road became too congested, affecting the flow of traffic, he said.

Shopkeepers told

that after the affidavit was submitted, any further breach of the SOPs would result in arrests and the registration of FIRs against the violators.

Officials said that the authorities had sealed as many as 196 eateries in different parts of the city during the past three days.

Karachi Commis-

Syed Hassan Naqvi told Dawn that the city's antienforcement campaign would remain in force, and that no shop or eatery would be per-

mitted to place articles or goods on walkways.

He said that the crackdown would continue to curb the growing trend of encroachments on footpaths, roads and service lanes.

"Action may harm economy."

However, traders dismissed the government action as unnecessary, warning that it would harm their businesses and the country's economy.

Muhammad Sabir Shaikh, a former officer of the Motor Vehicle Dealers Association, said that showing automobiles and bikes in front of their outlets is a worldwide practice.

Authorities should have marked a lane in front of the shops for displaying motorbikes," he demanded.

"The whole exercise, under the guise of an antienforcement drive, is aimed at raising rates," alleged another bike dealer, without elaborating.

Rallies across AJK mark Right to Self-Determination Day

NEWS DESK: Rallies and seminars were held across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Monday to mark the Right to Self-Determination Day, with participants urging the United Nations to implement its January 5 resolution on Kashmir as a prerequisite for creating peace in South Asia.

In Muzaffarabad, Pashawar-i-Hurrat Jammu Kashmir (PHJK), an organisation of post-1989 migrants for Indian-occupied Kashmir, organised a rally that drew a large number of participants, including women, children and elderly citizens.

The rally, which was attended by a police constable, was interrupted when armed assailants shot him in Bannu's Kashfi Khal area.

On Tuesday, an important gathering of tribal elders was expected to be held at the same site.

The former nazim was on his way to attend the meeting when the incident occurred.

Meanwhile, tribal elders gathered on the streets and announced a strong protest and harsh response by gathering at the scene of the incident.

The governor said that the repatriation of Afghan nationals was a firm government decision and that Afghans were welcome to return to the country by observing proper rules for business or employment.

He said the law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was deteriorating and there was need for an operation to restore peace.

Mr Kundi praised the KP police, particularly Dera Ismail Khan's, for their sacrifices.

resolutions to resolve the Kashmir dispute. He said the January 5 resolution provided a clear roadmap for settlement of the issue and that the Kashmir people were still waiting for its enforcement.

PHJK chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali called for the implementation of the UN resolution on the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He said the people of Jammu and Kashmir had been denied their right to self-determination and that the Indian government had violated their basic human rights.

Participants carried banners and placards highlighting flagrant human rights violations by Indian-occupied Kashmir and demanding the right to self-determination, which they said had repeatedly been pledged to the Kashmir people by the international community and the Security Council resolutions.

The governor expressed confidence that the chief minister would handle the dignity of his office.

He said the law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was deteriorating and there was need for an operation to restore peace.

Mr Kundi praised the KP police, particularly Dera Ismail Khan's, for their sacrifices.

for the right to self-determination until their demands were met.

Similars were held at several district headquarters, with the participants at Kashmir House in Islamabad with senior most minister Mian Abdul Waheed, former prime minister Raja Farooq Haider and Sardar Attique Khan, and APHC leader Altaf Ahmed Bhutto and the prominent speakers.

Separately, AJK Prime Minister Raji Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, who is in Islamabad, attended a rally organised by the Friends of Kashmir at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services.

He said January 5 served as a reminder of the UN's unfulfilled

commitments to the Kashmiri people and urged the world body to take effective notice of the situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir. He maintained that Kashmir remained a disputed territory and the Kashmiri struggle, marked by decades of sacrifices, could not be ignored indefinitely.

Meanwhile, speakers at a conference here on Monday urged the international community to prevail upon India to implement United Nations resolutions of independence of Jammu and Kashmir. The All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC), organised the conference titled "January 5: The Call for Self-Determination in Jammu and Kashmir."

He said the UN maintained the same position even after India attempted to mislead it by holding assembly elections in the occupied region.

He maintained that the people of Jammu and Kashmir should determine their own future.

He said the UN maintained the same position even after India attempted to mislead it by holding assembly elections in the occupied region.

Punjab Bar Council restores licence of lawyer Mian Ali Ashfaq

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab Bar Council (PBC) on Tuesday reinstated the practicing licence of Advocate Mian Ali Ashfaq, who is representing YouTuber Rajab Butt in ongoing legal matters.

The decision came a day after Justice Malik Awas Khalid of the Lahore High Court heard Ashfaq's petition challenging the revocation of his license. The court had also requested the full record from the

PBC regarding the suspension. In its order, PBC Vice Chairman Muhammad Ashfaq Kalooi stated, "Considering the facts and circumstances, particularly the violation of Article 10-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, the license of Ali Ashfaq to practice law is hereby restored."

Ashfaq's license had been suspended on December 31 following a complaint from the president and general secretary of the Karachi Bar Association (KBA). The PBC initially rejected the application for a proper hearing. The court then noted that while Ashfaq's claim regarding the lack of authority

of the PBC's executive committee was dismissed as "misconceived," the council emphasized it had the power to suspend, pending, or impose penalties on any advocate found guilty of profes-

sional misconduct under Section 4(1)(1) and (2) of the Act.

Ashfaq had argued in his petition that the decision to suspend him violated Article 10-A and the principles of natural justice, as the

order was issued in his absence without allowing him to respond. He also denied committing any misconduct, calling the KBA committee "biased, fickle, and motivated by certain members of its cabinet."



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, inspecting the construction work of the new Parliament Lodges Project.

Punjab CM Maryam reviews progress on Model Village Project

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has inspected the development and progress of Model Village Project.

Chairing a special meeting in Lahore on Tuesday, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was briefed that as many as 224 villages of Punjab are rapidly moving towards becoming model.

In the first phase, every street in 469 villages of Punjab will be made beautiful, bright and safe through water supply, drainage, children's park, footpath and streetlights. The meeting also reviewed the progress on Punjab Development Program, Lahore Development Program, Model

Village, PHA, clean water and rural road projects.

Maryam Nawaz instructed that every development project of Punjab should be completed on time.

She said a live dashboard will be established and she will herself closely monitor progress daily.

Maryam Nawaz directed that for the safety and convenience of citizens in Punjab, sewerage line should be laid in green belts instead of roads which will journey easy.

The chief minister

was briefed that the first phase of the Lahore Development Project has been completed and the second phase will be completed by April 30.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered the

completion of the Punjab Development Project in seven cities in April. Maryam Nawaz

instructed that every

development project of Punjab should be completed on time.

She said a live dashboard will be established and she will herself closely monitor progress daily.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif has sought a feasible plan to establish PHAs in the entire province. She also sought details of the manpower and assets of the existing PHAs.

Maryam Nawaz directed to prepare a resource generation plan for the financial autonomy of PHAs.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered the immediate release of the second installment of the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' project for the homeless. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to issue

allotment letters to allottees of 'Apni Zamin Apna Ghar' programme. The

plan was briefed that about 121,477 loans worth Rs 155 billion issued under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' scheme and 65,000 houses have been completed.

It was further briefed that 700 houses are being built daily under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar.'

Rs 5.15 billion received as instalments under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' project.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered to list the scheduled completion time of the project on the billboard. Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed anger over digging in streets and roads and leaving them open.

The prime minister was chairing a meeting of the Working Group comprising private sector experts. The working group was established to align the agriculture sector with the international standards and to increase the country's agriculture exports.

"The federal government, within its own jurisdiction, is undertaking reforms in the agriculture sector and in collaboration with provincial governments, is taking measures to promote agricultural development in order to increase per-acre yield."

He also emphasized that the government was taking measures to increase the export of the fisheries and horticulture products.

He directed the relevant authorities to present the policy measures to produce palm oil along the coastal belt.

The meeting was attended by Federal

PM directs for preparing comprehensive strategy to boost agri exports

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed authorities to formulate a comprehensive five-year strategy to boost agricultural exports. He emphasized that the government was also taking policy-level steps aimed at processing of the agriculture products to make them export-ready.

Recently, he said the 1000 Pakistani students had been sent to China at government expenses to train them on the latest agriculture technology.

Pakistan has great potential in the agricultural sector, the prime minister said, adding that, within available resources, the government is making efforts to increase the country's agriculture exports.

"The federal government, within its own jurisdiction, is undertaking reforms in the agriculture sector and in collaboration with provincial governments, is taking measures to promote agricultural development in order to increase per-acre yield."

He also emphasized that the government was taking measures to increase the export of the fisheries and horticulture products.

Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Dr. Musadik Malik, Dr. Shahid Kiani, Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar, and senior government officials.

During the meeting, Chairman Working Group Rana Nasem and his team briefed the participants on the issues faced by the sector and the future production needs.

The meeting was given a detailed comparative overview, at regional and global levels, of major Rabi and Kharif crops in the country, average per-acre yields, horticulture and fruit production and exports, livestock, dairy sector, and all agriculture-related sectors.

It was informed that under a short-term plan, from 2020 to 2025, Pakistan's current average per-acre yields would be increased while remaining within existing resources.

He directed the relevant authorities to present the policy measures to produce palm oil along the coastal belt.

The prime minister appreciated the detailed briefing by the Working Group and directed that a practical, effective, and comprehensive roadmap be prepared and included in the government's reform recommendations.

University of Lahore girl attempted suicide after getting low marks in test

LAHORE (INP): A girl student of the University of Lahore (UoL) who attempted suicide yesterday was still under treatment at a hospital in Lahore on Tuesday and her family said she has not yet fully recovered.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered the immediate release of the second installment of the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' project for the homeless. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to issue

initial investigation, emerged that Fatima decided to end her life in a domestic dispute. Police also collected all the necessary information from her parents.

It is necessary to note here that Fatima was critical of the university, after jumping from the second floor of the University of Lahore.

The university registrar confirmed that the administration was aware of the incident but said no conclusions could be drawn until the completion of the investigation.

Hospital officials said the student has sustained fractured vertebrae, lungs, her arm and ribs, along with serious head injuries.

Police further revealed that during the

jumping from the building, Police said efforts were under way to obtain details of her final phone conversation to determine the circumstances leading up to the incident.

A university registrar confirmed that the administration was aware of the incident but said no conclusions could be drawn until the completion of the investigation.

The registrar said the student's syllabus had not been completed and noted that scholarships at the university are awarded to high-achieving students, irrespective of admission and continue based on first-semester results.

An initial report of police inquiry revealed



LAHORE: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani met Makhdum Syed Ahmed Mahmood at his Lahore residence. Syed Ali Qasim Gilani and Makhdum Syed Murtaza Mahmood, MNA were also present.

Sindh govt assures full security, protocol to KP CM Afridi on Jan 9

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government has decided to provide full protocol and security to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Sohail Afridi during his upcoming visit to the province.

According to the report, following the decision, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has extended an invitation to Sohail Afridi for a formal luncheon.

The KP chief minister is scheduled to arrive in Karachi on January 9 for a three-

day visit and will meet Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah at the Chief Minister's House in Karachi.

Sources said that apart from Karachi, Sindh has also invited the KP chief minister in other cities of Sindh during his stay. Sindh Minister for Local Government Nasir Hussain Shah has formally contacted CM Sohail Afridi and conveyed the invitation of the Sindh chief minister.

The KP chief minister is scheduled to meet representatives of civil society and party leadership and will also address members of the Sindh Bar Association, focusing on key political and governance-related issues.

The Sindh visit follows Afridi's recent tour of Punjab. On

December 26, 2025, the KP chief minister arrived in Lahore on a three-day visit, during which he held meetings with party leaders, addressed the media, and visited the Punjab Assembly.

During his visit to Lahore, CM Afridi met the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Punjab parliamentary party to discuss the prevailing political situation and future strategy. He also held interactions with senior journalists, anchorpersons and beat reporters.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan inspected rest areas at M-2 Motorway Lahore.

Salaried class pays over Rs266 billion in income taxes

NEWS DESK: Salaried individuals paid Rs266 billion in income tax during the first half of the current fiscal year, contributing nearly one rupee of every Rs10 collected in income taxes across the country.

By salaried persons, in both the public and private sectors, remained more than double the taxes paid by the real estate sector during the same period, according to provisional figures compiled by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for the July/December period.

The statistics showed that salaried persons paid Rs266 billion in income taxes, higher by Rs23 billion, or 9%, compared to the same period of the last fiscal year. The Rs266 billion in income payments by salaried individuals were exclusive of book adjustments. In the last fiscal year, the income tax contribution, excluding book adjustments, stood at Rs243 billion.

Sources said that after adding book adjustments, the figure had already crossed Rs300 billion in the first half of the current fiscal year. It is also the exclusive of payments that



a few contractual employees make under Section 153-B of the income tax law, the sources added.

Pakistan's salaried class remains unduly burdened and is victim of the FBR's letdown approach, which places the burden of tax collection on the existing pool of taxpayers, mainly salaried individuals and retired persons. The salaried class pays about 38% of its gross income in taxes, which is significantly higher compared to regional countries and relative to the real estate sector and retailers.

In his address to the

Pakistan Business Council (PBC) last month, the national coordinator of the Special Interests and Foreign Council (SIFC), Lt Gen Sarfraz Ahmed, had said: "We have made a mess of our fiscal situation and so far as the government is concerned, what can I think of is taxation - and you (businessmen) are the easiest prey because you are already documented, and the statistics showed that non-corporate employees paid the highest amount, Rs117 billion, in income tax, up 14% from last year. Corporate sector employees paid Rs82 billion, also 13% higher than last year."

The FBR struggled to achieve its downward-revised tax target for the year. It had to resort to taking heavy advances and slowing down payments of taxpayers' refunds. Yet, it could hardly show a 10% increase in collections, which was one of the growth rate required to meet this year's annual tax target.

The FBR collected Rs3.6 billion in income tax during the first half of the fiscal year, with nearly one-tenth coming from salaried persons who pay taxes on their gross incomes without the option of adjusting their expenses.

Employees of provincial governments

paid Rs39 billion in income tax, a 7% reduction compared to a year earlier. In contrast, federal government employees contributed Rs27 billion, an increase of 10%.

The government's new tax on wealth pensioners, introduced in this year's budget for pensions exceeding Rs10 million, yielded very little, suggesting that annual collections may hardly reach Rs1 billion.

While succumbing to pressure from within, the government in the last month again allowed retired employees to claim more than one pension, undermining its stated objective of encouraging pension reforms and cutting expenditure.

While the salaried class continues to see rising tax contributions, collected from traders, it remains limited. The enforcement measures, including a ban on economic transactions by ineligible persons, were diluted or relaxed. The real estate sector also faced higher taxes, with increased rates for non-filers and the introduction of a new category late filers.

With ongoing collections on plot sales to rose by two-thirds to Rs87 billion.

Oil up more than 1% in choppy trade

NEWS DESK: Oil prices increased by more than 1% on Monday as traders assessed the possible impact on crude flows from Venezuela, home to the world's largest oil reserves.

Following the United States' capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

Brent crude futures were up 96 cents, or 1.58%, at \$61.71 a barrel by

12:56pm EDT. United States' WTI crude gained 95 cents, or 1.66%, to \$58.27.

Both benchmarks rose more than \$1 in late morning trade after falling more than \$1 earlier in a choppy session, as investors digested news of Maduro's capture and

according to four oil industry executives familiar with the matter.



Government tightens gas supply, reviews Winter load management

NEWS DESK: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik chaired a meeting to review the gas supply situation, winter load management and consumer complaints across the country.

The meeting also examined an Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) audit report on compliance with service standards for complaint handling.

According to an official statement, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui

Southern Gas Company (SSGC) briefed the minister on gas supply arrangements for consumers this winter was better than last year.

The meeting was informed that IoT-based monitoring and Town Border systems had been drawn largely by an increase in information technology exports.

In contrast to commodity exports, which have exhibited mixed trends, the services sector has consistently recorded growth since the start of the fiscal year.

According to data compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, services exports rose by 18.27pc year-on-year in the first half, followed by an increase of 8.41pc in August, 14.85pc in September, 17.61pc in October, and 22.26pc in November. The growth in export of services is mainly led by telecommunication, computer and information services.

The export of services reached \$3.833 billion in July-November FY26, up from \$3.283 billion in the corresponding months of

Services exports rise 17pc in July-November

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's exports of services

last year in rupee terms, the exports improved by 18.42pc to Rs16.77 billion during the first five months (July-November) of FY26, up 25.26%, driven largely by an increase in information technology exports.

In November, the

export of services

in rupee terms, the exports improved by 22.26pc. On a month-on-month basis, the exports of services grew 0.41pc. According to the data compiled by the State Statistical Bureau, the exports of telecommunication, computer, and information services rose 18.51pc to \$1.799 billion in November.

The export of other business services jumped 24.01pc to

import of services decreased by 9.04pc.

The largest share in the import of services during FY26 was attributed to the transport sector, with its value rising 6.35pc to \$2.093 billion followed by travel services, which surged 54.27pc to \$1.487 billion. The trade deficit in services increased by 2.55pc to \$1.312 billion in FY26 compared to \$1.279 billion in FY25.

PM directs easy bank loans for small and medium enterprises



NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the relevant institutions to expedite measures for providing loans to small and medium enterprises on easy terms through banks and other financial institutions.

Chairing a meeting, the premier commended Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar and Small and Medium En-

terprises Development Authority's (Smeda) newly elected board of directors for formulating a practical and effective plan.

"SMEs are the backbone of the country's economy," Mr Shehbaz said, adding that there is immense potential to increase the country's exports through the development of small and medium enter-

prises. A three-year roadmap for the promotion of SME sector was presented in the meeting besides a detailed financial plan.

Pakistan's SME sector is on a competitive basis in the global market. The meeting was briefed on enhancing the capacity of domestic SMEs, multiple workshops have recently been organised in six cities.

A briefing was also given on ongoing measures to further enhance the existing cooperation with various countries to introduce SMEs to a competitive environment. Addressing fishermen, academics and members of the business community, the minister said the strategy to include SMEs in the country's exports and other measures included in the business plan.

A briefing was also

First fishing technology museum inaugurated in Karachi

NEWS DESK: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Junaid Anwar Chishti on Monday inaugurated Pakistan's first Fishing Technology Museum and soft launched the Maha Dost digital traceability system. The initiative aims at strengthening fisheries management and improving export competitiveness.

According to an official statement, the museum, located in Karachi, traces the evolution of fishing practices from traditional artisanal methods to advanced technologies.

It is a natural center for research, learning and policy development, while also documenting the cultural heritage of coastal communities across the country.

The minister noted that Pakistan's fishing economic zone has significant untapped potential but continues to face losses due to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. He added that the museum's archive and research resources could contribute to evidence-based reforms and support the training of future marine

scientists and fisheries management experts.

Launched alongside the museum, the Maha Dost app introduces a digital catch-to-consumer tracking system using blockchain and GPS technology. Using QR codes, fishermen can record catch data to ensure traceability and compliance with international requirements. The app also features a marine archive and research resources to evidence-based reforms and support the training of future marine

mission. The minister said the application would help verify dolphin-safe fishing practices and improve transparency in seafood supply chains. He added that this would support Pakistan's seafood exports, currently valued at around \$500 million.

According to the statement, pilot projects using the app have reduced apprehensions for European markets and enabled small-scale fishermen to access higher-value international buyers.



Smith in charge after Head's 163 to put Australia seven behind England

NEWS DESK: Run-machine Travis Head hit a swashbuckling 163 and Steve Smith an unbeaten 65 as Australia moved to within seven runs of England's first innings 384 at tea on day three of the fourth Test in the Ashes fest on Tuesday.

It was the destructive opener's third ton of the series, to go with the phenomenal match-winning 123 he made in Perth and 170 at Adelaide.

It helped the hosts, who began the day 166-2, to 377-6 at the break in a packed Sydney Cricket Ground, with Cameron Green alongside Smith on eight not out.

Head brought up three figures off just 105 balls and second debutant Ben 200. He came undone in the third over after lunch by the part-time spin of Jacob Bell, who was bowling for the first time in the series.

In his second over, Bell trapped the 32-year-old lbw attempting



a sweep shot to end a magnificent knock.

Usman Khawaja, in his 88th and last Test after another brilliant effort, also fell lbw in the second session to Brydon Carse for 17.

Josh Tongue was probing and finally got a reward when he ended the day from Alex Carey to Bell in the slips on 16 just before tea to reinvigorate Eng-

land. The hosts lead the series 3-1 and have already retained the Ashes despite a slender win after victory at the previous Test in Melbourne.

Head resumed on 91 and nightwatcher Michael Neser, who had earlier been dropped after Jake Weatherald (21) and Marnus Labuschagne (48) were

out on Monday. Head clattered an early midwicket boundary off Ben Stokes and reached three figures with his 17th, which crunched through the covers from Tongue, windmilling his bat in celebration.

It was a 12th century for the Sydney cement his reputation as one of the game's most versatile batsmen.

Head only moved to the top of the order in the second session of the first Test in Perth due to Khawaja's back injury, but he has made the position his own.

With his hundred second, he scored four straight fours off Matt Potts then had a massive let-off when he pulled Carse and Will Jacks dropped a sitter near the ropes.

A 10th-wicket stand took him to 148 and he passed 150 with another four from Tongue.

Neser ably stuck around for 90 balls to foil England, who had started their last two reviews of him.

Batting like a top-

notch batsman, he smacked four boundaries before getting a third-leg catch 24 to wicketkeeper Jamie Off-Carse.

Smith, on 121, was dropped at leg slip by Zak Crawley but safely got away with a post 50 for 45th time with a drive down the ground.

Amorim sacked by Man Utd after 14-month reign

NEWS DESK: Ruben Amorim has been sacked as Manchester United manager 14 months after arriving at Old Trafford, the club announced on Monday.

United said in a statement that the Portuguese had left his role, with the club's leadership "reluctantly making the decision that it is the right time to make a change".

The club added:

"This will give the team the best opportunity of the highest possible Premier League results."

"The club would like to thank Ruben for his contribution to the club and wishes him well for the future."

Current Under-18s coach Darren Fletcher will take charge of the team against Burnley on Wednesday.



Amorim has been sacked as Manchester United manager 14 months after arriving at Old Trafford, the club announced on Monday.

"Guys, start with that and I noticed that you receive selective information about everything - I came here to be the manager of the club, not the United, not to be the coach of Manchester United," Amorim said. "And that is clear. I know that my name is not (Thomas) Tuchel, it's not (Antonio) Conte, it's not (José) Mourinho but I'm the manager of Manchester United."

"And it's going to be different. It's 18 months or when the board decides to change, so that was my point."

ICC mulls relocating Bangladesh T20 WC matches from India after BCB request

NEWS DESK: The International Cricket Council (ICC) is considering the Bangladesh Cricket Board's request to relocate their T20 World Cup matches from India after the board refused to send the team to India due to a controversy surrounding the expulsion of a Bangladeshi cricketer from the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Earlier, ESPNcricinfo reported that Bangladesh refused to travel to India for the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup with the BCB citing concerns around "safety and well-being" of the players in a climate of deteriorating political ties between the two countries, and sparked by Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) instructions to Kolkata Knight Riders to release Mustafizur Rahim.

The BCCI has not officially said that its instruction to KKR to release Mustafizur from their squad was based on security.

Bangladesh's T20 World Cup matches were scheduled to be held in Kolkata and

Mumbai, with their opening fixture against West Indies at Eden Gardens on February 7. With just a month to go for the start of the tournament, the BCB's decision threw the schedule into some disarray.

"Following a thorough assessment of the prevailing situation and the growing concerns regarding the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India and considering the advice from the Bangladeshi Government, the Board of Directors

resolved that the Bangladesh National Team will not travel to India for the tournament under the current conditions," the BCB said in a statement.

"In light of this decision, the BCB has formally requested the International Cricket Council (ICC), as the event authority, to consider relocating all of Bangladesh's matches to a venue outside India."

The BCB's statement came two hours after Bangladeshi sports adviser Asif

Nazrul backed the board's decision of refusing to travel to India. "The BCB has decided not to send the Bangladeshi team to India for the World Cup," he wrote on his official Facebook page.

"India said that they are unable to provide security for one player, so how can they give security for the whole team? We had to take the decision considering not just the players and support staff," a BCB official said. "We have to think about the fans and journalists who will travel to India. We can't just go there. We can't play in India."

On 1-1 at Sri Lanka, Bangladesh's fixtures could result in a fresh set of complications. The 2026 T20 World Cup will be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

The tournament does not follow a hybrid model like the 2025 Champions Trophy, so it remains to be seen whether the BCB will agree to Bangladesh's request to move their matches out of India.

Meanwhile, the BCB has also written to the BCCI, asking it to explain why Mustafizur was released from the KKR squad when the Indian board had written to the Bangladesh board, requesting it to make him available for the IPL auction. It's understood that the BCB's letter to the BCCI, however, doesn't address its security concerns. The BCB has shared those concerns with the ICC.



Atletico, Real Sociedad share spoils

NEWS DESK: Atletico's 1-1 draw with Real Sociedad in La Liga on Sunday with Goncalo Guedes cancelling out Alexander Sorloth's opener for the visitors in a five-minute spell after the break at Anoeta Stadium.

The result saw Atletico lose further ground in the title race and left them fourth on 38 points, level with third-placed Villarreal, who have two games in hand, but 11 points adrift of Atletico.

Real Sociedad climbed to 15th on 18 points, two clear of the relegation zone, in an encouraging first game under new coach Pellegrino Matarazzo.

"We're not happy, we wanted the three points," said forward Gelson Simeone.

"I think they outplayed us in the first half in terms of intensity. They were very aggressive in their pressing and we didn't know how to break them down."

We started the second half differently. We had chances, however, and it wasn't to our advantage. Real Sociedad took the lead in stoppage time when Sorloth turned a Carlos

Soler free kick into his own net, only for the effort to be ruled out for offside.

Despite the hosts' poor start, Atletico struck five minutes after the restart when Simeone surged down the right flank and delivered a superb, pinpoint cross to the far post, where the unmarked Sorloth headed home to hand the visitors the lead.

Real Sociedad took the lead five minutes later when Guedes levelled with a powerful strike after a swift counterattack, sweeping home a precise cross from Takefusa Kubo following a well-worked move on the right.

Both sides had chances to snatch a late winner, with Jan Oblak denying Kubo twice, Antoine Griezmann failing to convert a one-on-

one against Alex Remiro

and Soler firing just wide in the dying moments.

"We prepared well.

"It's a shame we didn't

get the win because on other days the opposition deserves more, but today we deserved more than them," Kubo said.

"Our fans noticed

that the team is trying to

change and move

forward. We showed more

desire than them."

Atletico next face bitter rivals Real Madrid on Thursday in the Spanish Super Cup semi-finals.

"This isn't enough.

"We have to analyse

what happened."

Simeone added: "Now

we have to

rest. There's

not long to go until

the next match. We have to

focus on that match

against Madrid."

Sanders wins second stage to take lead

NEWS DESK: Australia's defending Dakar Rally motorbike champion Daniel Sanders moved into the overall lead after winning Monday's second stage in Saudi Arabia.

The 31-year-old covered the 518km route from Yanbu to Al Ula in 4hrs 13mins 37 seconds to cross the line 1min 35s clear of KTM teammate Edgar Canet, who lost time with a couple of minor crashes.

American Ricky Brabec, the 2024 winner, completed the day's podium for Honda.

With this 10th stage win in motorsport's toughest challenge, Sanders climbed to the top of the bike standings by half a minute from Canet, winner of the prologue and opening stage, with Brabec 2min 18s back in third.

"The navigation was really tricky in some places but we fixed a couple of mistakes quickly and didn't lose too much time," said Sanders, who has been competing in the Dakar since 2021.



The rider, who lists bee-keeping as one of his hobbies and is known as 'Chucky', added: "I caught Edgar after he had one bad kilometer."

"Well, the stage is completed," said the 20-year-old Spaniard. "After that, there has been a long stage, 400 km opening the track for the first time. I had a few

crashes, as you can see, but hey, these things happen. There are some rocks that you can't see when you're looking at the roadbook," he added.

"In the car category, American Seth Quintero beat his South African Toyota Gazoo Racing teammate Henk Lategan by 1:42 with Saudi's reigning champion Yazeed Al Rajhi in third.

Qatar's five-time Dakar winner Nasser Al-Attiyah heads the overall classification for the roadbook, just seven seconds ahead of Quintero after coming in eighth in the stage.

Tuesday's third stage is a 422km special starting and ending in Al Ula.

Djokovic quits players' union he co-founded

NEWS DESK: Novak Djokovic announced on Sunday he was leaving the professional players' union he co-founded in 2020, citing "concerns regarding transparency, governance and ethics" within the entity.

The Professional

Tennis Players

Association

(PTPA),

co-founded by the current world No. 4 and Canadian Vasek Pospisil, took legal action in March 2025 against tennis governing bodies.

denouncing "anti-

competitive restraints

and abusive practices."

The action also

highlighted the "unac-

tainable schedule"

for players,

with tournaments

scheduled 11

months out

of 12 by

both the

men's

and women's

WTA.

"After careful consideration, I have decided to step away completely from the Professional Tennis



Trump sketches expansionist United States (US) agenda

NEWS DESK: Fresh from ordering a dramatic military raid to capture Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, President Donald Trump spent Sunday sketching an expansive and confrontational vision of American power, vowing to "re-venezuelize" new push to annex Greenland, and issuing stark warnings to Iran and Cuba.

The series of declarations made aboard Air Force One and in media interviews, laid out a vision of direct American oversight for the oil-rich Latin American nation and a major threat to Maduro's successor with more US strikes.

"We're going to run the country" until a transition can be made, he stated, later telling the Atlantic that "nothing there and regime change? is better than what you have right now."

He warned that Venezuela's aging President Dely Rodriguez, a loyalist known as the trigger, "doesn't do what's right, she is go-



ing to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro."

Secretary of State

Marco Rubio offered a somewhat more diplomatic tone, insisting the US was fighting drug traffickers, "not a war against Venezuela," and would assess cooperation with Caracas based

on actions.

Yet he confirmed a large US naval blockade would remain for "tremendous leverage" to achieve Washington's

goals, chiefly access to Venezuela's vast oil reserves.

The operation drew sharp regional criticism from Brazil, Chile, Colombia,

Mexico, Uruguay, and Spain, jointly rejecting the intervention and expressing "concern about any attempt at outside appropriation of natural or strategic resources."

The spectacle of the United States seizing a foreign head of state has reignited acute anxieties in Copenhagen and

Nuuk.

President Trump has long coveted Greenland for its strategic Arctic location and mineral resources, and on Sunday he doubled down. "We need Greenland from the standpoint of national security and Denmark is not going to be able to do it."

Trump told reporters, adding, "Well worry about Greenland in about 10 years."

His comments followed an interview with The Atlantic, where he said, "We do need Greenland, absolutely. We have it now." The sentiment was provocatively amplified by Katie Miller, wife of top Trump adviser Stephen Miller, who posted an image of Greenland in US territory with the caption "SOON."

The response from Europe was swift, firm, and unified. Denmark Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen called the notion "absolutely absurd" and urged the US to stop "threatening its historical ally."

Pakistan's \$3 million partisan PR battle for Washington's attention

NEWS DESK: Staff at Pakistani websites otherwise used to rehashing international coverage of the motherland as a bona fide news genre were a little surprised to find their Finance Minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb, splashed all over the Today in DC on December 22. The man in the tabloid is known for its four-colour infographics and weather reports, not necessarily knowing where Pakistan is located on the map.

The 16-page Pakistan Special Report titled, "Pakistan Rising on New Foundations in ChatGPT house" style, claimed to be a "game-changer" in macro-economic stabilisation, policy continuity, and export-led growth. And while it stressed Pakistan would not progress with its development, including women who formed half the population, the special report featured only one of them, amid 15 Pakistan men. She is not named to go, though. Check the quarter page ad for basmati rice on page 13.

Instead of a byline, you'd find One World Media accompanied by a disclaimer in 10% gray text: "This story is paid for by an advertiser." Members of the editorial and news staff of USA Today Network were not involved in the creation of this, the intent of One World Media, it turns out, is a creative agency that specialises in "elevating your content to a global stage". Its thought leadership includes people with names like the title of Steel novel (Fleur Coleman and Michael Joseph) from the date-line: Cayman Islands. If you wanted to

read the full sixteen pages, however, you'd have to exit USA Today's website and instead visit a site run by a group of disgruntled US lawmakers and officials since Imran Khan's ouster."

The PTI-led stream focuses on highlighting the escalation of US-backed and democratic backsliding and seeks international pressure, including calls for US intervention to secure Imran Khan's release.

The engagement

shifted towards military

and economic

stability.

On the other hand,

the PTI has been highlighting the incarceration of its founder and former prime minister Imran Khan, along with alleged human rights violations.

Both these two major

streams can be enumerated.

Forty-four Democratic lawmakers wrote to Secretary of State Marco Rubio last month, urging targeted sanctions

on Iran over its

actions.

Iranian officials have

denied the accusations.

He added that Iran

listens to the protesters

and distinguishes between them.

De

monstrations have

taken place in 23

Iran's 31 provinces,

affecting at least 45 different cities to varying degrees.

Iran has been concentrated in the west and consists mostly of small or medium-sized

gatherings, according to

official statements and media reports.

At least 12 people,

including members of

the security forces, have been killed in the clashes since December 30, officials announced.

Since the protests

began on Dec 28 —

spreading to the shopkeepers in the case of Tehran — staged a strike over high prices — officials have struck a conciliatory tone regarding

economic demands while vowing to crush destabilisation.

Trump threats

told reporters that the US was watching the situation "very closely."

"If they start killing people, then they're going to get hit very hard" by the United States, Trump said.

Iran's economy has

been hit hard by the internal protests.

The national currency, the rial, has lost

more than a third of

its value against the US dollar in the past year, and inflation is the double digits.

To alleviate economic pressure, the government announced a new minimum wage for every citizen equivalent to roughly 3.5 percent of the average monthly wage, said Finance Minister Benjamin Nantyamou.

Iranian Foreign

Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqai, speaking

at a press conference, accused Israel of trying "to exploit the slightest opportunity to sow division and undermine our nation."

Israel fought a 12-day war with Iran in June, which the US briefly joined with limited strikes on Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities.

Explosives seized

Police intelligence

officers in Tehran have

detained Iranian protesters, including

men and women

seizing "sweatshirts, ammunition, and materials for making improvised explosive devices," according to

Iranian news agency Fars.

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