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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 intensified 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 College (PTC) 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 PTC Quetta.

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

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

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. Residential blocks have been modernized, a newly built mess hall now 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 designed to enhance the quality of life of our trainees and make their professional training more effective," Commandant Akbar said.

"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.

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 in 2025.

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 state 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 behind this conclusion.

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

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

particularly about Afghanistan having become a "base of terrorism" operations.

Moreover, he said the last year also saw "how the National Action Plan (NAP) was reinvigorated and how it was being implemented".

Senate panel refers ministers' absence to privileges committee

NEWS DESK:

Absence of the federal and state ministers from 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 Sayed Yousuf Raza 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 Parliament House to review matters relating to the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), including the collection of revenues, expenditure mechanisms, relevant policies, and details of the board's assets.

Senator Dinesh Kumar 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 protest, the Committee decided to defer the agenda.

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

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

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA — Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz 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 would make state responsibility more defined 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 tribal customs, 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 complexities 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. The former Levies personnel need 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 across the province. 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.

Balochistan in the Eye of Climate Change Storm: Calls for Resilient Climate Policies Surface

Chandni Kakar:



In the global battle against climate change, Balochistan, Pakistan, serves as 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, many residents mistake these extreme weather occurrences for regular fluctuations, hindering recognition of the escalating climate crisis.

Balochistan becoming unbearably hot

Balochistan is becoming unbearably hot, with rising temperatures transforming heatwaves into a year-round threat. These heatwaves pose severe health risks, including heat stress, dehydration, 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.

However, the climate challenges in Balochistan extend beyond relentless heat waves. The province grapples with devastating droughts and floods, both 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 over Balochistan. Driven by intensified and increasingly frequent monsoon rains, the full extent of the damage is yet to be comprehended. However, it exposed the province's vulnerabilities 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.

CC affects economy

Climate change also decimated the region's economy

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

However, Balochistan need not accept this grim fate. It requires comprehensive strategies tailored to its unique challenges. The provincial government must implement robust climate change policies, emphasizing water resource management and disaster preparedness. Learning from the tragic dam collapses of 2022, preventive measures, such as effective water reservoirs and early warning systems, are imperative. Spreading awareness about climate change and promoting sustainable agricultural practices are

Tree plantations could mitigate sweltering temperatures

In a province where tree planting could mitigate sweltering temperatures and climate change impacts, government initiatives should engage younger generations in green initiatives. Achieving a resilient future necessitates a collaborative effort involving government, local communities, civil society, and the commercial sector. Balochistan's path towards resilience begins with a symphony of collective action.

By addressing these critical issues, Balochistan can better adapt to the challenges posed by climate change, ensuring a more secure and sustainable future for its residents.

Quetta City, Proposed Master Plan

Abdul Latif Kakar : QUETTA: The mountain-ringed Quetta city needs a comprehensive master plan to ensure the solution of problems faced by citizens and address the mega question of climate change.

Through the proposed plan, scarce resources would be transparently and rationally utilized to make it a better living city in the country.

For the first in the history of the province, the Urban Planning Development (UPD) under the leadership of chief minister Balochistan, Jam Kamal Khan has started the preparation of the master plan.

Geographical location, looming threat of natural calamities including earthquakes, drought, and floods, the need for making a comprehensive master plan for Quetta city is growing. Rather, it is now indispensable to make this plan, before it is already late.

Geography and Soil

Four main units may describe the soils of Quetta i.e. (1) piedmont plains (very deep and well-drained soil) (2) piedmont basins (3) salinity and alkalinity (4) gravelly piedmont fans and aprons bordering the mountains and plains.

The central part of the Quetta valley is covered by a soil that ranges from sandy loam to silt loam. This type of soil is good for crop production.



At the margin of the valley floor is covered by barren rock of sandy loam, mixed

with pebbles and rock fragments and is suitable for vegetation. In the Hanna valley,

the greater part of the valley floor is covered by barren rock about crops of low re-

lief and dry mala bed. The soil is restricted to the narrow banks and low ter-

aces along the main stream. However, the nature of the soil in Beliti

is silty clay which is not suitable for cultivation. Similarly, the

Chiltan surface has soils that are predominantly gravelly loams. The vegetation on these soils is mainly Haloxylon which provides poor grazing for livestock.

Soil erosion As far as soil erosion is concerned, both stream erosion of soil and wind erosion is occurring in the district.

The stream erosion takes place in the piedmont plain along the banks and beds of streams.

Such streams are Sariah Lora, Hanna river, Habib Nallah near Hudda. Wind erosion occurs in the valley.

This all requires a review of the existing plans and documents and preparation of the digitized base map of Quetta with a protocol for its updating.

A review of existing policies, procedures, plans studies conducted by donor agencies, and other relevant data. Current and future population trends need to be reviewed.

Transportation, mass transit, and city traffic management and monitoring system, housing commercial, and industrial land use evaluation of the existing condition of buildings and housing schemes should be thoroughly reviewed.

To be precise, the city needs a master plan on an emergency basis to address the looming threat of climate change and natural disasters.



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

NEWS DESK: Pakistan and Bangladesh's 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 two military conflicts with India in 2019 and 2025.

The press release issued by ISPR said Bangladesh Air Force Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan called on Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air Chief Marshal Zafar Ahmed Babar Sidhu in Islamabad.

The Bangladesh air chief led a high-level defence delegation during the visit, it said.

"The meeting focused on strengthening

operational cooperation and institutional synergy, with emphasis on training, capacity building, and collaboration in aerospace advancements," it said.

According to the press release, the visiting air chief was accorded a guard of honour.

Air Chief Marshal Sidhu briefed his Bangladeshi counterpart on PAF's recent advancements and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to supporting Bangladesh Air Force through a comprehensive training framework from basic to advanced flying.

He also assured fast-tracked delivery of Super Mushak trainer aircraft, along with a complete training and long-term support eco-

system," it added. The Bangladeshi air chief praised PAF's combat record and expressed interest in benefiting from its operational expertise, seeking assistance in maintenance support for Bangladesh Air Force's aging fleet and integration of air defence radar systems to enhance air surveillance," the statement said.

"Detailed discussions were also held on the potential procurement of JF-17 Thunder aircraft," it said, adding that the delegation also visited key PAF facilities.

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.

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

NEWS DESK: The former nazim of Bannu district's Domel Tehsil, Fida Muhammad Khan Wazir, was injured in a bomb blast outside his office on Tuesday.

Asif Hassan, the Bannu police spokesperson, confirmed the incident to Dawn, 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 Bazaar.

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

Meanwhile, tribal elders came out onto the streets and announced a strong protest and harsh response by gathering at the scene of the inci-

dent. Further, armed individuals were also spotted along the Bannu Kohat Road.

The Bannu police spokesperson said the situation was being closely monitored.

The incident comes a day after a man and his son, belonging to the Hathkhel tribe, were allegedly abducted by suspected terrorists in Bannu. Police and locals said on Monday that

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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 revisions, was widely criticised for abolishing judicial independence through the formation of a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) and introducing changes to the military leadership structure by rewriting Article 243 of the Constitution (command of the armed forces).

In a statement issued on Tuesday, 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 comply with Pakistan's international human rights law obligations and commitments".

Amnesty "insulates the president and heads of the naval, armed and air forces from accountability".

"The Pakistani authorities must immediately take all appropriate measures to safeguard the impartiality, independence and safety of judges, ensuring that they can carry out their judicial functions without any inappropriate or unwarranted interference and any restrictions, improper influences, pressures and threats, direct or indirect, from any quarter or

for any reason," the rights body said. It noted that the Amendment violated "international human rights law, particularly undermining the independence of the judiciary, right to fair trial and justice and accountability".

It urged Pakistani authorities to "uphold their international human rights obligations, effectively protect the human rights of everyone in the country, and ensure access to justice and effective remedies for victims, as well as respect the separation of powers and the rule of law".

Amnesty maintained that the 27th Amendment had en-

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

Amnesty noted that the 26th Amendment transferred "the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction — the authority to hear cases at its own initiative — and advisory jurisdiction and authority to provide opinion on significant questions of law or public importance referred to the president — to the newly created Constitutional Benches".

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

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to submit affidavits

A meeting held on Monday decided that any shopkeeper who does not submit an affidavit providing written assurance of compliance with the standard operating procedures (SOPs) will not be allowed to open shops.

It was decided that shops which submitted undertakings to the DCs would be reopened in a phased manner and any violators of the SOPs would have their premises sealed for three days.

The DC-South said

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 Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi told Dawn that the city's anti-environment 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 and obstructions 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 Motorcycle 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 motorcycles," he demanded.

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

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A meeting held on Monday decided that any shopkeeper who does not submit an affidavit providing written assurance of compliance with the standard operating procedures (SOPs) will not be allowed to open shops.

It was decided that shops which submitted undertakings to the DCs would be reopened in a phased manner and any violators of the SOPs would have their premises sealed for three days.

The DC-South said

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 Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi told Dawn that the city's anti-environment 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 and obstructions 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 Motorcycle 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 motorcycles," he demanded.

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

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

NEWS DESK: After sealing the entire motorcycle market on Akbar Road, authorities on Monday sealed the automobile spare parts market off M.A. Jinnah Road near Tibet Centre, as well as hundreds of shops in other parts of the metropolis.

The expansion of the drive against encroachments — from owners of roadside eateries to traders who contribute millions in taxes daily — raised many eyebrows.

Officials claimed that many as 86 shops in the automobile parts 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 Commis-

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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 Awais Khalid of the Lahore High Court heard Ashfaq's petition challenging the suspension 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 Kahooti stated, "Considering the facts and circumstances, and particularly the violation of Article 10-A of the Con-

stitution of Pakistan, 1973, the license of Ali Ashfaq to practice law is hereby restored."

Ashfaq's licence had been suspended on December 31 following a complaint from the president and general secre-

tary of the Karachi Bar Association (KBA). The PBC initially acted without providing Ashfaq an opportunity for a proper hearing. The order further 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 has the power to reprimand, suspend, or impose penalties on any advocate found guilty of profes-

sional misconduct under Section 41(1) and (2) of the Act. Ashfaq had argued in his petition that the KBA complaint "biased, mala fide, 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 has reviewed the development and progress on 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 models.

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. Meeting was told that new PHAs have been established in 11 more districts of Punjab and the total number will be 21.

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

allotment letters to the allottees of 'Apni Zamin Apna Ghar' programme. The meeting was briefed that about 121,477 loans worth Rs155 billion issued under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' scheme and 65,000 houses have been completed. It has further briefed that 700 houses are being built daily under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar'.

Rs15.5 billion regioned as instalments under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' project. Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered to list the scheduled completion time of the project on billboard. Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed anger over digging in streets and roads and leaving them open.

Railways launches major track upgradation, expansion drive in country

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Railways has launched an extensive programme to upgrade aging rail infrastructure, expand the network and restore long-neglected sections, with the objective of improving safety, reducing travel time and strengthening national connectivity.

"The department owns a total of 11,881 track kilometers and 7,791 route kilometers across the country, adding that nearly 67 percent of the existing track has become over-aged," an official in the Ministry of Railways.

Despite limited investment in railway infrastructure for more than seven decades, the official said, Pakistan Railways has continued to maintain operations to ensure sustainable service delivery.

The official said the Ministry has recognized the deteriorating condi-

tion of railway tracks and is making substantial efforts to improve infrastructure through revenue generation and funding under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

Among the key ongoing projects, he said, is the construction of a 105-kilometer new rail link connecting Thar Coal Mines with Chhor Railway Station, a project expected to facilitate energy transportation and promote regional development.

He said that several operational routes are currently being upgraded under PSDP-funded track safety initiatives. These included immediate and essential safety works on critical sections such as Tando Adam-Rohri, Rohri-Khanpur, Kiamari-Hyderabad, Khanewal-Shorkot-Faisalabad-Qila Sheikhupura-Shahdara, Sher Shah-Kundian, Rohri-Sibi and

Kotri-Akhubad. These measures are aimed at enhancing operational safety and improving reliability on major rail corridors.

At the planning stage, the official said Pakistan Railways has proposed large-scale upgradation of branch lines with financial support from the provincial governments of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan.

In Punjab, the official said seven sections spanning over 1,400 kilometers are planned for upgradation, including the Shahdara-Narowal-Sialkot, Raiwind-Kasur-Pakpatan-Lodhran and Kot Adu-Dera Ghazi Khan-Kasoor Colony routes.

In Sindh, six sections covering nearly 1,000 kilometers—such as Karachi-Hyderabad, Hyderabad-Rohri and Kotri-Dadu—have been proposed for improvement. While in Balochistan, the Sarab-

Quetta-Kuchlak section is also included in the upgradation plan, he added.

To further enhance regional and international connectivity, the official said Pakistan Railways has initiated feasibility studies for new rail links, including a possible connection with Afghanistan via Kohat-Tal-e-Parachinar-Kharlachi, as well as a 680-kilometer rail link from Gwadar to Nok Kundi.

The official said that land acquisition is underway for future rail connectivity from Gwadar to Mastung and Jacobabad through various routes in Balochistan.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Railways has successfully restored the Sibi-Harnai section, measuring 93.41 kilometers, which had remained closed since 2006 and was reopened for rail traffic in October 2023.

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 reforming the agriculture sector and educating farmers on international standards were top priorities of the government.

The prime minister was chairing a meeting of a Working Group comprising private sector experts. The working group was established to align the agriculture sector with the international requirements and to increase the country's agricultural 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," the prime minister said adding that the government was taking measures to increase the per acre yield of the crops by providing farmers with standard seeds,

fertilizers and pesticides timely and at affordable prices. PM Shehbaz Sharif pointed out that the government was also taking policy-level steps aimed at processing of the agriculture produce to make them export-ready goods.

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

Pakistan has great potential in the agriculture sector, the prime minister said, adding that, within available resources, investment was being made in research for 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

Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Dr. Mussaddik Malik, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaulah Tarar, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar, and senior government officials.

During the meeting, Chairman Working Group Rana Naseem and his team briefed the participants on the issues faced by the sector and the future plan of action.

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

It was informed that under a short-term reform framework, Pakistan's current average per-acre yields would be increased while remaining within existing resources. For this purpose, the federal government, along with policy measures and the provision of quality seeds, will

work in cooperation with provincial governments to ensure effective extension services and to acquaint farmers with modern agricultural practices.

The meeting was further informed that the federal government will work on a certification regime for the processing of agricultural commodities, which will ensure value addition of agricultural produce and their derived products in global markets, thereby increasing farmers' profits.

A comprehensive roadmap for reforms of research institutions was also presented, which will ensure not only increased productivity of existing crops but also encourage the cultivation of new and profitable crops suited to Pakistan's climate and soil.

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), Fatima, who attempted suicide yesterday, was still under treatment at a hospital in Lahore on Tuesday and her family has so far not filed any case with the police.

Police said that all the medical tests of the female student will be conducted again today.

However, a preliminary inquiry report suggested that the girl took the extreme step after scoring low marks in a university test.

Hospital officials said the student has sustained fractures to her arms, spine, lungs, legs, and ribs, along with serious head injuries.

Police further revealed that during the

initial investigation, it emerged that Fatima decided to commit suicide due to a domestic dispute. Police also collected all the necessary information from her parents.

It is necessary to mention here that Fatima was critically injured after jumping from the second floor of the University of Lahore.

The 21-year-old student was rushed to a private hospital following the incident, which occurred at the university's Raiwind campus. Police said she was enrolled in the PharmD programme and hailed from Narang Mandi in Sheikhupura district. According to investigators, the student had made a telephone call to her family shortly before

jumping from the building. Police said officers 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 student's syllabus for the semester was aware of the incident but said no conclusions could be drawn until the completion of an internal inquiry.

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

An initial report of police inquiry revealed

that Fatima was not interested in continuing her education as she obtained only 18 marks out of 35 in a university test. The police report stated that Fatima reached the University at 7:58 am on Monday but failed to join the class. Rather, she was talking with someone on the phone on the second floor of the university for 27 minutes.

At 8:30 am, she jumped from the second floor of the University. Her brother bought her a new mobile phone after a technical problem occurred in her old one. Police also recorded the statements of the girl's brothers.

Her brothers told the police that Fatima was not satisfied with the marks she obtained in the university test.



LAHORE: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani met Makhdom Syed Ahmed Mahmood at his Lahore residence. Syed Ali Qasim Gilani and Makhdom 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, full security arrangements will also be provided to 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 announcement was made by KP

government's Adviser on Information, Shah Jan, who said the visit aims to strengthen political and institutional engagement between the provinces.

During the visit, Chief Minister Afridi 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.

Provincial Livestock Minister Reviews Development Projects and Law & Order in Nasirabad Division

Chief Justice Justice Kamran Khan Mullahkhalil also inspected drainage and development works at Imdad Chowk, expressing satisfaction over the progress while directing authorities to ensure timely completion and quality standards.

The visit highlights the judiciary's keen interest in monitoring urban development, traffic management, and public welfare projects in Quetta to ensure transparency, efficiency, and maximum relief for citizens.

The Commissioner also commended the district administration for the restoration of closed schools and hospitals and for ensuring a transparent and effective contract-based recruitment process.

At the conclusion of the meeting, both sides reiterated their commitment to working in close coordination to accelerate overall development, public welfare, and provision of basic facilities in Nasirabad.

Later, Provincial Minister Sardarzada Faisal Khan Jamali also met DIG Nasirabad Range, Captain (Retd) Asim Khan. During the meeting, discussions were held on maintaining law and order, strengthening security arrangements in the public interest, and taking strict legal action against criminal elements to ensure peace and stability in the region.



Irrigation Department Honors SDO Rabbi Canal for Outstanding Services to Farmers in Nasirabad

This Open Katcheri marks a significant step toward transparent governance, improved service delivery, and public-centric administration in Kalat district.

NASIRABAD: Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle Nasirabad Division, Mudassar Zafar Khosa, awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Rabia Canal, Muhammad Saleem Behrani, in recognition of his exemplary professional performance and effective services rendered in the best interest of farmers.

A simple yet dignified ceremony was held on this occasion, attended by Executive Engineer Kachhi Canal Ghulam Muhammad Badini, SDO Zeeshan

While addressing the gathering, SDO Muhammad Saleem Behrani expressed his gratitude to the Superintending Engineer and stated that the appreciation certificate would further motivate him to perform his duties with greater dedication, responsibility, and commitment. He added that encouragement of officers and staff by the Irrigation Department is a positive tradition that contributes significantly to improving overall institutional

and promoting agricultural development, which remain top priorities of the government.

He emphasized that departmental achievements are the result of collective efforts by all officers and staff, not just individuals.

He further assured that officers and employees who demonstrate outstanding performance will continue to be encouraged and honored in the future. Such recognition, he noted, plays a vital role in enhancing departmental efficiency and ensuring effective measures for

TENDER NOTICE				
<p>Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOS Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPGA GOS. The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BUILDING DEPTA(BUGTI) invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates</p>				
S. No.	Name of Works	E/Cost	Tender Fee	Bid Security
1	Pre-Fab/Accommodation (SP) District Dera Bugti PSDP	10,535,000	2,000 PKR	2%
No 4048/26/2025 (TSE-259999959)04843				

[illegible][illegible]

**BEFORE THE JUDGE BANKING COURT QUETTA DISTRICT
COURT KACHHRY SHARA E-AQBAL QUETTA**

SUIT NO. 16/2026

Askan Bank Limited,
M.A Jinnah Road Quetta.

VERSUS

Ikram ulah Khan S/o Shah Nawaz Khan.

Plaintiff

Resident of:

1. 261 Supry PLASC Zhab' Cant.
2. Daak Khana Chodda, Baka, Tehsil Kolachi, District Dera Ismail Khan

Official Address:

Rank: Sepoy
Department: Pakistan Army.
P.A No. 64401095
Parent Unit/IO: 261 Sup PLASC.
CNIC No: 12102-8311233-5
Cell No: 0344-939995/03-26745257

Defendant

**SUITER RECOVER OF RS. 21,47,000/- HEARING COURT NO. 19/ABK/2006
PERSONAL LIABILITY OF PLAINTIFFS IN BANKING INSTITUTIONS RECOVER OF RS.
FINANC ESTORDEANCE XLVI, 4001.**

NOTICE UNDER FORM IV APPENDIX B OF C.P.C. 1908

Notice to: The above noted defendant

WHEREAS the plaintiff has instituted a suit against you under section 9(5) of the Banking Companies Ordinance XLVI of 2001 for RS. 231,947,756/- balance of principal & interest mark up repaid due to him of which copy can be obtained from this court, on or, hereby summoned to obtain leave from the court within 30 (thirty) days from the date of service hereof in and to the effect that

3.5.No 1) Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure (3.5.No 2 to accompany Bid Security in the form of **Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Bank** same of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Document can be obtained electronically from www.dgprn.gov.pk. Issuance of Bidding Document can be viewed at www.dgprn.gov.pk. Last Date of submitted electronically listed by 22 January, 2026 at 12:00 PM (noon) opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 01:00 PM on EPR. Ders Bugli Phone no: 0835410162, Fax no: 0835410562 Email: dgprn@dgprn.gov.pk

PRQ No.3123/06-01-2026
www.dgprn.gov.pk dgprn@dgprn.gov.pk dgprn@dgprn.gov.pk dgprn@dgprn.gov.pk

ACTIVE ENGINEER - (BUILDING)
P&M/H DEPARTMENT
DISTRICT DERA BUGTI

In the default whereof the plaintiff will be entitled at any time after expiration of such 30 (thirty) days to obtain decree as prayed in the plaint.

Leave to appear may be obtained on an application to the court supported by an affidavit or declaration showing that there is defense to the suit on the merits, or i.e if, it reasonable that you should be allowed to appear in the suit. Date of hearing is 10-02-2026.

GIVEN under my hand and seal of the court, this ^{5th} day of January, 2026.

(SAIFULLAH KHAN)
Registrar
Banking Court Quetta

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 out of every Rs10 collected in income taxes across the country.

Tax contributions 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 a little over Rs266 billion in income taxes, higher by Rs23 billion, or 9%, compared to the same period of the last fiscal year. The Rs266 billion income tax 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 by the end of the first half of the current fiscal year. It is also 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 undervalued and is a victim of the FBR's lethargic approach, which places the burden of tax collection on the existing pool of taxpayers, mainly salaried individuals and manufacturers. 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 Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Lt Gen Sarfraz Ahmed, had said: "We have made a mess of our fiscal situation and so the only thing the government can think of is taxation - and you (businessmen) are the easiest prey because you are already documented, already visible."

The FBR collected Rs3.03 trillion in income taxes 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 8%.

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

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

While the salaried class continues to see rising tax contributions, collections from traders remain limited. Several enforcement measures, including a ban on economic transactions by ineligible persons, were diluted or reversed.

The real estate sector also faced higher taxes, with increased rates for non-filers and the introduction of a new category for late filers. Withholding tax collections on plot sales 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 (US) capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

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

12:56pm EDT.

United States (US) 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 that Washington would take control of the OPEC member whose crude exports

had been under a United States (US) embargo that remains in place.

The Trump administration did not consult with oil companies Exxon Mobil, ConocoPhillips or Chevron Corp about Venezuela before or after United States (US) forces captured Maduro, 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 on Monday to review the gas supply situation, winter load management and consumer complaint redressal 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 meeting on gas supply arrangements for the ongoing winter season. The companies said that, in line with the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, gas supply to domestic consumers had been enhanced to provide relief during winter.

SNGPL reported that it supplied an additional 95 million cubic feet per day (mcmd) of gas in December 2025 compared to December 2024, while SSGC supplied 32 mcmd more gas

during the same period. The minister expressed satisfaction that gas supply to domestic consumers this winter was better than last year.

The meeting was informed that IoT-based monitoring and Town Border systems had been deployed at tail ends of the gas network to automatically generate alarms in case of pressure drops.

While appreciating the initiative, the minister directed SSGC to further improve pressure management and alarm systems.

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's exports of services improved by 18.42pc to Rs1.081 trillion in 5MFY26 against Rs913.145bn in 5MFY25. This clearly indicates that export of services is steadily on the rise in the current fiscal year.

In November, the export of services reached to \$814.25m from \$666.01m over the corresponding month of last year, indicating growth of 22.26pc.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports of services grew 0.41pc. According to the data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan, the exports of telecommunications, computer, and information services rose 18.51pc to \$1.799bn in 5MFY26 against \$1.518bn in 5MFY25.

The export of other business services jumped 24.01pc to \$816m in 5MFY26 against \$658m in 5MFY25. The export of transport services increased by 2.76pc to \$372m against \$362m last year. However, the export of travel services grew 9.15pc to \$322m in 5MFY26.

At the same time, the import of services surged by 12.78pc to \$5.146bn in 5MFY26 as against \$4.563bn in 5MFY25. On a month-on-month basis, the

Services exports rise 17pc in July-November

import of services decreased by 9.04pc in 5MFY25. The largest share in the import of services during 5MFY26 was attributed to the transport sector, with its value rising 6.35pc to \$2.093bn followed by travel services, which surged 54.27pc to \$1.487bn. The trade deficit in services increased by 2.55pc to \$1.312bn in 5MFY26 compared to \$1.279bn in 5MFY25.

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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 briefing on the problems faced by SMEs and the plan of action to address them, the strategy to include SMEs in the country's exports, and other measures included in the business plan. A briefing was also



given on ongoing measures to further enhance the existing co-operation with various countries to introduce Pakistan's SME sector 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.

First fishing technology museum inaugurated in Karachi

NEWS DESK: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Monday inaugurated Pakistan's first Fishing Technology Museum and soft launched the Mahi Dost digital traceability application, initiatives aimed 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 has been positioned as a national center for research, learning and policy development, while also documenting the cultural heritage of coastal communities and the sector undergoes rapid modernisation.

Addressing fishermen, academics and members of the business community, the minister said the museum was intended to support policymaking in the fisheries sector by combining indigenous knowledge with modern tools. He said the integration



of technologies such as AI-enabled sonar systems and environmentally friendly nets would help address overfishing and climate-related risks. The minister noted that Pakistan's exclusive economic zone has significant untapped potential but continues to face losses due to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. He said the museum's archives and research resources could contribute to evidence-based reforms and support the training of future marine

scientists and fisheries managers. Launched alongside the museum, the Mahi 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, including European Union Catch Certification and IUU regulations, the US Marine Mammal Protection Act and standards of the Indian Ocean Tuna Com-

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 annually. According to the statement, pilot projects under the app have received approval times 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 fifth and final Ashes Test 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.

Head brought up three figures off just 105 balls and seemed destined to score 200. But he came undone in the third over after lunch by the part-time spin of Jacob Bethell, who was bowling for the first time in the series.

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



a sweep shot to end a magnificent knock.

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

Josh Tongue was probing and finally got a reward when he enticed an edge from Alex Carey to Bethell in the slips on 16 just before tea to reinvigorate En-

gland. The hosts lead the series 3-1 and have already retained the Ashes, with England desperate for another win after victory at the previous Test in Melbourne.

Head resumed on 91 and nightwatchman Michael Neser on one 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 four, crunched through the covers from Tongue, windmilling his bat in celebration.

It was his 12th century and first in Sydney to cement his reputation as one of the game's most versatile batsmen.

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

With his hundred secure, he banged three straight fours off Matthew Potts then had a massive let-off on 121 when he pulled Carse and Will Jacks dropped a sitter near the ropes.

A big six off Potts took him to 148 and he passed 150 with another four from Tongue.

Neser ably stuck around for 90 balls to foil England, who wasted their last two reviews on him.

Batting like a top-order batsman, he smacked four boundaries before getting a thin edge on 24 to wicketkeeper Jamie Smith off Carse.

Smith, on 12, was dropped at leg slip by Zak Crawley but safely made it to lunch and posted 50 for a 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 having "reluctantly made 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 finish."

"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.

United are currently sixth in the Premier League table after a 1-1 draw at Leeds on Sunday.

After that game, an irate Amorim stressed he was United's manager rather than just the coach during an eye-



catching press conference in which he told the scouting department and director of football, Jason Wilcox, "to do their job". The 40-year-old had alluded to frustration behind the scenes in the build-up to the match as the United boss refused to clarify his recent comments about the club's transfer plans.

He had looked downbeat when he sidestepped those questions but was more forthcoming when asked on Sunday if he still felt he had confidence from the board.

"Guys, to start with that -- and I noticed that you receive selective information about everything -- I came here to be the manager of the Manchester 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 (Jose) Mourinho but I'm the manager of Manchester United."

"And it's going to be like this for 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 outside 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).

The BCB's decision throws 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 Bangladesh Government, the Board of Directors

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 throws 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 Bangladesh 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 Bangladesh's sports adviser Asif

Nazrul backed the board's decision of refusing to travel to India. "The BCB has decided not to send the Bangladesh team to India for the World Cup," he wrote on his official Facebook page. "We welcome this decision taken in the context of the radical communal policies of the Indian cricket board."

"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 deci-

sion 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 play in India. We can play in Sri Lanka."

Relocating 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 ICC 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 Madrid were held to an entertaining 1-1 draw at 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 leaders Barcelona.

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," Atletico forward Giuliano Simone said. "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 but it wasn't to be."

In a high-tempo first half, Real briefly thought they had taken the lead when Antoine Griezmann failed 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 swift counterattack Spanish Super Cup semi-finals.

"This isn't enough. We have to analyse our mistakes and improve," 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 around one hundred kilometres."

It was so hard to catch him and pass him before."

"After that, there was some really tricky stuff and he (Canet) just sat behind and

watched, followed and learned."

Canet was thankful to complete an eventful stage unharmed.

"Well, the stage is completed," said the 20-year-old Spaniard.

"The truth is that it has been a long stage, 400 km open road, 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 cham-

pion Yazeed Al Rajhi in third.

Qatar's five-time Dakar winner Nasser Al-Attiyah heads the standings driving for Dacia by just seven seconds from Quintero after coming in eighth in the stage.

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

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 the way my voice and image have been represented."

The Professional Tennis Players Association (PTPA), 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 "unsustainable schedule" for players, with tournaments scheduled 11 months out of 12 by both the men's ATP and women's WTA.

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

Players Association."

The 38-year-old 24-time Grand Slam winner said he will "continue to focus on my tennis, my family, and contributing to the sport in ways that reflect my principles and integrity."

Djokovic is aiming for a record-breaking 25th major title at the upcoming Australian Open and will next take part in the ATP event in Adelaide from January 12-17 as part of his preparations for the start of the new season.

"I am proud of the vision that Vasek and I shared when founding the PTPA, giving players a stronger, independent voice - but it has become clear that my values and approach are no longer aligned with the current direction of the organization."

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Trump sketches expansionist United States (US) agenda

NEWS DESK: Fresh from ordering a dramatic military raid that captured Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, President Donald Trump spent Sunday sketching an expansive and confrontational vision of American power, vowing to "run" Venezuela, renewing a 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 issued a blunt threat to Maduro's successor with more US strikes.

"We're going to run the country until a position can be made, he stated, later telling The Atlantic that "rebuilding there and regime change? is better than what you have right now."

He warned if Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez, a loyalist known as the tigress, "doesn't do what's right, she is going 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. Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay, and Spain jointly rejected the intervention and expressed "concern about any attempt at" outside appropriation of natural

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

Nauk.

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 two months."

His comments followed an interview with The Atlantic where he said, "We do need Greenland, absolutely. We need it for defence." The sentiment was provocatively amplified by Katie Miller, wife of top Trump adviser Stephen Miller, who posted an image of Greenland in US flag colours 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 reheating international coverage of the motherland as a bona fide news source were a little surprised to find their Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb splashed all over USA Today on December 22. The American 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: New Foundations" in ChatGPT house style capitalisation featured Muhammad Aurangzeb expounding on macroeconomic stability, policy continuity, and export-led growth. And while he stressed Pakistan would not progress without economically including women, he formed half the population, the special report featured only one of them, amid 15 Pakistani men. She's not too hard to spot, 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 80% gray text, saying, "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 content." 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 out of a Danielle 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 site and go to a pdf nestled on OWM's website. But none of this is a secret. Pakistan's image is shaped by a mix of hired lobbying firms, politically aligned diaspora networks, and US institutions that amplify frames aligned with their own interests. The Pakistani government and its opposition, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, are both keen to get coverage.

For the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Party's coalition government, and the military leadership, the emphasis is on stability, strategic relevance, and a reset in Pakistan-US relations, particularly after May's India-Pakistan conflict.

The May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict was a four-day military confrontation involving missile strikes, armed drones, air operations and heavy fighting

along both sides. India conducted standoff attacks inside Pakistan, while Pakistan responded with air defence, missile and drone operations. The crisis ended after US-led diplomatic intervention, exposing the escalation risks between the two nuclear-armed neighbours and marking a shift towards multi-domain warfare in South Asia.

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

These two major streams converge at Hill. "The first is the official Government of Pakistan-led effort to build stronger bilateral ties with the US," said Uzair Younus, a foreign and economic policy analyst.

"This stream is led through the embassy and other official channels, including via lobbyists hired by the government, data for which is publicly available. The second is driven by PTI-aligned diaspora groups engaging US lawmakers and officials since Imran Khan's ouster."

The PTI-led stream focuses on highlighting authoritarianism and democratic backsliding and seeks international pressure, including calls for US intervention to secure Imran Khan's release. "The engagement has not fundamentally shifted US policy," Younus added, however. "But it has created media attention, which in many ways is precisely the objective."

The symbolic gains can be enumerated. Forty-four Democratic lawmakers wrote to Secretary of State Marco Rubio last month, urging targeted sanctions against Pakistani officials over what they described as escalating transnational repression and rights abuses. That same week, the military responded publicly.

He added that Iran has been hit hard by tough international sanctions. Iran's economy has been hit hard by tough international sanctions. The national currency, the rial, has lost more than a third of its value against the US dollar over the past year, and inflation is in the double digits.

To alleviate economic pressure, the government announced Sunday a monthly allowance for every citizen equivalent to roughly 3.5 per cent of the average monthly wage.

Iran's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country stood "in solidarity with the struggle of the Iranian people and with their aspirations for freedom."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei, speaking

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

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Explosives seized by police intelligence officers in Tehran have identified a suspected hideout used by "rioters," seizing weapons, ammunition, and materials for making improvised explosive devices," according to Mizan.

The Fars news agency reported on Monday that "the trend observed on Sunday night shows a notable decrease in the number of gatherings and their geographic reach compared to previous nights."

While videos flooding social media are often impossible to verify, local media's accounting is not exhaustive, and state-run outlets have downplayed coverage of the demonstrations.

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Iran remains unbothered by United States (US) threats

NEWS DESK: Iran refused to be intimidated by US threats on Monday to offer "rioters" leniency while defending citizens' right to demonstrate, a defiant stance taken after US President Donald Trump warned Tehran would "get hit very hard" if authorities killed more demonstrators amid deadly unrest.

Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei ordered officials to take a hard line against those causing instability as protests, which erupted over economic stagnation, expanded to include political demands.

"I instruct the attorney general and prosecutors across the country to act in accordance with the law and with resolve against the rioters and those who support them... and to show no leniency or indulgence," Mohseni Ejei said, according to the judiciary's Mizan news agency.

He added that Iran has been hit hard by tough international sanctions. Iran's economy has been hit hard by tough international sanctions. The national currency, the rial, has lost more than a third of its value against the US dollar over the past year, and inflation is in the double digits.

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