

## China says hopes for cooperation with US on trade under Trump

Beijing(News Desk) China said on Tuesday it hoped to cooperate with the United States to resolve trade issues, as President Donald Trump began his second term after threatening to impose biting tariffs on the Asian giant.

Beijing is "willing to strengthen dialogue and communication with the United States, properly manage differences and expand mutually beneficial cooperation," foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said in response to a question about potential new levies under Trump.

"It is hoped that the United States will work with China to jointly promote the stable, healthy and sustainable development of China-US economic and trade relations," Guo said at a regular press briefing in Beijing. He acknowledged "differences and frictions" between Beijing and Washington but said "the common interests and space for cooperation between the two countries are huge."

"The two sides can strengthen dialogue and consultation in this regard," he added.

China and the US are the world's two largest economies but have had a tumultuous trade relationship in recent years.

Trump imposed tariffs on imports from China during his first term, citing alleged unfair practices by Beijing. His successor Joe Biden kept up the pressure with sweeping rules aimed at restricting Chinese access to high-tech chips.

And Trump threatened to go even further during his election campaign, vowing even higher tariffs if he won another term in office.

## Tech billionaires take centre stage at Trump's inauguration

WASHINGTON: (News Desk) US tech multibillionaires — including Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and Jeff Bezos — were given prime positions at Donald Trump's inauguration on Monday, in an unprecedented demonstration of their power and influence in the White House.

The tech tycoons, whose companies are among the world's most valuable, have spent the ten weeks since the election courting favour with Trump, marking a dramatic shift from Silicon Valley's more hostile response to his first term four years ago.

Attendees also included Apple CEO Tim Cook and Google CEO Sundar Pichai, along with the search engine's founder Sergey Brin. TikTok CEO Shou Chew sat in the back row of the stage, even as his platform's future remains uncertain. TikTok on Sunday credited Trump for promising an executive order to save the app from a US ban, though its fate in the United States remains unclear while under Chinese company ByteDance's ownership, in defiance of a US law.

Despite highly limited seating after the ceremony moved indoors due to bad weather, Meta CEO Zuckerberg attended with his wife Priscilla Chan, while Amazon executive Bezos was accompanied by his fiancée, Lauren Sanchez. Google, Meta, Apple, and Amazon face landmark antitrust lawsuits from the US government that could force their breakup.

## Longest-serving Palestinian inmate among prisoners to be deported under swap

KUBAR: (News Desk) Palestinian Iman Nafeh had been eagerly awaiting her husband's return ever since she heard he would be released from prison as part of a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas. But her joy was cut short when she learned he would be expelled from the Palestinian territories immediately after he was freed.

After spending 44 years behind bars in Israeli custody, 34 of them consecutively, Nael Barghouthi holds the record for the lengthiest detention among Palestinians, according to advocacy group the Palestinian Prisoners Club.

Nafeh's home in the village of Kubar, in the occupied West Bank, is decorated with photos of Barghouthi — some old, some recent, all taken during his decades of detention. "Imagine a person who has spent 44 years in prison, and now they're imposing a new punishment on him: exile," Nafeh said. Barghouthi was arrested in 1978 and sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of an Israeli officer and attacks on Israeli sites. At the time, he was a member of Fatah, the movement of current Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas and a rival of Hamas. After more than 15 months of conflict in the Gaza Strip and a protracted, halting negotiation process, a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas finally went into effect on Sunday. In the first phase of the deal, Hamas is expected to release 33 Israeli prisoners — 31 of whom were taken during the group's October 7, 2023 raid — in exchange for around 1,900 detained Palestinians. Of those, more than 230 are serving life sentences for deadly attacks on Israelis, and will be permanently expelled from the Palestinian territories upon their release, according to a list made public by Israeli authorities.



This handout photograph released by the Demiroren News Agency on January 21 shows an aerial picture of a fire on the fourth floor of the 11-storey hotel in Bolu's Kartalkaya ski resort

## Turkish ski resort fire kills 66, forces guests to jump from windows

Istanbul(News Desk) A fire at a ski resort hotel in Turkey's Bolu mountains killed 66 people on Tuesday and forced panicked guests to jump out of windows in the middle of the night.

Some 51 people were injured, Health Minister Kemal Memisoglu said at the Kartalkaya ski resort in northwest Turkey. The blaze

at the 12-storey Grand Kartal hotel, which has wooden cladding, started at 3:27am (5:27am PKT), Ali Yerlikaya said on X. Private NTV broadcaster said three people died after jumping from the hotel's windows.

The resort is located on top of a mountain range about 170 kilometres northwest of the capital Ankara.

The fire, which is believed to have started in the restaurant at around midnight, spread quickly. It was not immediately clear what caused it.

Television footage showed huge plumes of smoke rising into the sky with a snow-capped mountain behind the hotel. Part of it backs onto a cliff, making it harder

for firefighters to tackle the blaze. Local media said 237 people were staying at the hotel, where the occupancy rate was between 80 and 90 percent due to the school holidays. Those evacuated were rehoused in nearby hotels. Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said six prosecutors had been allocated to investigate the blaze.

## UK PM vows to fight new 'terrorism' threat after Southport girls' murders

London(News Desk) British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Tuesday pledged to fight the changing face of "terrorism" after a teenager admitted the murder of three young girls in a stabbing spree that triggered riots last year.

Starmer said the "barbaric" killings, which were not treated as "terrorism" by the judicial authorities,

were "a sign Britain now faces a new threat ... acts of extreme violence perpetrated by loners, misfits, young men in their bedrooms" who were accessing material online.

Bebe King, six, Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven, and Alice da Silva Aguiar, nine, were killed in the attack in the northwestern seaside town of Southport near Liverpool on July 29, 2024.

Axel Rudakubana, 18, who was born in Wales to Rwandan parents, on Monday admitted murder as his trial was due to start, prompting the government to announce a public inquiry into the events leading up to the killings. Starmer said the girls' deaths should mark a "line in the sand" and "a fundamental change in how Britain protects its citizens

and its children". Admitting that questions now needed to be answered, the prime minister said failure by the state in the case "frankly leaps off the page". 'Obsession with violence' His televised address came as media reported that Rudakubana had been in contact with the police and social services over the years.



Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Lauren Sanchez, founder of Amazon Jeff Bezos, Google CEO Sundar Pichai and Tesla CEO Elon Musk attend the inauguration day of US President-elect Donald Trump's second Presidential term in Washington

## Bangladesh probe reveals children held in secret jails

Dhaka(News Desk) Several children were among hundreds of people held in secret detention centres in Bangladesh, a commission investigating enforced disappearances carried out during the tenure of now-deposed premier Sheikh Hasina revealed on Tuesday.

At least half a dozen children spent months in black site jails with their mothers, the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances said in its preliminary report, saying babies were even used as leverage during interrogations, including denying them milk.

Dhaka has issued arrest warrants, including on charges of crimes against humanity, for 77-year-old Hasina, who fled to old ally India in August 2024 after she was toppled by a student-led revolution. Hasina's government was accused of widespread human rights abuses, including the extrajudicial killing of hundreds of political opponents and the unlawful abduction and disappearance of hundreds more.

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## WHO seeks full Gaza access during truce

GENEVA: (News Desk) The World Health Organisation said on Sunday it was ready to pour much-needed aid into Gaza during the truce, but that it would need "systematic access" across the territory to do so.

Much of the Gaza Strip's health infrastructure has been destroyed by the more than year-long conflict between Israel and Hamas before a ceasefire took hold on Sunday.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus welcomed the ceasefire, posting on social media that it would "bring great hope for millions of people whose lives have been ravaged by the conflict". But he added that "addressing the massive health needs and restoring the health system in Gaza will be a complex and challenging task, given the scale of destruction, operational complexity and constraints involved".

While the United Nations' health body was "ready to scale up the response" to address the territory's critical needs, it said in a statement that "it is critical that the security obstacles hindering operations are removed". "WHO will need conditions on the ground that allow systematic access to the population across Gaza, enabling the influx of aid via all possible borders and routes, and lifting restrictions on the entry of essential items," the agency said in a statement.

## Champions Trophy preparations on schedule, says PCB

LAHORE:(News Desk) The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) allayed fears about the readiness of the venues for this year's Champions Trophy as it welcomed media for a tour of stadiums in Lahore and Karachi on Monday. The eight-team 50-overs event will be the first global tournament to be held in Pakistan in 28 years. India, however, will play all their matches in Dubai due to the hostile relationship between the two countries. Stadiums in Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi are being upgraded and if the tournament is successful more could follow in a country deemed unsafe following a 2009 attack on touring Sri Lankan cricketers. "We are on schedule to complete the renovation and upgrade of the Gaddafi Stadium (in Lahore)," PCB spokesperson Sami Ul Hasan said. "The venue is expected to be handed over to us by the end of the month." "We have no doubt about Gaddafi Stadium's operational readiness to host the Champions Trophy match between Australia and England on Feb 22." The stadium's capacity has been increased to accommodate 35,000 fans and new hospitality areas have been built. Lahore and Karachi will host a tri-nation series, also involving New Zealand and South Africa, next month to prove their readiness for the Champions Trophy beginning on Feb 19.

## India series ideal preparation for Champions Trophy: McCullum

KOLKATA:(News Desk) England coach Brendon McCullum said Monday he hopes his side emerge from a host of limited overs matches against India in "good shape" for the upcoming Champions Trophy. The tourists, led by Jos Buttler, will face India in the first of five T20 internationals at Kolkata's Eden Gardens on Wednesday.

The India series marks England's first limited-overs tour under McCullum, previously in charge only of the Test side.

"I'm desperate for us to play a really watchable brand of cricket," McCullum told reporters. "With the talent we have, there's no reason we can't." The teams will play three ODIs, before they move into the eight-team ODI Champions Trophy starting February 19 in Pakistan and Dubai.

"We'll use the next few weeks to try and hit the ground running, I'm sure there will be some times where we don't quite get it right. But, hopefully, we will chisel away at that over the next few weeks, and we'll be in good shape come that Champions Trophy."

## Pakistan to host Asian Development Tour in Multan

LAHORE:(News Desk) The Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) will hold the Asian Development Tour (ADT) at Rumanza Golf and Country Club in Multan later this year.

According to a press release issued by the PGF on Monday, the federation which hosted the ADT in 2019, has now got its hosting rights for the second time. "The last ADT event of this kind was held in Lahore in October 2019 and now the return marks a successful milestone in the national golf journey. Thereby the PGF, with exemplary enthusiasm continues its commitment to fostering professional golf by hosting another ADT event in Multan. In this way it makes Pakistan as a prime venue for international golf tournaments," the PGF press release said.

"What represents a landmark development in our golfing history is that Pakistan will add two additional ADT events to the 2025 golf calendar. And these tournaments will be held under the titles CNS Open Golf Championship and the Pakistan Open Golf Championship. The Championships are scheduled to be held in September this year and will signify the country's growing footprint on the global map," the press release added. The two Pakhtoon sisters have taken Pakistan's golf scene by storm. Rimsha, who is 21 now, along with her younger-by-one-year sister, are currently rewriting the record books as they achieve scores never seen before in the country's women's golf circuit. In age group events, they even performed better than the boys in corresponding categories. Their remarkable story has seen their family shifting base so that the girls can enjoy better golf facilities. The sisters started playing at the practice range of the Islamabad Golf Club. But as the club was not taking new members then, the Ijaz sisters obtained membership of the Margalla Greens Golf Club in Islamabad.

## Afghan Taliban govt announces prisoner swap with US

Kabul(News Desk) The Taliban government said on Tuesday it had released two American citizens from prison in return for an Afghan fighter held in the United States, in a deal brokered by Qatar.

Discussions about the prisoner exchange were confirmed last year, but the swap was announced after outgoing US president Joe Biden handed over to Donald Trump, who was inaugurated on Monday. "An Afghan fighter Khan Mohammed imprisoned in America has been released in exchange for American citizens and returned to the country," the Afghan foreign ministry said in a statement. The ministry said Mohammed had been serving a life sentence in California after being arrested "almost two decades ago" in the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar. Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP two US nationals had been released, declining to provide any further details on

the exchange. The family of US citizen Ryan Corbett, who was detained by the Taliban in 2022, confirmed he was released and expressed "overwhelming gratitude" that he was coming home. "Today, our hearts are filled with overwhelming gratitude and praise to God for sustaining Ryan's life and bringing him back home after what has been the most challenging and uncertain 894 days of our lives," the family said on their website. They thanked both the

Biden and Trump administrations, as well as Qatar, for Corbett's freedom, and called for two other Americans still held in Afghanistan to be released. US media named William McKenty as the second released American detainee, noting little was known about what he was doing in Afghanistan and that his family had asked the US government for privacy in his case. The New York Times said two other Americans remain in detention in Afghanistan, former

airline mechanic George Glezmann and naturalised American Mahmood Habibi. In August 2024, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation said it was seeking information about the disappearance of Afghan-American businessman Habibi two years previously. Biden came under heavy criticism for the chaotic withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in 2021, more than a year after Trump presided over a deal with the Taliban insurgents to end US and Nato involve-

ment in the two-decade war. After Trump's election win in November, the Taliban government had said it hoped for a "new chapter" in ties with the United States. Taliban authorities have repeatedly said they want positive relations with every country since sweeping back to power in 2021. No state has officially recognised their government, with restrictions on women's rights a key sticking point for many countries, including the United States.