



BALUCHISTAN
Written Tests & Interviews
for Balochistan Sports...
Page No 5



NATIONAL
Bride and groom among 8 dead in
explosion at Islamabad house, 12...
Page No 3



INTERNATIONAL
Death toll climbs after trash
site collapse buries dozens...
Page No 8



SPORT
Italy go
into bat
for T20
World
Cup
debut Italy
go into
bat for...
Page No 7

First Digital, Print Daily of Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan.

QUETTA VOICE

Rs. 10.00 Vol. VII: No. 106

Email address: dquettavoice@gmail.com
Website: www.quettavoice.com

Monday 12, January, 2026



Raids, clash in three KP districts leave 12 terrorists dead

NEWS DESK:

At least 12 terrorists were killed in multiple counterterrorism operations and gun battles in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday, while violence elsewhere in the province left two Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel martyred in targeted attacks and claimed the life of a senior JUI-F leader who succumbed to injuries from a bomb blast a day earlier in South Waziristan. In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said security forces carried out two intelligence-based operations on Thursday after receiving information about the presence of terrorists.

It said the first operation was conducted in North Waziristan, where troops engaged a terrorists' location and gunned down six of them in an exchange of fire. The second operation, conducted jointly by police and security forces in Kurram district, resulted in the killing of five terrorists, the statement said.

ISPR said weapons and ammunition were recovered from the dead terrorists, whom it described as "Indian-sponsored khawarij". It said the terrorists had been involved in attacks on security forces and law enforcement agencies, as well as the targeted killing of civilians.

The military's media wing said sanitisation operations were being conducted to eliminate any remaining terrorists in the areas, adding that counterterrorism operations under the "Azmi-i-Istehkam" vision would continue. Separately, one terrorist was killed, another injured and two were arrested during an exchange of gunfire in the Malagori area of Khyber district, sources told. On Saturday, residents alerted security forces after spotting a group moving towards the hilly locality of Murad Dhand near the Khunari dam, the sources added. The sources said security forces, aided by local armed volunteers, engaged the terrorists, while gunship helicopters and artillery were also called to pound the terrorists' position.

A video circulating after the clash showed two blindfolded suspects in custody amid a crowd of residents, while an army official urged local volunteers not to shelter terrorists. Local sources said it was the first such clash in Malagori, where Chinese engineers and workers are stationed for maintenance work at the Warsak Dam and the construction of an irrigation canal.

Iranian Authorities Issue Strong Security Warning as Protests Spread

News Desk:

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Saturday reiterated that maintaining law and order is a "red line," while the country's armed forces vowed to protect public property and key infrastructure, as the government intensified efforts to suppress the most widespread protests in years.

The warnings came as international pressure mounted, with U.S. President Donald

Trump issuing fresh remarks toward Iran's leadership and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressing support for demonstrators.

Inside Iran, unrest continued overnight. State media reported that a municipal building in Karaj, west of Tehran, was set ablaze, blaming the incident on protesters. State television also aired funeral scenes of security personnel reportedly killed during clashes in Shiraz, Qom and Hamedan.

What began nearly two

weeks ago as demonstrations over soaring prices and economic hardship has evolved into open political dissent, with protesters calling for an end to clerical rule.

Iranian officials have accused the United States and Israel of stirring unrest, while human rights groups say dozens of demonstrators have been killed. Authorities have also maintained widespread internet restrictions.

In a statement broadcast on state television, the Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps claimed that "terrorist elements" had targeted military and police facilities over recent nights, resulting in casualties and damage to property.

The Guards stressed that protecting national security and the legacy of the 1979 Islamic Revolution was non-negotiable, warning that continued instability would not be tolerated. Iran's regular military, which operates alongside the Revolutionary Guards under the authority of Supreme

Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said it would ensure the protection of national interests, strategic infrastructure and public assets.

Meanwhile, Reza Pahlavi, son of Iran's last monarch, has emerged as a prominent voice abroad, urging protesters to escalate their actions. In recent remarks, he called for preparations to take control of city centers and appealed for nationwide strikes in vital sectors, including transportation and energy.

Villagers set dogs on cops during raid in Punjab

NEWS DESK:

A police raid to arrest a suspect involved in electricity theft turned violent in Mamunkanjan when villagers attacked a police team, set dogs on them and injured three officers, including an assistant sub-inspector.

Police said ASI Ahmed Ali led a raid in Chak 502-G/4 to arrest Sikandar, son of Noor Ahmed, nominated in an electricity theft case.

The suspect was arrested outside his house, but he raised an alarm, prompting dozens of villagers to gather at the scene.

Police said at least 41 people, including 10 women, attacked the police party with sticks, clubs and axes, and unleashed their pet dogs on the officers.

The assailants forcibly freed the arrested suspect and severely beat ASI Ahmed Ali, Constable Zakaria and Constable Ghulam Farid, leaving them injured. The attackers also tore their uniforms and snatched cash and mobile phones.

Upon receiving information, SHO Mamunkanjan and a heavy police contingent reached the spot and rescued the injured officers.

Balochistan Govt Orders Crackdown on Unlicensed Child Nurseries

News Desk:

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has decided to launch a strict crackdown on unlicensed and substandard child nurseries operating across the province to ensure child safety and protect parents' trust.

Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar said on Friday.

Taking notice of a serious and disturbing incident involving the alleged swapping of a child at a private nursery in Quetta, the health minister ordered a high-level inquiry into the matter.

He said the case has been handed over to the Balochistan Healthcare Commission to ensure a transparent and impartial investigation.

Bakht Muhammad Kakar said DNA testing has also been ordered to establish the child's identity and uncover all facts, adding that the measure is aimed at delivering justice to the affected family and removing any doubts surrounding the case.



The provincial health minister made it clear that a zero-tolerance policy will be strictly enforced against unregistered and non-compliant child nurseries.

He warned that no negli-

gence related to child protection would be tolerated and that those undermining parents' confidence would face action without discrimination.

He further directed the authorities to carry out a com-

prehensive inspection of all child nurseries across Balochistan and to fast-track the licensing process so that only institutions meeting prescribed standards and legal requirements are allowed to op-

erate. Bakht Muhammad Kakar cautioned that nursery owners found violating the law would face strict legal action, stressing that no leniency would be shown in this regard.

THE PALESTINE VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Trump's Peace Plan: Legitimising Israel's Occupation

Editorial:

A Peace agreement often loses its credibility when it fails to recognize the rights of the oppressed. This is the case with President Trump's much-surfaced Gaza peace plan. Far from being a genuine step toward peace, it presents a surrender document that legitimizes Israel's long-standing occupation of Palestine. Sadly, this so-called peace plan was endorsed by major Muslim countries, including Pakistan.

While standing with Trump, Netanyahu, accused of war crimes, accepted the plan and also threatened to finish the job if Hamas does not accept the plan wholeheartedly. However, outrage sparked among various analysts when Netanyahu claimed victory in Hebrew language at Tel Aviv. The question arises: How can Trump propose a plan for Palestine without involving an international arbitrator—the United Nations Organisation? Critics have rejected this plan on various grounds.

First, the plan has no two-state solution. In fact, it blurs the possibility of an independent Palestinian state in the future. Sadly, Netanyahu has already repudiated the idea of an independent state. Also, President Trump called Palestine recognition by France, Britain, Canada, and Spain a reward to Hamas. So far, the United States has stopped Israel from occupying the West Bank, but some government officials of Netanyahu intended to do so.

Second, Hamas and the Palestine National Authority, the only representatives of Gaza and the West Bank, have been eliminated in the process. Even the United States barred the Palestinian Authority from entering New York during the UNGA annual session. It reflects the colonial plan because peace is mutual; it cannot be imposed at the dictate of aggressors. Zahid Hussain in his essay pointed out as in the practically brings to an end the concept of a Palestinian state.

Third, in the post-war administration, both Hamas and PA have no share. The proposed



plan contains the demilitarization of Hamas. They can live in peaceful coexistence after getting amnesty, and also safe passage will be given to those who want to exit. What kind of peace is this, where those who suffer have no voice in the decisions that shape their future? This is total surrender to be forced on the group.

Fourth, this official instrument lost its credibility when the UN was excluded. It discredits the international organization. Although the question is raised about the ineffective role of the UN—unable to stop genocide—its sanctity must prevail. Critics always blamed the United States. For instance, every time the US vetoed a resolution to stop Israel's evil deeds.

Fifth, Hamas has been given the ultimatum of 72 hours to accept the plan. It is not a plan but a surrender charter for the group. It means Hamas has no choice but to go with the plan. They are not consulted on their fate. The Trump-Netanyahu plan has benefited Israel further. It openly advocates for Greater Israel.

Sixth, this plan also outlines that Palestine will be governed by a political committee under the supervision of a Board of Peace chaired by the US. This controversial plan is biased and destined to crumble. Gazans cannot be left to the mercy of war-mongers. It is a wake-up call for the United States and the World to let Gazans live a free life in their own independent state. Netanyahu's transgression must not go with impunity. The only solution lies in an independent Palestinian state.

Seventh, no future guarantee is mentioned in the proposed frame-

work. It fails to prevent Israel from occupying. Most important, the aggressor's accountability has not been outlined. In fact, Israel has impunity in its every action. The President assured Tel Aviv that they can do what they want if Hamas rejects the plan.

Eighth, no recognition, no peace. Durable peace hinges on the recognition of Palestine. Both the US and Israel have rejected recognition. Seemingly, they have no plan to recognize Palestine in the near future. The record of history demonstrates that illegal occupation and peace cannot move together. Peace remains impossible without an end to illegal occupation.

On the positive side of the plan, if this project is implemented, it will end ruthless killing and Gaza genocide. The aid blockade will be drawn. The supporters of this plan also cited the same reason. The deputy prime minister, Isaac Dar, also said that the first priority of Pakistan is to end uncontrolled killing of Gazans. He further said that we are on a bid to remove all Netanyahu's excuses to continue war.

In the end, occupation, annexation, and illegal settlements cannot run with peace. Two states are the only answer to long-term peace. This controversial plan is biased and destined to crumble. Gazans cannot be left to the mercy of war-mongers. It is a wake-up call for the United States and the World to let Gazans live a free life in their own independent state. Netanyahu's transgression must not go with impunity. The only solution lies in an independent Palestinian state.

The writer can be contacted through: dzindia19@gmail.com

The Future of Pakistan's Higher Education – Where Are We Heading

Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan

One year on, the chaos continues at the highest institution mandated to oversee higher education in the country. At the Higher Education Commission, the current chairman, Dr. Tariq Binuri, is still battling for his survival. While Dr. Binuri might barely complete his term this May, the future of higher education in Pakistan is set on a downward spiral.

The Higher Education Commission had evolved as an institution in two decades, assimilating many essential attributes and continually weeding out ill practices along the way. Exactly when the institution was in the middle of its development, it was struck with an unneeded blow of an arbitrary ordinance. The events that followed, it has directly exposed higher education to the whims of the power corridors for good.

The status of the Higher Education Commission is fast on its way to becoming a mere equivalent of a board of intermediate and secondary education overseeing tertiary education. It is approaching being completely subsumed in the black hole of public officialdom. Perhaps it was frowned upon as a peculiar case in the public sector for its relatively superior standards in education and governance. Therefore, it was felt that it needed to be governed by colleagues who oversee the rest of the education domain.

The role of the federal government enhanced in HEC affairs

It is clear from the fact that the tenure of the chairman is reduced to two years and the role of the federal government has been enhanced in the HEC affairs. Inevitably, the same wizards in the government will oversee HEC, who have earned some interesting distinctions for us. For example, according to a UNICEF report, we have the second-largest number of out-of-school children after Nigeria, i.e., about 22.8 million children out of school. Only about 67% of our kids finish primary school; and only 55% of those in grade 5 can solve a two-digit subtraction (reported in a survey by South Asia Forum for



Education Development), not to mention the evil of evils—the class disparity ingrained in the system up to grade 12. As a result, the standard of higher education in the country will be, in no way, better than what we have at the primary and secondary levels.

Another consequence of the above scenario is that higher education will inspire attention at the helm in the provinces. While there is no harm in overseeing higher education at the provincial level, if unchecked, this will, however, incur its own heavy cost—one that is exemplified in the recent developments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Initiating new universities with arbitrary plans, mysterious appointments of key university officials, increasing political influence in the university management, and wrecking the already scarce financial resources are among a few recent proceedings in higher education at KPK.

Provincial-level, higher education is merely treated as part of the riches to distribute among the stakeholders of the government

Similar occurrences are likely to follow in other provinces given the frail existence of the HEC. At the provincial level, higher education is merely treated as part of the riches to distribute among the stakeholders of the government. Therefore, a reflection of the riches to distribute in higher education will remain the number of appointments (excessive and unjust), promotions based on kinships, unfair admissions, undeserved scholarships, and illegal award of contracts to desired contractors. Anything about institution making quality education, and impactful research will only be deceptive slogans.

The push for a subdued HEC will cause more than just saying goodbye to Dr. Binuri

It is not intended here to establish that everything has been exquisite in higher education in the past. There is a long list of improvements and reforms that would the actual spirit of a regulator and patron of higher education in the country. Some might argue that the existing model in the HEC required delegation within the institution instead of concentration of power with the chairman. A more inclusive model of working with the universities and the provinces was required. Therefore, a reflection within the institution was needed instead of an intrusion from above. The advances last year have only made things worse.

The push for a subdued HEC will cause more than just saying goodbye to Dr. Binuri. It will undo the progress made in the sector in the last two decades. Universities will only become dominions of politicians and the bureaucracy with bountiful interests for them.

Yet we can hope that it is still not too late for the new government to realize the damage already done. The stature of the HEC should be restored to its original form with a plan of enabling the team within the institution and promoting the inclusive participation of academics and stakeholders from across the country.

Political interests and enmities should be set aside for the sake of our youth and future generations.

Socrates has summed it well: "The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

PPL and the Case of Balochistan

Mehfooz Ali Khan
As Secretary of Finance, I had initiated a case for getting Balochistan in PPL, the biggest oil and gas producing company.

This company owes all its assets based on Balochistan's Sui Gas Field. Unfortunately, political leadership didn't press for its due share.

Here is my analysis of PPL from inception. Recent developments have not been captured, but it tells the story.

Overview
Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has been a major player in the energy sector since the mid-1950s.

As a major supplier of natural gas, PPL today contributes over 20 percent of the country's total natural gas supplies besides producing crude oil, Natural Gas Liquid, and Liquefied Petroleum Gas.

The company's history can be traced back to the establishment of a public limited company in June 1950.

With a major shareholding by Burma Oil Company (BOC) of the United Kingdom for exploration, prospecting, development, and

production of oil and natural gas resources.

PPL employees were allotted 12 percent shares from the government's equity

In September 1997, BOC disinvested from the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector worldwide and sold its equity in PPL to the Government of Pakistan (GoP). Subsequently, the government reduced its holding through an initial public offer in June 2004, which was further decreased with the initiation of the Benazir Employees Stock Option Scheme (BESOS) in August 2009 when PPL employees were allotted 12 percent shares from the government's equity.

More recently, GoP further disinvested its 5 percent shares, around 3.55 percent of the total paid-up capital, in PPL through a Secondary Public Offering in June 2014. Currently, the company's shareholding is divided between the government, which owns



about 68 percent, PPL Employees Empowerment Trust which has approximately 7 percent, and private investors, which hold nearly 25 percent. PPL has acquired 100 percent shareholding of MND E&P Limited, a company incorporated in England and Wales. The name of the subsidiary has been changed to PPL Europe E&P Limited.

PPL operates eight producing fields across the country

The company has also established a wholly-owned subsidiary, PPL Asia E&P B.V., with a corporate seat in Amsterdam, Kingdom of Netherlands. The subsidiary will focus on the exploration and production of oil and gas in the region. PPL has assigned its interest in Block 8, Iraq, under the Exploration, Development, and Production Service Contract with Midland Oil Company, Iraq to PPL Asia E&P B.V.

PPL operates eight producing fields across

the country at Sui (Pakistan's largest gas field), Adhi, Kandhkot, Chachar, Mazrani, Adam, Adam West and Shaddad and holds working interest in fifteen partner-operated producing fields, including Qadirpur the country's second-largest gas field.

As a major stakeholder in securing a safe energy future for the country, PPL pursues an aggressive exploration agenda aimed at enhancing hydrocarbon recovery and replenishing reserves. PPL, together with its subsidiaries has

a portfolio of 47 exploration assets of which the company operates 27, including one contract in Iraq, while 20 blocks, comprising three offshore leases in Pakistan and two onshore concessions in Yemen, are operated by joint venture partners.

PPL has developed a reliable foundation and infrastructure for providing clean and safe energy

Over the years, PPL has developed a reliable foundation and infrastructure for providing clean and safe energy through sustainable exploitation of indigenous natural resources while adhering to best practices of corporate governance and employee health and safety and constraining the ecological footprint of its operations. As a result, Monitoring and Inspection, Design and Construction, Drilling and Well Engineering, Joint Operations, Operational Technical Support Ser-

vices and Projects departments, Mazrani, Adhi and Kandhkot fields, Sui Field Gas Compressor Station, Sui Production, Sui Field Engineering and Sui Purification stand certified for ISO 9001 Quality Management System. Similarly, Kandhkot, Mazrani and Adhi fields, Sui Production, Sui Field Gas Compressor Station, Sui Field Stores, Sui Field Engineering and Drilling and Well Engineering, Design and Construction, Projects, Health, Safety and Environment and Exploration departments and Sui Field Hospital have been certified for ISO 14001 Environmental Management System and OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series. Sui Purification is certified for OHSAS 18001.

Currently Government of Pakistan holds 68% Shares out of total shares outstanding of 676,95% Current Year

Current Financial position of PPL. Currently Government of Pakistan holds 68% Shares out of total shares outstanding of 676,95% Current Year. The Company paid 80% dividend to shareholders and government of Pakistan got Rs. 36,826 billion as Dividend. The net Profit registered by the company was Rs. 30.0 Billion. Government also earned billions in tax revenue as well.

The government of Balochistan only got slightly above Rs.3.0 billion as Royalty from the Sui Field Legal position. Legally after 18th Constitutional Amendment, Article 172(3), province of Origin should have an equal share in the profit of oil and gas companies operating in a province. In this case, no such arrangement has been made even after a lapse of 10 years. So it is the right of the province to claim its interest in the profits of the company.

The company divests 5% shares to the public in 2014 and the government of Balochistan was not consulted in violation of the Constitution.



Pakistan Medical Association seeks PM's intervention on FBR raids at clinics

NEWS DESK: The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) has taken exception to the raids by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) at private healthcare centres, asking the prime minister to take notice of "aggressive", "commando-style" searches by tax officials.

In a statement, the representative body of healthcare professionals said the "unannounced and aggressive entry of FBR teams into private healthcare facilities — particularly across Punjab — has reached an intolerable level of harassment".

Such measures threaten the very fabric of healthcare delivery in the country, said PMA Secretary General Dr Abdul Ghafoor Shoro in a statement. "The PMA highlights that recent raids, which forced the immediate suspension of Outpatient Department (OPD) services, not merely administrative issues; they constitute a direct interference in patient management and a violation of the sanctity of life-saving institutions," according to the statement.

It said the presence of enforcement officials in clinics "creates an atmosphere of fear, causes psychological distress to patients, and disrupts surgical teams".

Association claims such measures threaten fabric of healthcare delivery.

"Tax collection must never come at the cost of human life. Doctors are not 'traders', and hospitals are not 'retail outlets'. The private sector serves over 70pc of Pakistan's population. Treating healthcare providers as commercial vendors is a gross misinterpretation of a noble profession," he stated.

"While we respect the rule of law, audits should be conducted through documented, professional channels not through 'commando-style' raids that victimise healers. This targeted victimisation discourages professional excellence and pushes our brightest medical minds to seek opportunities abroad," it claimed.

The PMA said the doctors were ready to comply with taxation, provided there was accountability for how that money would be spent. "We demand that the tax collected from the sweat and toil of healers not be squandered on the luxurious lifestyles of the ruling elite," he stated.

It called upon the PM and the finance minister to take immediate notice. "We demand an immediate cessation of

these aggressive tactics," Dr Shoro stated.

He warned that if the FBR does not immediately halt the "harassment", the PMA will be forced to take the final definitive step of a nationwide suspension of services. "The responsibility for any resulting healthcare crisis will rest solely on the shoulders of the FBR and the relevant authorities," he added.

In December 2025, the FBR deployed Inland Revenue Service (IRS) officers to the premises of commercial hospitals and clinics, marking a shift toward on-site monitoring. The initiative gained momentum in the wake of the poor tax compliance of doctors in the tax year 2025.

Official figures compiled by the FBR show that a large share of Pakistan's medical profession remains outside the net, with a minimal number of those on the tax rolls declared extremely low annual incomes in their tax returns.

Of the 319,572 registered doctors nationwide, only 130,243 are registered on the income tax rolls, representing 40.75 per cent of the total. Even within this already narrow base, just 56,267 doctors filed income tax returns.

Naem Gujjar re-elected as Islamabad bar president

NEWS DESK: In the annual elections of the Islamabad Bar Association (IBA) for the year 2026, Chaudhry Naem Ali Gujjar was elected president, while Raja Khawar Dhaniyal secured the post of secretary, according to unofficial results.

Polling was held at the Islamabad Judicial Complex, where voting continued from 8am to 4pm, with a break for food and prayers from 1pm to 2pm. More than 4,000 lawyers were eligible to exercise their right to vote for six key office-bearer positions, including president, vice-president, secretary, joint secretary, additional secretary and library secretary.

The presidential contest had become a four-way race following the withdrawal of Hafiz Malik Mazhar Javed. Chaudhry Naem Ali Gujjar, Raja Yasir Shakeel, Mian Arshad Javed and Shabana Rafique were in the run for the top slot.

According to the unofficial results announced by the Election



Board Chairman Qazi Rafiuddin Babar and other members, Chaudhry Naem Ali Gujjar won the presidency with 1,214 votes. His rivals Raja Yasir Shakeel secured 870 votes, Shabana Rafique 948 votes. For the post of library secretary, Damajawon with 1,188 votes, while Syeda Nazish Naqvi secured 1,029 votes.

For the vice-presidential post, Irum Rashid emerged victorious with 1,405 votes, defeating Biqyas Mahmood Khattak, who obtained 812 votes.

Raja Khawar Dhaniyal won the secretary's post with 1,595 votes, while his opponent Muhammad Sohail Khurshid Gujjar bagged 654 votes.

In the contest for joint secretary, Imran

Khan Kakar secured 1,245 votes, defeating Sanaullah Bugti, who received 952 votes. Farha Jafar Bhatti was elected additional secretary with 1,228 votes against Asma Bashir Bangash's 948 votes. For the post of library secretary, Damajawon with 1,188 votes, while Syeda Nazish Naqvi secured 1,029 votes.

Strict security arrangements were in place at the judicial complex in view of the elections. Additional security personnel were deployed, strict checking was carried out at entry points, and the entry of unrelated persons into the premises was completely banned to ensure a smooth polling process.

Girls school bombed in Koh-e-Suleman area

NEWS DESK: Unidentified militants blew up a girls' primary school with explosive material in the remote Koh-e-Suleman border region of Dera Ghazi Khan, partially damaging the school building and spreading fear in the area.

According to officials, the attack took place in Basti Jotar of Union Council Midwan, within the jurisdiction of Border Military Police (BMP). Police Station Lakhan.

The Government Girls' Primary School

Jotar was targeted using explosives, resulting in partial destruction of the structure.

No casualties were reported.

Security agencies, law enforcement personnel and a bomb disposal squad rushed to the site after the incident and cordoned off the area. A joint search operation was carried out, however, no arrests could be made.

The bomb disposal squad has been directed to submit a detailed report regarding the nature and quantity of the ex-

plosive device used.

Sources said the attackers are suspected to be linked to the banned militant group Fitna al-Khawarij, with the apparent aim of sabotaging girls' education in the area. Deputy Commissioner Dera Ghazi Khan and Senior Commandant Border Military Police, Usman Khalid, told The Express Tribune that the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) has registered an FIR at CTD Police Station DG Khan under relevant sections including the Anti-Terrorism Act.

KPCM heads to Mazar-i-Quaid for PTI rally, party says roads blocked to bar workers from reaching venue

NEWS DESK: PTI leaders are resolute to hold a public gathering at Mazar-i-Quaid today with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on his way to the mausoleum while the party says that authorities have blocked the routes to bar its workers from reaching the venue.

The rally has been planned as part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi's three-day visit to Sindh, who is leading his party's street mobilisation movement.

The visit began with his arrival in Karachi on Friday afternoon. He visited Hyderabad yesterday, and the PTI plans to conclude his visit with a public gathering in Karachi today.

PTI spokesperson

Mohammad Ali Boddar said news reports that Dawn that police had blocked roads and were not allowing party workers to enter Bagh-i-Jinnah, where the government had allowed the party to hold the rally.



The KP CM would now arrive at Mazar-i-Quaid at 3pm, he said, reiterating his allegation that police had blocked roads in various areas and were preventing PTI workers from reaching the new venue as well.

When again reached out to him at around 3:30pm, he said the KP CM's convoy, which also included other party leaders, had left a farmhouse in Gadap and was on its way to Mazar-i-Quaid.

"He is expected to reach there at 4pm," he said, adding that CM

Afridi would pay his respects at the mausoleum and later on, he would address party workers from a truck, the arrangements for which had been completed.

PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh also said in a video statement that the rally would definitely be held at Mazar-i-Quaid today.

Criticising the Sindh government for allegedly blocking the rally, he recalled the Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani had welcomed the KP CM at the Karachi airport and pre-

sented a Sindh cap and Ajrak to him.

"Was that a pretence?" he questioned, slamming the Sindh government for its "shamelessness".

On the party's decision to hold a gathering outside one of the gates of Mazar-i-Quaid, he said, "Holding a rally at a public gate does not block any route."

The party initially planned to hold the rally at Bagh-i-Jinnah, and the PPP-led Sindh government had even issued a no-objection certificate for it despite objections

from the PML-N.

But the PTI blamed the Sindh administration for "wasting their time" and announced that the public meeting would now be held in front of the Quaid's mausoleum.

In a late-night development, PTI spokesperson Fauzia Siddiqui posted on X that the Sindh government wasted their time as the deputy commissioner East had issued a no-objection certificate (NOC) on Saturday evening at 6:30pm.

"The public power witnesses in Karachi yesterday has frightened them; they can't decide what to do now. The people of Karachi will be at the Mazar-i-Quaid public gate at 2pm with our guest, chief minister of KP, Sohail Afridi."

We will hold a public meeting at the VIP gate at 2pm," she stated.

But Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Janjua warned of strict action if any violent action was held on the road.

Bride and groom among 8 dead in explosion at Islamabad house, 12 others injured: officials

NEWS DESK: At least eight people died and 12 others were injured in an explosion at a house in Islamabad's Sector G-7/2 during wedding festivities on Sunday, officials said.

The officials said

the deceased also included the bride and the groom.

According to Pak-istan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) spokesperson Dr Aneeqa Iqbal, six bodies and 11 injured people were brought to the hospital, where the injured were being provided medical treatment.

She told Dawn that an emergency was imposed in Pims after the incident on the directives of Executive Director (ED) Dr Rana Imran Sikander.

One of the injured was being treated at the hospital's burns centre as he had sustained 20 per cent burn injuries,



she said. Meanwhile, Islamabad Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Sahibzada Yusuf reached the site of the incident after the explosion on the directives of Executive Director (ED) Dr Rana Imran Sikander.

He said while speaking to the media that at least four houses had been damaged by the explosion and confirmed that the deceased included the bride and the groom.

Moreover, he told media persons that apart from the bodies and injured taken to Pims, two other bodies were brought to the Capital Hospital.

The explosion occurred at a wedding venue, where guests were also present, he

said, adding that all those trapped had been rescued from the rubble by means of "advanced technology".

The rescue team was conducting further checks using specialised equipment, ADC Yusuf said, further stating that an inquiry had been ordered to determine the exact cause of the explosion. However, he added,

the incident seemed to be of a cylinder explosion.

Islamabad Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa also spoke to the media and said the explosion seemed to be a result of a gas leak.

He added that one of the houses had been demolished in the incident, and arrangements had been made for the dead bodies to be brought to a ground near the site of the incident. They would then be taken to a graveyard, he said. Hanif Mash, the father of the deceased groom, said while speaking to the media that his son's wedding was held on Saturday and they had reached home late yesterday night.

"At the time of the explosion, I was present at home but sleeping in a separate room adjacent to the house.

Cold wave triggers surge in flu, respiratory illnesses across Punjab

NEWS DESK: The province of Punjab is facing a growing public health challenge as an intense cold wave continues to sweep across the region, triggering a sharp rise in respiratory and viral illnesses.

Lahore and other major cities are witnessing an unprecedented rush at public hospitals, where doctors report a continuous increase in patients suffering from super flu, influenza, viral infections, chest complications, pneumonia and high fever.

A survey of patient flow at major government hospitals in Lahore reveals a troubling situation. Over the past 24 hours, more than 1,000 patients with cold-related ailments sought treatment at six large public-sector hospitals. Mayo Hospital alone received more than 300 patients, while Jinnah Hospital treated over 250. Services Hospital and Lahore General Hospital each recorded more than 200 cases, while the Children's Hospital admitted over 100 young patients showing flu and respiratory symptoms.

Hospital corridors, emergency units and outpatient departments remain overcrowded throughout the day. Patients, many wrapped in blankets, can be seen waiting for hours in the corridors. Hospital medical staff work under intense pressure.

"The number of patients is far beyond our routine winter load. Most of the patients are senior citizens and young children," said Dr Fareed, senior medical officer at Mayo Hospi-



tal Lahore. "Most are suffering from super flu, influenza, pneumonia, chest infections and other cold-related diseases. A large number are also presenting with high fever, severe cough, breathing difficulties and body aches. Many cases are more aggressive than the usual seasonal flu," he added.

Health experts link the surge directly to the ongoing cold wave, which has significantly lowered temperatures, particularly during night-time and early morning hours. Prolonged exposure to cold, combined with poor air quality and smog, has weakened immune responses, making people more vulnerable to infections.

Doctors note that super flu cases are spreading rapidly, with symptoms including na-

sal congestion, sore throat, persistent cough, high fever, muscle pain and shortness of breath. A worrying trend is the rising number of pneumonia cases among children and elderly citizens. Paediatric wards are under particular strain as young children with compromised immunity are brought in with breathing problems. Elderly patients, especially those with heart disease, diabetes, asthma or other chronic conditions, are also facing severe complications. Pregnant women and individuals with weakened immune systems have been categorised as high-risk.

"Cold weather allows viruses to survive longer and spread faster. People stay indoors with limited ventilation, which increases transmission. Those who ig-

nore early symptoms often end up in hospitals with serious complications such as pneumonia," said Dr Abdul Basit, former medical superintendent of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Hospital administrations admit that despite preparations, the scale of the outbreak has stretched resources. Bed shortages, limited staff and overcrowded emergency rooms have become routine, with some patients treated in hallways or waiting areas due to a lack of space.

"Our doctors and nurses are working extended shifts, but the inflow of patients is relentless," said a hospital official at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Medical experts are urging the public to take preventive measures. The use of face

masks in crowded areas has been strongly recommended, along with frequent handwashing and avoiding close contact with infected individuals. Doctors have also emphasised the importance of seasonal flu vaccination, particularly for children, senior citizens, pregnant women and those with chronic illnesses.

"Vaccination does not just reduce the risk of infection; it also lowers the severity of the disease," said Prof. Dr. Sabhat.

Meteorological trends indicate that the cold wave is likely to persist over the coming days, with chilly nights, sporadic rain and dry conditions expected to continue. Health experts warn that if temperatures remain low, respiratory illnesses may increase further.

Ayaz Sadiq pays tribute to security forces for conducting successful operations

ISLAMABAD (INP): Speaker of National Assembly Sadiq Saturday paid rich tribute to the security forces for conducting successful intelligence-

based operations (BOs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in North Waziristan and Kurram districts. In a statement, the Speaker lauded the pro-

fessional competence of the security forces for neutralizing 11 terrorists affiliated with Indian-sponsored Fitna Al-Khawarij. He said the bravery and sacrifices of

the armed forces and law enforcement agencies in the ongoing war against terrorism were a source of pride for the entire nation. Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that the Pakistani

nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its courageous security forces in eliminating the menace of terrorism. He emphasized that effective operations against Indian-

backed terrorist elements were vital to safeguarding national security. The Speaker made it clear that there was no place in Pakistan for elements involved in

targeting innocent civilians and security personnel. He affirmed that counter-terrorism operations would continue uninterrupted until the complete eradication of terrorism.

Commending the operations being carried out under Azme-e-Istehkam, the Speaker said these actions reflect the strong resolve of the state to defeat hostile designs.



LAHORE: Mrs. Samina Amjad Randhawa, Amjad Karim Randhawa, parents of late Arfa Karim Foundation called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan on path of economic stability, development: Amir Muqam

ISLAMABAD, Jan 11 (INP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, Sunday, attended the event as the chief guest, which was organized by the Pakistan South Africa Association in Pretoria, Lodheim, South Africa. The prestigious event was attended by High Commissioner of Pakistan Malik Muhammad Farooq, the Overseas Pakistan community, political and social figures and hundreds of people from different walks of life, said a press release.

Addressing the event, the federal minister extended heartfelt congratulations to the attendees on the New Year and said that last year, 2025, proved to be a year of achievements for Pakistan. Pakistan achieved sig-

nificant milestones in defense, economy, diplomacy, sports, and other fields, he added. He appreciated the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and said that due to the hard work and timely decisions of the current government,

Pakistan was on the path of rapid development. Amir Muqam emphasized that under the leadership of Field Marshal and Chief of Defence Forces General Syed Asim Munir, the Pakistani Armed Forces achieved historic successes in the war of truth.

He said that in the war of truth, the Pakistani Armed Forces defeated the enemy and raised the head of the entire nation with pride. He paid tribute to the overseas Pakistanis and said that after the

Indian aggression, overseas Pakistanis defended the interests of Pakistan steadfastly. This war was fought by the entire Pakistani nation with unity and gave a clear message to the world that we are all one for Pakistan.

If any kind of attack is carried out on homeland, every patriotic Pakistani will give a befitting reply like a war of truth.

The minister said that a conducive environment had been provided for investment in Pakistan and a one-window facility for investment had been established through SIFC so that overseas Pakistanis could invest confidently.

Speaking on the Kashmir issue, he said that it is imperative to give the Kashmiri people the right to self-determination in accordance with the UN resolutions and that lasting peace in the region was not possible without a solution to this long-standing issue.

Earlier, the central president of the Pakistan South Africa Association, Mian Nasser Ahmed, welcomed the chief guest and informed him about the problems faced by overseas Pakistanis and appealed for cooperation to resolve them.

Renowned journalist Yousuf Abrarji and local councilor Naem Patel also stressed on further strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and South Africa. High Commissioner of Pakistan Malik Muhammad Farooq welcomed the arrival of the federal minister and assured all possible cooperation for the overseas community.

Hunza records country's lowest temperature as mercury drops to -21°C

HUNZA (INP): A severe cold wave continues to grip Pakistan with heavy snowfall in northern mountainous regions and icy winds

sweeping across the plains. In Hunza, the mercury dropped to a freezing minus 21 degrees Celsius, making it the coldest area in the country. According to an international weather website, the minimum temperature in Hunza was recorded at -20°C, while Quetta saw a low of -1°C early Sunday morning. Other major cities also experienced chilly conditions, with temperatures recorded at 2°C in Islamabad, 3°C in Lahore, 4°C in Peshawar, and 7°C in Karachi.

Snowfall over Babusar Top, Nanga Parbat, and other northern areas has intensified the cold and disrupted road connectivity. Temperatures plunged to

21°C in Hunza, -19°C in Astor, -11°C in Chilas, and -8°C in Kalat.

Meanwhile, dense fog and freezing cold continued to disturb life in Punjab, with closure of motorways. Due to reduced visibility, vehicles were prohibited from entering the M2 Motorway from Lahore to Kot Momin, M3 from Faizpur to Darkhana, and M4 from Pindi Bhattian to Multan. Similarly, vehicles are not allowed to enter M5 Multan to Rohn and M11 Lahore to Sambar. There are also fog-hit areas on the national highway in Lahore, Manga Mandi, Pattoki, Okara, Sahiwal, and Ahmedpur Sharqia.

Traffic flow was also affected due to heavy fog in Mian Channu, Khanewal, Multan, Basti Maluk, Lodhran, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Sadiqabad.



QUETTA: Head of Mazloom Awami Tehreek Pakistan Sadiq Khan Achkzai addressing the Youth Conference at Quetta Press Club (QPC).

ECP sets Jan 20 deadline for postal ballot applications in PP-167 by-elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set January 20, 2026 as the deadline for receiving applications for postal ballot papers for the PP-167-Lahore-XXIII by-election.

The commission stated that the facility is designed to assist voters unable to appear at polling stations. Under election law, postal ballots are available to government employees, military officers and soldiers, as well as their registered voters, spouses and children.

Residing with them, provided they live outside their constituencies. Persons with disabilities who cannot travel may also apply, if they hold a national identity card bearing the disability logo issued by NADRA. Prisoners in custody are likewise en-

titled to vote through postal ballots.

Officials assigned election duties by the Returning Officer including police personnel who are registered voters have been directed to submit their applications within three days of their appointment. Applications must be submitted on the prescribed form to the Returning Officer of the constituency.

Forms can be obtained from the concerned Returning Officer or downloaded from ECP's official website, www.ecp.gov.pk. The commission stressed that voters issued postal ballots will not be permitted to cast their votes in person at polling stations. Each application must also be verified by the applicant's office or department to prevent unauthorized use of the facility.

Youth sports, public recreation and women's access in Gwadar underway

GWADAR (INP): The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) highlighted initiatives focused on youth development, public recreation and women's participation, including work on public parks and support for sports activities in educational institutions.

Director General GDA Moeen ul Rehman Khan visited Padi Zar Park to review rehabilitation work, which officials said includes restoration of children's swings, installation of

recreational equipment, and expansion and beautification of the park. GDA Director (Environment) Rasool Bakhsh Baloch accompanied the visit and briefed the director general on construction, extension and maintenance work, according to a Gwadar Pro's report.

"Providing citizens with a safe, clean and peaceful recreational environment is among GDA's top priorities," Khan said at the event. He said development work at public

parks, including Central Park and Model Beach Park, reflects the authority's efforts to improve quality of life alongside urban development.

Model Beach Park is being expanded with facilities intended for women, aimed at encouraging greater participation in outdoor and recreational activities.

"Urban development must go hand in hand with accessible recreational spaces for families, youth and women," Khan said, adding that improved

lighting, safer play areas and inclusive design are central to current projects.

Separately, GDA distributed footballs, sports uniforms and other equipment to students at GDA Public Higher Secondary School, officials said, as part of efforts to encourage healthy activities among students.

Officials said the equipment was provided with support from members of the local builders and developers association and GDA staff.

Thick fog blankets national highways, shutting motorways across country

PESHAWAR (INP): Thick fog continues to blanket most parts of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provinces, prompting the closure of several motorway sections as a precautionary measure to ensure public safety.

According to details, the dense fog severely affected the routine life of citizens. Motorway M-1 was closed from Peshawar to Rakshai.

M-2 from Thoker Niaz Baig to Chakri, M-3 from Faizpur to Darkhana, M-4 from Pindi Bhattian to Sher Shah, M-5 from Sher Shah to

Nagar, Mian Channu, Khanewal, Multan, Basti Malook, Lodhran, and Bahawalpur, Ahmadpur Sharqia, Taranda Mohammad Pannah, Iqbalabad, Rahim Yar Khan, and Sadiqabad.

Visibility was also reduced from 10 to 30 meters from Sehwan to Larkana. The Motorway Police, Central Region, Syed Innar Ahmad, said the decision to close the motorways was taken to protect

the lives and property of the public. He warned that lane violations during foggy conditions could lead to serious accidents.

The Motorway Police advised road users to strictly follow lane discipline and avoid unnecessary travel during fog.

Citizens were urged to prefer traveling during daylight hours, noting that safer travel in Lahore is in fog between 10:00 am and 6:00 pm.

Ongoing cold wave continues for next two days across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Met Office predicted that the ongoing cold wave will continue for the next two days across Pakistan, especially in Karachi, while the cold wave further intensified in most parts of the country.

The minimum temperature of Islamabad was recorded at one degree centigrade, accompanied by cold winds.

The Met Office predicted that the maximum temperature of Islamabad is likely to reach 15 degrees centigrade. In the morning, the temperature was recorded at nine degrees centigrade, and cold winds blew at a speed of 30 meters per hour.

The Met Office said that there is no chance of rain in the federal capital for the next two to four hours.

Karachi is also experiencing severe cold weather as the minimum temperature has dropped further to nine degrees centigrade.

The pollution rate of Karachi remained se-

vere as the city was declared as 13th most polluted city in the world. The amount of particulate matter in the air was recorded at 163 particulate meters.

Cold wave and fog also gripped Mitwari, Kandayaro, and Tehri Mirwah, forcing the residents to stay at home. Vehicles were also facing difficulties on the National Highway.

Dense fog also engulfed the entire area of Okara with low visibility. Motorway M-5 was closed for all kinds of traffic from Guddu Interchange, Rohri to Zahri Pir. Cold wave accompanied by low visibility also affected the routine life of Jacobabad, Thul and Garhi Khoro. Several feeders were also dipped due to a severe cold wave.

Traffic authorities also advised citizens to avoid unnecessary travel. People were facing a lot of difficulties in the severe cold wave, as the electricity was also suspended in these areas.



QUETTA: Men sit around the fire to keep themselves warm during cold night in provincial capital.

New dams planned to tackle water shortages issue of twin-cities

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday chaired a high-level meeting that decided to construct new dams to address persistent water shortages in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, according to a report.

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and Prime Minister's Adviser Syed Tauqeer Shah attended the meeting as special participants, along with senior officials from relevant departments.

The meeting reviewed both short-term and long-term strategies to improve water supply in the twin cities. Officials

briefed participants on the progress and scope of the Chahan, Dothara, and Shahdara dam projects. It was decided that the Dothara Dam, with a storage capacity of 110 million gallons per day (MGD), would be completed within two years.

Participants also held detailed discussions on the construction of additional small dams and water reservoirs, as well as proposals to address deficiencies in Islamabad's existing water supply system. Emphasis was placed on identifying weaknesses in the water distribution network and developing a more

efficient mechanism to ensure reliable delivery.

Representatives from WAPDA and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) presented various options, feasibility studies, and proposed timelines aimed at increasing water availability.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi directed the concerned authorities to submit a comprehensive implementation plan for the approved roadmap within 10 days and instructed them to fast-track all procedural requirements to initiate the projects without delay.

He also ordered a strict crackdown on

water theft and the misuse of water connections, stressing that ensuring adequate water supply for Islamabad's residents was a top priority. The minister further directed officials to take immediate and effective measures to guarantee water availability, adding that under the short-term plan, all available resources must be utilized to maintain an uninterrupted supply.

The meeting was attended by the interior secretary, additional interior secretary, CDA chairman, Rawalpindi commissioner, CDA members, and other senior officials.

Written Tests & Interviews for Balochistan Sports Board Vacancies Underway in Nasirabad



NASIRABAD: The recruitment process for vacant positions in various cadres of the Balochistan Sports Board is currently in progress in District Nasirabad, where written examinations and interviews are being conducted for candidates from across the entire division.

The recruitment activities are being held at Shaheed Abdul Ghafoor Syal Cricket Ground under the direct supervision of Director General Sports Balochistan, Dr. Yasir Khan Bazzi, ensuring

transparency and strict monitoring throughout the process. Several senior officials were present on the occasion, including Assistant Commissioner Dera Murad Jamali Bahadur Khan Khoso, Deputy Director Sports Nasirabad Division Ferz Ali, Assistant Director Mohib Kakar, Assistant Director Adil Qadir, District Sports Officer Jaffarullah Namatullah Rind, Sports Officer Nasir Khan Panizai, Syed Sajjad Shah, and other officials. According to officials,

all stages of the written tests and interviews are being completed in a fair and transparent manner under the strict supervision of the Sports Board administration. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Yasir Khan Bazzi stated that the recruitment process aims to fill long-vacant posts in the Sports Department of Nasirabad Division, emphasizing that merit-based appointments remain the top priority of the department. He added that this initiative is intended to provide deserving and

qualified candidates with fair employment opportunities. "Currently, recruitment is being conducted for the following positions: Supervisor, Futsal In-Charge, Tube Well Operator, Chowkidar, Naib Qasid, Sanitary Worker, Ground Man, and Wall Man. The transparent recruitment drive reflects the Balochistan government's commitment to strengthening the provincial sports infrastructure and promoting good governance through merit-based employment."

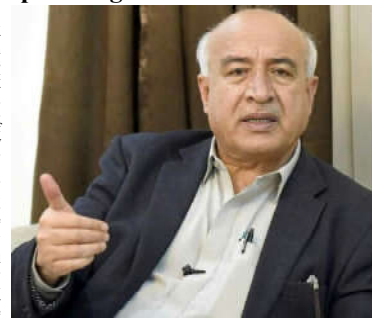
Dr Abdul Malik Baloch Calls Education Key to Empowering Sariab Residents

News Desk:

QUETTA: National Party President Dr Abdul Malik Baloch has said that Sariab has been deliberately kept undeveloped for decades under a systematic agenda, depriving its people of basic facilities, quality education and opportunities for progress.

Speaking to National Party officials, workers and local elders at the residence of Malik Faisal Shahwani, Dr Baloch said that education—particularly quality and technical education—is the only effective path through which the people of Sariab can safeguard their political, social and economic rights.

Provincial Farmers Secretary Haji Farooq Shahwani also addressed the gathering. Dr Baloch welcomed the joining of Malik Faisal Shahwani and his associates into the National Party, calling it a vote of confidence in the party's political philosophy is rooted in the intellectual and



Sariab and Mastung have historically been strongholds of national consciousness and nationalism, but were intentionally weakened to keep the population politically ineffective. He emphasized that the National Party does not believe in opportunistic or short-term politics, but stands for ideology, principles and the people's right to rule.

He added that the party's political philosophy is rooted in the intellectual and ideological development of political workers. Dr Abdul Malik Baloch said that Sariab is often viewed merely as a geographical area rather than as a national and political entity, leading to unjust decisions that harm the province. He also described the issue of missing persons as a grave humanitarian crisis that has affected nearly every household in Balochistan.

Reaffirming the party's commitment to democratic and political struggle, he said only organized political forces can guarantee a national survival and the protection of public rights.

Senior National Party leaders and local notables, including Dr Ishtaq Baloch, Ali Ahmed Lango, Nasrullah Shahwani, Haji Waheed Shahwani and several others, were also present on the occasion.

Loralai Police and CIA Conduct Successful Drug Busts, Four Arrested and Large Quantities of Hashish Seized

LORALAI: Loralai Police, in collaboration with the CIA, carried out effective and successful operations against drug dealers, leading to the arrest of four suspects and the seizure of significant quantities of hashish. These actions were executed under the orders of Deputy Inspector General of Police Loralai Range, Janid Ahmed Shaikh, and the supervision of SSP Loralai, Malik Muhammad Asghar Usman, with additional guidance from SDPO Karim Mandkhel.

The operations,

conducted by various police stations and CIA teams, unfolded in separate raids. Second Operation: Under the leadership of CIA In-Charge Loralai, Sub-Inspector Muhammad Anwar Jalalzai, the CIA team seized a significant quantity of narcotics. Wahid Shah, son of Jaleel, a resident of Makhtar, was arrested with 1.05 kilograms of hashish. Third Operation: A third successful operation was led by SHO Sadiq Ali Shaheed Saddar, Sub-Inspector Muhammad Akram Hamza, resulting in the arrest of Mirza Khan,

son of Muhammad Hashim, a resident of Kunobi. He was found with 520 grams of hashish. All arrested individuals have been charged under the Control of Narcotics Act, and investigations are ongoing. Police officials have announced that further anti-drug operations will be intensified, ensuring that no one is above the law.

Authorities have vowed to continue cracking down on drug trafficking in the region to ensure public safety and uphold the rule of law.



Gwadar District Set for Historic Transformation with N-25 Expressway Project, Promises Economic Growth and Improved Connectivity

KHUZDAR: Khuzdar, a geographical and economic hub of the province, is on the brink of making history with a groundbreaking development.

The monumental project to convert National Highway N-25 into a modern dual carriage-way expressway will not only cut travel time by half but also has the potential to transform the region's economy, trade, and employment landscape.

Today, Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar, Abdul Razak Sasoli, visited the Wadh Tehsil for an in-depth and significant tour, marking the administration's commitment to public needs and the timely completion of this mega project.

The visit highlighted the seriousness of local officials in ensuring the smooth execution of the project, with a focus on resolving land disputes and addressing project-related matters.

Accompanied by key officials, including Assistant Commissioner Wadh, Akbar Ali Mazari, District Education Officer Abid Hussain Baloch, Execu-



tive Engineer C&W Saleem Razak Umrani, DSM PPHI Dr. Munir Ahmad, and Assistant District Manager Nasir Ahmad Musiani, the visit began with a tour of the FWO (Frontier Works Organization) camp and meetings with project officials.

The team later visited the Wadh Office, where the revenue staff provided detailed briefings on land issues, conflict resolution, and other critical matters related to the project.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razak Sasoli conducted a direct inspection of the ongoing construction along N-25, particularly in the areas of Wadh and Darakhela, meeting with FWO officers and staff at the site and Saman

Tang camp. Discussions focused on the pace of work, challenges, and their solutions. Sasoli instructed that all available resources be utilized to ensure the project section is completed ahead of schedule.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner also inspected key Basic Health Units (BHUs) in Wadh and Darakhela, engaging with medical staff and stressing the importance of providing top-notch healthcare, especially as construction activities increase traffic in the area.

Additionally, the 1122 Emergency Services Center at Darakhela was reviewed, with an emphasis on ensuring rapid response capabilities given the expected surge in traffic once the expressway is operational.

In his concluding remarks, Deputy Commissioner Sasoli expressed his confidence that the N-25 Pakistan Expressway will be a revolutionary project not just for Khuzdar district but for the entire province of Balochistan. He emphasized that this highway is not merely a road but a gateway to prosperity, development, and improved communication.

The federal and provincial governments are fully committed to the timely completion of the project, and all necessary support will be provided to ensure that this vision becomes a reality for the people of Balochistan.

Gwadar Assistant Commissioner Responds Swiftly to Landslide, Restores Key Highway for Traffic

GWADAR: In a swift and decisive response to a landslide that blocked the main highway between Gwadar and Dasht, Assistant Commissioner Zafar, personally visited the affected site at Dasht Duro Kandig to supervise emergency measures.

The landslide had completely obstructed the highway, halting traffic between Gwadar and Dasht, causing significant hardships for the local population.

Recognizing the severity of the situation, Assistant Commissioner Zafar immediately took charge of the operation and directed the B&R Department and the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department to deploy heavy machinery and tractors on-site to clear the debris. Under his direct supervision,



the team successfully removed the landslide material, reopening the critical route for traffic without delay. Thanks to the quick and effective action, the highway was cleared and traffic was restored, providing much-needed relief to thousands of commuters between Gwadar and Dasht.

The prompt restoration of the road ensured that the flow of traffic was back to normal, reducing public inconvenience.

During the operation, Assistant Commissioner Zafar emphasized the importance of maintaining readiness for any future emergencies. He instructed all concerned departments to ensure that machinery and personnel are always prepared to respond swiftly, minimizing disruption to the public.

Zafar reiterated the commitment of the district administration to prioritize the safety, convenience, and well-being of the people in the region.

Grand Marathon Held in Turbat Under Kech Sports and Fitness Festival, Youth Participate with Enthusiasm

TURBAT, KECH: A grand marathon race was successfully organized at the headquarters of District Kech, Turbat, under the banner of the Kech Sports and Fitness Festival, drawing a large number of youth and citizens who participated with great enthusiasm and spirit.

The marathon aimed to promote sports activities, encourage a healthy lifestyle, and engage youth in positive and constructive pursuits.

The inaugural ceremony of the marathon was attended by Commissioner Makran Qadir Bakshi Perkani, Deputy Commissioner Kech Bashir Ahmed Baloch, Assistant Commissioner Turbat Muhammad Hanif Kabzai, Assistant Commissioner Turbat Sheikh Hayat, Mayor Mumukh Bakhshi, and a large number of local citizens.

The federal and provincial governments are fully committed to the timely completion of the project, and all necessary support will be provided to ensure that this vision becomes a reality for the people of Balochistan.

The marathon officially started at 11:00 AM from the residence of the Deputy Commissioner Kech. The race route passed through Turbat Police Station Chowk, Takhti Chowk, Taleem Chowk, and concluded at Kech Stadium Turbat.

Participants, including young athletes from various parts of the city, displayed remarkable discipline, determination, and sportsmanship throughout the race.

Special appreciation and traffic arrangements were made by the district administration to ensure the smooth conduct of the event. Citizens lined the route, applauding and cheering the runners, which further boosted the morale and excitement of the participants.

After a tough competition covering a distance of approximately five kilometers, Ayaz Baloch from Josak, Turbat, secured first position, Muhammad Jan from Pangur claimed second position, while Adeb Ahmed from Malik Abad, Turbat, achieved third position.

<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>
<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>
<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notarization for issuance of Letter of Administration of Estate of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, to his son, Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Ali Khan, deceased, for the purpose of administering the estate of the deceased.</p> <p>Notarized by: [Signature]</p> <p>Notary Public: [Signature]</p>

Pakistan, Indonesia to set up JTC to boost trade

NEWS DESK: Pakistan and Indonesia have signed a memorandum of understanding to establish an Indonesia-Pakistan Joint Trade Committee (JTC) to strengthen trade dialogue, facilitate cooperation and address opportunities and challenges in bilateral trade.

The MoU was signed after high-level talks in Islamabad on Friday, led by Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and visiting Indonesian Vice Minister of Trade Dyah Roro Esty Widya Putri, said a press release.

The development coincided with a reception hosted by the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi in honour of the visiting vice minister, attended by government officials and representatives of the business community from both countries.

During the talks, Mr Kamal described Indonesia as strategically important within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and said it could serve as a regional hub for fostering trilateral and regional economic cooperation.

The federal minister emphasised that Paki-



stan could serve as a reliable source for minerals, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and agri-food commodities for the Indonesian market.

He also conveyed Pakistan's intention to organise a single-country exhibition and busi-

ness forum in Jakarta, with invitations to be extended to Asean member states, aimed at showcasing Pakistani products and strengthening regional business linkages. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) Chief Ex-

ecutive sought Indonesian facilitation for the early announcement of free import quotas, rationalisation of certification requirements for Pakistani exports, notification of rice import quotas and improved market access for indus-

trial-grade potatoes. Both sides agreed to work jointly towards expanding the existing preferential trade agreement (PTA), with the shared objective of progressing towards a Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Agreement to unlock greater trade and investment opportunities. Mr Kamal noted that imported edible oil, primarily from Indonesia, forms an essential part of Pakistan's food chain and daily life and appreciated the contin-

ued contribution of Indo-Pakistani stake-holders to sustaining bilateral trade. The Indonesian vice minister reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to deeper economic ties and welcomed closer co-

operation through the newly established JTC. With bilateral trade exceeding \$4 billion, both sides reiterated their commitment to further strengthening relations through political trust, growing economic cooperation and people-to-people links, the press release said.

Growth in auto sales. Separately, the minister on Wednesday expressed optimism that sales of locally manufactured vehicles would improve in the coming years, citing policies aimed at discouraging imports of used cars.

Mr Kamal said Pakistan's annual production of vehicles, currently below 200,000 units, could rise to between 500,000 and one million units, creating new investment opportunities. He also stressed the need to strengthen auto-financing to support higher sales of locally made vehicles. During a visit to the Bin Qasim automotive cluster of the Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts and Accessories Manufacturers, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting domestic automobile manufacturing and exports.

Govt to shift high-loss power feeders to solar energy

NEWS DESK: The federal government has decided to convert electricity feeders operating at heavy losses to solar power as part of efforts to improve electricity supply and curb financial losses in the energy sector.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which reviewed ongoing power sector reforms and strategies to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply, particularly in remote areas.

The prime minister directed that high-loss feeders be shifted to solar energy in coordina-

tion with local communities and provincial governments, saying the move would help reduce losses while ensuring a reliable power supply in affected regions.

He also ordered the immediate launch of pilot projects for loss-making feeders of the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) and Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), stressing that consultations with elected representatives and active community participation were essential for the projects' success.

Officials briefed the meeting that converting these feeders to solar

power would lead to the development of environment-friendly, low-cost and sustainable microgrids, with local communities, provincial governments and the federal government as key stakeholders.

They added that the initiative would not only provide affordable electricity but also significantly reduce future financial losses of power distribution companies.

PM Shehbaz approved the plan and instructed authorities to begin work on the pilot projects in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan without delay.

NEWS DESK: Banks received 30 per cent fewer US dollars from exchange companies in the first half of the current fiscal year, according to official data.

Exchange companies sold about \$1.4 billion to banks during July-December FY26, compared with around \$2bn in the corresponding period of FY25, reflecting a decline of nearly 30pc.

Exchange companies are required to sell surplus foreign currency in the banking market. However, they are also allowed to sell dollars to individuals for specific purposes.

"The customers bought about \$1.2bn in six months from exchange companies, kept \$400m in bank accounts and the remaining \$800m is not traceable," said Malik Bostan, Chairman of the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP).

The untraceable \$800m is believed to have been used for purchasing virtual currencies. Trading in virtual currencies remains unregulated in Pakistan, though the State Bank is

working on a framework to regulate cryptocurrency transactions.

The government has expressed support for cryptocurrency trading and is willing to legalise it with the assistance of the State Bank.

Selling dollars to the general public is not straightforward, as exchange companies typically issue cheques for encashment through banks or directly transfer dollars into buyers' bank accounts instead of

providing cash. Data show that currency sales to banks have been on a declining trend from June to December 2025.

The highest inflow was recorded in June, when banks received \$48m.

At the start of FY26, sales stood at \$279m in July, falling sharply to \$165m in August. They recovered to \$187m in September, rose to \$243m in October, dipped slightly to \$238m in November and in-

creased again to \$271m in December.

Despite rising remittance inflows this year, dollar sales by exchange companies to banks have declined.

"Special apps available on websites are attracting dollars from Pakistan."

The current US dollar rate offered by banks is around Rs292, which is highly attractive for dollar holders," Mr Bostan said, adding that these platforms guide holders either to

sell at these rates or invest in cryptocurrencies.

Exchange rate outlook

"The latest liquidity profile of the SBP shows aggregate short positions of less than \$2bn, broadly in line with the IMF's targets and suggests that reserve accumulation has not been driven by buy-sell swaps but by net up excess liquidity from the interbank market," said Faisal Mamsa, CEO of Tresmart.

The current trajectory implies a potential breach of the Rs280 to a US dollar; however, with the real effective exchange rate at 104.8, competitiveness already appears stretched.

In this context, the central bank should resist a decisive break below Rs280, preferring stability over signalling strength, particularly as import demand gradually recovers and longer-dated external pressures remain unresolved, he said.

"For now, the dollar-rupee parity is likely to remain range-bound, with two-way movement increasingly coming into play," he added.

Dollar inflows from exchangers dip



Modern seafood processing zone planned at Korangi harbour

NEWS DESK: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has announced plans to establish a 100-acre, \$80 million Seafood Processing and Export Zone at the Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority (KoFHA), aimed at boosting the blue economy and global seafood trade.

In a statement on Saturday, the minister said the proposed project was aimed at developing, financing and operating a modern seafood processing and value addition complex under KoFHA.

positioning the harbour as a regional hub for sustainable, technology-driven seafood processing linked to high-value international markets.

He said the initiative would be a bridge between medium-scale seafood processors and value-added plants, and global buyers by providing modern infrastructure, certification standards and efficient logistics. The project reflects the government's intent to move away from raw



seafood exports towards higher-value processed products.

The minister noted that the project would cover 100 acres of dedicated seafood processing and export infrastructure at the Korangi Fisheries Harbour in Karachi.

He said the estimated project cost would range between \$60 million and \$80 million, based on regional and global benchmarks from countries such as Vietnam, China and Ecuador, which have developed similar seafood

facilities. He said the planned facilities would include multi-tenant seafood processing units, large-scale cold storage and packaging facilities, logistics and export terminals and a wastewater treatment plant to ensure environmentally compliant operations.

The zone will be used exclusively for commercial seafood processing, packaging, cold storage and export-oriented activities. The maritime minister said the project was proposed under a pub-

lic-private partnership or build-operate-transfer (BOT) concession model, under which private investors would develop, operate and maintain the processing zone, while KoFHA would keep regulatory oversight and provide facilitation.

Elaborating on the development components, he said the zone would host between 20 and 25 medium to large-scale seafood processing units designed for fish and shrimp processing, value addition and export-grade packaging.

Sugar deregulation risks flagged

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's plan to fully deregulate its sugar sector after nearly eight decades of state control has entered a decisive phase, with the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA) cautioning that market freedom without strong oversight could deepen long-standing problems instead of resolving them.

In a detailed policy report, ICMA has proposed a gradual and closely monitored deregulation framework at a time when the government, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is seeking to reduce price controls, fiscal subsidies and ad hoc interventions in politically sensitive sectors.

The sugar sector has long been one of Pakistan's most controversial yet important sectors, sitting at the intersection of agriculture, food security and politics. The country produces between 6 and 7 million tonnes of sugar annually, depending on the cane crop, while domestic consumption is estimated at around 5.5 to 6 million tonnes. Despite this apparent bal-

ance, Pakistan has repeatedly faced sharp price spikes, sudden shortages and controversial decisions to export sugar, only to allow imports months later at higher prices. These cycles have been costly for consumers and have frequently drawn the attention of regulators and parliamentary committees.

According to ICMA, Pakistan's domestic sugar prices have remained significantly higher than global benchmarks for extended periods, reflecting structural distortions rather than genuine shortages. The report notes that cartelisation, weak stock reporting, delayed payments to farmers and politically influenced trade decisions have undermined trust in the

market. While the government now plans to let demand and supply determine prices, the report argues that deregulation alone will not automatically dismantle entrenched market power or prevent manipulation.

The push for reform is closely linked to Pakistan's ongoing IMF programme, which emphasises market-based pricing, reduced subsidies and improved governance.

Recent government announcements indicate that long-standing restrictions on new sugar mills may be lifted, pricing mechanisms rolled back and export and import liberalised. Officials see deregulation as a way to attract private investment, improve efficiency and align Pakistan with global practices. However, the report stresses that

international experience shows deregulation works best when supported by strong institutions. It recommends the creation of a national digital stock monitoring system to track sugar production and inventories in real time, allowing authorities to detect artificial shortages early and trigger rule-based import or export decisions. Without transparent and verifiable data, the report warns, powerful players could continue to exploit information gaps.

Farmer protection is another major concern highlighted in the study. In past seasons, growers have complained of delayed payments running into billions of rupees, despite official support prices for sugarcane. The report proposes enforceable payment timelines backed by escrow accounts or bank guarantees to ensure that farmers are paid on time in a deregulated environment. It also suggests a hybrid cane pricing model that reflects regional production costs while linking part of farmers' returns to market outcomes, as seen in countries such as Brazil and India.



Sialkot owner eyes PSL crown, top players from Pakistan and Australia

In his original post, Romero said it should be "other people coming out to speak, but they don't". He later deleted the post.

The trust called on the club leadership to maintain transparency with the fans, starting with the mid-season transfer window, to demonstrate the seriousness of the club.

first media conference after purchasing the Sialkot team at the office of the Sports Journalists Association Lahore at the National Hockey Stadium.

Hamza, who owns a business in Australia

After the addition of two new teams — Hyderabad and Sialkot — the total number of participating teams in the PSL has reached eight, expanding the level of profit to manifold against Rs5 billion

On whether his Sialkot team will miss their home venue — Jinnah Stadium — like Quetta and Peshawar Zalmi teams during the PSL games, Hamza said

Zakaria, Eleinen deliver stunning upsets to set up title clash

"It's something that can help us a lot because the Olympic Games are really important in Italy," Malaspina added.

Although major Italian soccer clubs, including AC Milan and Genoa, have had cricket teams in the past, the sport has never gained much popularity in the country.

"When I went for my physical at the Ital-

"We have some school-level programmes that introduce children to cricket and hold competitions... but players don't have enough opportunities to transition to club cricket."

Both advanced to their maiden finals at a Gold-level tournament on the PSA Squash Tour with fifth seed Zakaria, the two-time world junior champion, delivering a quick 11-3, 11-9, 11-4 takedown of 2016 world champion and top-seeded compatriot Karim Abdel Gawad while Eleinen romped past compatriot Mohamed El Shorbagy, the 2017 world champion who

Elainen. "He's from Alexandria, I'm from Alexandria, so of course I grew up watching him the whole time. I've looked up to him so much—I still look up to him so much."

"What he has done for the game will be talked about for years and years. I wanted to show him so much respect today by giving it my everything and playing my absolute best."

The 26-year-old then killed off ElShorbagy's hopes of a comeback by racing away to a 10-3 lead in the third.



ian Olympic Committee (CONI) facilities, even

The 18-year-old Zakaria had lost all his three previous meetings with Gawad and said he was in "disbelief" after his 52-minute victory over the world number four.

"It's so difficult to play against Karim," he said.

"He has so many gears to shift to. I'm still a bit in disbelief at how well my plan turned out."

"Lost to Gawad the last three times I played him. I watched back some of those matches today and something clicked. I knew what I was going to do and I'm so happy with how it turned out."

Top seed Amina Orfi of Egypt eased past an under-the-weather Nada Abbas 11-4, 11-6, 11-5 while second seed Sivasangari Subramaniam of Malaysia was made to work by her compatriot Aifa Azman before she prevailed 11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 12-14, 11-5.

Holders Palace suffer biggest ever FA Cup shock, City hit 10

Morocco, Africa's top-ranked team and World Cup semi-finalists in 2022, are under enormous pressure to win the Cup of Nations in front of their own fans,

Fresh from knocking out South Africa in

helped by the early loss of
of night wing-back Jack
son Tchamadeu, who
tried to carry on after
Noussair Mazraoui
landed heavily on his
knee before eventually
being stretched off.
Moments after that,
Morocco scored. Achraf
Hakimi sent in a corner
from the right which was
headed towards goal by
El Kaabi at the near post
and the ball struck Diaz
in the groin before go-
ing in.

That calmed a fre-

They entered the record books for the wrong reasons this time at Moss Rose as captain Paul Dawson and Isaac Buckley-Ricketts scored either side of half-time for the side managed by John Rooney, the

stick" defending by the Eagles, who are now winless in nine games. "I have no explanation for what I have seen today," said the Austrian, who has been linked with the vacant managerial role at Manchester United.

Just a day after securing his 65 million (\$87 million) move from Bournemouth, Semenyo was among the scorers as City put League One Exeter to the sword at the Etihad.

Wolverhampton Wanderers are now unbeaten in four games after thrashing Shrewsbury Town 6-1 thanks to a Jorgen Strand Larsen hat-trick.

Fulham needed three goals in the final half hour to beat Middle-sbrough 3-1 at Craven Cottage, but Burnley found Championship opposition an easier proposition in thrashing Millwall 5-1.

Brentford cruised to a 2-0 win at financially

The 117 places that separate Premier League outfit Palace from Macclesfield of the National League North in the English football pyramid is the most ever overcome by an underdog in FA Cup history.

On Friday, second-tier Wrexham knocked out Nottingham Forest 4-3 on penalties after a 3-3 draw to reach the fourth round elimination.

the last round here, Cameroon were clearly banking on frustrating Morocco as much as possible in an attempt to

"I can't believe it. We never thought we would be in this position," said Rooney. "I didn't think it was pos-

fourth round, eliminating a Premier League side for the first time in 26 years in another chapter of their Hollywood story.

Turkiye seeks entry into Pak-Saudi defence pact: Bloomberg

NEWS DESK: Turkiye is reportedly seeking to join a strategic mutual defence agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, a move that could reshape regional security dynamics in the Middle East and beyond, according to a Bloomberg report.

Citing people familiar with the matter, Bloomberg said discussions are at an advanced stage and that an agreement is likely. The defence pact, signed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in Riyadh in September last year, commits both countries to treat any aggression against one as an attack on both.

The report said Turkiye views the arrangement as a means to strengthen security cooperation and deterrence at a time when questions persist over the reliability of the United States and US president Donald



Trump's commitment to Nato, despite Washington's strong military ties with all three countries. According to Bloomberg,

Turkiye's strategic interests increasingly align with those of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia across South Asia, the Middle East

and parts of Africa, making its inclusion in the pact a logical expansion. Analysts cited in the report highlighted

the complementary strengths of the three countries, with Saudi Arabia providing financial resources,

Pakistan offering nuclear capability, ballistic missile capability and manpower, and Turkiye contributing military experience and a developed de-

fence industry. Nihat Ali Ozcan, a strategist at Ankara-based think tank TEPAV, was quoted by Bloomberg as saying that shifting regional dynamics and the fallout from ongoing conflicts were prompting countries to develop new frameworks to identify allies and security partners.

Pakistan's information ministry and Turkiye's defence ministry declined to comment on the development, while Saudi authorities were not immediately available for comment, Bloomberg said. The report noted that Turkiye's potential entry into the pact would underline a new phase in its relations with Saudi Arabia, following years of strained ties. The two countries are now expanding cooperation in the economic and defence sectors and recently held their first-ever

naval meeting in Ankara. Pakistan and Turkiye already maintain close defence ties. Ankara has been involved in building corvette warships for the Pakistan Navy and upgrading Pakistan Air Force F-16 fighter jets. Turkiye is also sharing drone technology with both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and has proposed their participation in its Kaan 15th-generation fighter jet programme, according to Bloomberg. The tri-annual defence discussions follow a ceasefire between Pakistan and India that ended a brief but intense military confrontation in May 2025. Bloomberg also noted ongoing tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as mediation efforts by Turkiye and Qatar that have so far failed to yield a breakthrough.

Death toll climbs after trash site collapse buries dozens in Philippines

NEWS DESK: Hard-hat-wearing rescue workers and backhoes dug through rubble in search of survivors on Saturday in the shadow of a mountain of garbage that buried dozens of landfill employees in the central Philippines, killing at least four.

About 50 sanitation workers were buried when refuse tumbled onto them on Thursday from what a city councillor estimated was a height of 20 stores at the Binili Landfill, a privately operated facility in Cebu City.

Rescuers were now facing the dangerous task of their collapse as they navigated the wreckage, Cebu rescuer Jo Reyes told AFP on Saturday.

"Operations are on-going as of the moment. It is continuous. But from time to time, the landfill is moving, and that will temporarily stop the operation," he said.

"We have to stop for a while for the safety of our rescuers."

Information from the disaster site has been emerging slowly, with city employees citing the lack of signal from the dumpsite, which serviced Cebu and other surrounding communities.

Joel Garganera, a Cebu City council member, told AFP that as of 10:00am (0200 GMT), the death toll from the disaster had climbed to four,

with 34 still missing.

"The four casualties were inside the facility when it happened."

"They have these staff houses inside where most people who were buried stayed," he said.

"It's very difficult on the part of the rescuers, because there are really heavy (pieces of steel), and every now and then, the garbage is moving because of the weight from above," Garganera said.

"We are hoping against hope here and praying for miracles," he said when asked about the timeline for rescue efforts.

"We cannot just jump to the retrieval (of bodies), because there are a lot of family mem-

bers who are within the property waiting for any positive result."

At least 12 employees have so far been pulled alive from the garbage and hospitalised.

Photos released by police on Friday showed a massive mound of trash atop a hill directly behind buildings that a city informa-

tion officer had told AFP also contained administrative offices.

Garganera noted that the disaster was "sad, double whammy" for the city, as the facility was the "lone service provider" for Cebu and adjacent communities.

The landfill "processes 1,000 tons of municipal solid waste daily," according to the website of its operator, Prime Integrated Waste Solutions.

Calls and emails to the company have so far gone unreturned.

Rita Cogay, who operates a compactor at the site, told AFP on Friday she had stepped outside to get a drink of water just moments before the building she had been in

strengthen security precautions and evacuate in an orderly manner.

It also advised Chinese nationals to immediately report any unusual activity or emergencies to local authorities and the Chinese Embassy.

The embassy also provided emergency contact numbers for use if required.

On November 27, 2025, three Chinese workers in Tajikistan were killed in an attack launched from Afghanistan near the border, according to Tajik authori-

China urges evacuation of nationals from Afghanistan-Tajikistan border region

NEWS DESK: The Chinese Embassy in Afghanistan has issued an urgent advisory calling on Chinese citizens and companies in the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border region to evacuate due to deteriorating security conditions.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the embassy described the security situation in the border region as "complex and severe". It said a series of attacks on Chinese citizens last November caused significant casualties and warned that further attacks against Chinese companies and nationals could not be ruled out.

The embassy said several security incidents involving Chinese-run gold mining companies had recently occurred in Badakhshan and Takhar provinces, resulting in deaths and injuries and damage to machinery and equipment.

The advisory urged Chinese citizens and enterprises in the affected areas to closely monitor the situation,



Tajikistan has also maintained limited engagement with Afghanistan, including diplomatic contacts, border trade and electricity supplies.

In December, Tajik state media reported that five people were killed in an armed clash on the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border, including two Tajik border guards.

As a result, Tajikistan sought an apology from Afghanistan, accusing Kabul of failing to meet its obligations to ensure security along the border.

President Emomali Rahmon, who has been in power since 1992, has been openly critical of the Taliban and urged them to respect the rights of ethnic Tajiks, who make up roughly a quarter of Afghanistan's population. Despite tensions,

Tajikistan has also maintained limited engagement with Afghanistan, including diplomatic contacts, border trade and electricity supplies.

In December, Tajik state media reported that five people were killed in an armed clash on the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border, including two Tajik border guards.

As a result, Tajikistan sought an apology from Afghanistan, accusing Kabul of failing to meet its obligations to ensure security along the border.

Venezuela says in talks with US to restore diplomatic ties

NEWS DESK: Venezuela said on Friday it had launched talks with the United States on restoring diplomatic ties, days after US forces deposed Nicolas Maduro as its president.

It was the latest sign of cooperation following the leftist leader's capture and US President Donald Trump's claim to be "in charge" of the South American country.

Officials said US diplomats were in Caracas to discuss re-opening the country's embassy, while in Washington, Trump met with oil companies over his plans to access Venezuela's huge crude reserves.

The government of interim President Delcy Rodriguez "has decided to initiate an exploratory diplomatic process with the government of the United States," Foreign Minister Yury Gil said in a statement.

John McNamara, the top US diplomat in the region, said he had called off a second wave of attacks on Venezuela due to the prisoner releases. The US president had suggested he might use force again to get his way in Venezuela, which has the world's largest proven oil reserves. At a White House meeting on Friday, he pressed top oil executives to invest in Venezuela's reserves, but was met with a cautious reception — with ExxonMobil chief executive Darren Woods dismissing the country as "uninvestable" without sweeping reforms.

Rodriguez, in a statement, condemned "the serious, criminal, illegal and illegitimate attack" by the United States and vowed: "Venezuela will continue to confront this aggression through the diplomatic route."

Trump said foreign firms had enjoyed no meaningful protections under Maduro, "but now you have total security. It's a whole different Venezuela." He also stressed that the companies would deal only with Washington, not Caracas, when exploiting Venezuela's oil resources. Trump earlier said that oil companies promised to invest \$100 billion in Venezuela, whose oil infrastructure is creaky after years of mismanagement and sanctions.

He had earlier announced a plan for the United States to sell between 30 million and 50 million barrels of Venezuelan crude, with the money to be used at his discretion. He promised any funds sent to Caracas would be used to buy only US-made products. In the mean-



time, Washington has maintained maritime pressure on oil tankers in the Caribbean, where it seized a fifth tanker carrying Venezuelan crude — oil that would be sold, Trump said.

State-owned oil company PDVSA confirmed in a statement that one vessel was returning to Venezuelan waters, describing it as the "first successful joint operation" with Washington.

Anxious relatives waited outside a Venezuelan jail for a glimpse of their loved ones as the authorities began releasing political prisoners — a move Washington claimed credit for.

"When I heard the news, I broke down," said Dhisia Caro, 50, waiting for the release of her husband, Noel Flores, who was jailed for criticising Maduro.

Australia, India invited to G7 meeting on critical minerals: US treasury secretary

NEWS DESK: United States Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Australia and several other countries would join a meeting of finance ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) advanced economies that he is hosting in Washington on Monday to discuss critical minerals.

Bessent said he had been pressing for a separate meeting on the issue since last summer's summit of G7 leaders, and finance ministers had already held a virtual meeting in December.

India was also invited to attend the meeting, Bessent told Reuters in an interview after touring the Minneapolis-area engineering lab of RV and boat maker Winnebago Industries. He said he was unsure if it had accepted the invitation.

It was not immediately clear which other countries had been invited. The G7 includes the United States, Britain, Japan, France, Germany, Italy and Canada, as well as the European Union, most of whom are heavily dependent on



rare earth supplies from China. The group last June agreed on an action plan to secure their supply chains and boost their economies.

Australia signed an agreement with the US in October aimed at countering China's dominance in critical minerals. It included an \$8.5 billion project pipeline and leveraged Australia's proposed strategic reserve, which will supply metals like rare earths and lithium that are vulnerable to disruption.

Canberra has said it has subsequently received interest from Europe, Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

China dominates the critical minerals supply chain, refining between 47 per cent and 87pc of copper, lithium, cobalt, graphite and rare earths, according to the International Energy Agency. These minerals are used in defence technologies, semiconductors, renewable energy components, batteries and refining processes.

China's share of global critical minerals production, based on British Geological Survey's July 2023 data, was still living up to its commitments to purchase US soybeans and ship critical minerals to US firms.

Monday's meeting comes days after reports that China had begun restricting exports to Japanese companies of rare earths and powerful magnets containing them, as well as banning exports of dual-use items to the Japanese military.

Bessent said China was still living up to its commitments to purchase US soybeans and ship critical minerals to US firms.