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## **January 10, 2019: National Current Affairs**

### **1. FATF satisfied with bid to curb money laundering, say officials**

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is reported to have expressed a degree of satisfaction over Pakistan's efforts and action plan to combat money laundering and terror financing under international obligations and indicated certain areas to do more before May this year to get out of the grey list.
- A high-level delegation led by Finance Secretary Arif Ahmed Khan is currently attending a three-day conference of the FATF in Sydney, Australia. The delegation comprises representatives of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), National Counter Terrorism Authority (Nacta), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Financial Monitoring Unit.
- 'For the first time, our delegation felt that FATF is appreciating our performance so far,' a senior official told Dawn on the basis of feedback received from Sydney on the conclusion of second day of the conference. He said most of the 10-point action plan envisaging 27 benchmarks had been reviewed by the Paris-based global watchdog on anti-money laundering and terror financing. One or two relatively insignificant areas were left for Thursday when the FATF will give its final opinion.

### **2. Pakistan passport listed among five worst**

- The Pakistani passport has been ranked among the five worst passports globally in a list of countries that enjoy visa-free or visa on arrival access.
- The country's passport has moved up two spots on the 2019 Henley Passport Index, but continues to remain the fifth-worst passport globally, offering its holders visa-free access to just 33 countries.
- Only Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq are lower on the list, according to the Henley Passport Index. India is in joint 79th position alongside Benin, Morocco, Mongolia and Armenia.

- The index ranks all the world`s passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa. It is updated in real-time as and when visa-policy changes come into effect.
- The Palestinian Territory is placed three places higher and Yemen is one place above Pakistan (with access to visa-free/visa-on-arrival to 37 countries).
- Pakistan stands at 102nd place with access to visa-free/visa-on-arrival to 33 countries. Sri Lanka is in 95th position and Bangladesh on 97th with access to visa-free/visa-on-arrival to 41 countries.
- The US and the UK continue to drop down the Henley Passport Index which is based on authoritative data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and now sit in joint sixth place, with access to 185 destinations.
- China`s steady ascent up the rankings is a clear demonstration of this.
- In 2017, the country was ranked at 85, with citizens able to access just 51 destinations. Going into 2019, China now sits in 69th place, with access to 74 countries around the world.

### **3. Pakistan, S. Arabia may ink \$10bn MoUs this month**

- Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are likely to sign memoranda of understanding for more than \$10 billion Saudi investment in Pakistan this month. Pakistan will also sign similar MoUs with China, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia over the next two months.
- This was said in the second meeting on ease of doing business (EoDB) presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan on January 9, 2019. The meeting was told that the MoU on investment framework with the UA E was expected next month.
- Saudi Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz would visit Pakistan next month and most of the MoUs were expected to be signed during his trip.
- Saudi Arabia was interested in Pakistan`s four sectors oil refinery, petrochemicals, renewable energy and mining.

### **4. First NCC meeting held without representation from Sindh**

- Official representation from the government of Sindh was absent at the first meeting of the National Curriculum Council (NCC) on January 9, 2019, held to develop a consensus on introducing a uniform system of education in the country.
- Neither the Sindh education minister nor the education secretary attended the meeting, and sources in the PPP have said the move to convene the NGC meeting is unconstitutional.
- Sans representation from Sindh, participants of the NGC agreed in principle to bring uniformity to the education sector.
- The meeting was organised by the Ministry of Federal Education and attended by stakeholders from the public, private and madressah systems, the higher education sector and the provinces.

## 5. Ayesha elected Senate body's head

- Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, who belongs to the opposition Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz, was on January 9, 2019 elected chairperson of the Senate Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges.
- The seat became vacant after Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party's Senator Sardar Azam Khan Musakhel passed away last month.
- The name of Ms Farooq was proposed by Senator Raja Muhammad Zafar-ul-Haq and Senator Khanzada Khan seconded the proposal.
- Other members of the committee who attended the meeting were Brig (r) John Kenneth Williams and Dilawar Khan.

## January 10, 2019: International Current Affairs

### 6. Pentagon making plans for partial Afghan pullout

- The US military is drafting plans to withdraw a few thousand troops from Afghanistan, The Washington Post reported on Wednesday, adding that the reduction will not affect major missions.
- The drafting follows instructions from US President Donald Trump to send him options for pulling out from a war, the longest in American history.
- The Post reported that the Pentagon has suggested recalling about half of what Trump was initially seeking. Even this would mark nearly a full rollback of the 3,900-troop increase the president authorised in August 2017.
- But at least six senior officials of the Trump administration told The Post that the president had ordered the Pentagon to prepare the withdrawal of up to half of the roughly 14,000 US troops deployed in Afghanistan. And that's why the US military was drafting a plan for a gradual pullout.
- The Post reported that while the president wanted large removals, the Pentagon has proposed recalling 'far fewer' than the 7,000 Trump had suggested.

### 7. Brazil to issue decree relaxing gun laws

- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro will issue a decree next week to make it easier for citizens to own a gun, Onyx Lorenzoni.
- Bolsonaro, who took office Jan. 1, is eager to issue the decree because it was one of his key campaign promises, said Lorenzoni. "A promise made is a promise kept," he said, following a meeting with the Brazilian president and his cabinet Critics of the proposed decree — which will allow any Brazilian of legal age with no criminal record to purchase a gun — say such changes in legislation should be debated in Congress rather than made by presidential decree.
- Some 61 percent of Brazilians oppose making it easier to own a gun, according to a poll released last

week by pollster Datafolha.

## **8. 'Egypt promises to permanently reopen Rafah crossing with Gaza'**

- A senior Islamic Hamas movement's official said on January 9, 2019 that Egypt has positively promised to permanently reopen Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip.
- The only key border crossing point for the Gaza Strip to the outside world had been closed for three days after the Palestinian Authority (PA) decided to pull out its employees from the crossing in protest against Hamas' crackdown on supporters of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Gaza.
- Bassem Naiem, member of Hamas political department, told Xinhua that the movement has received positive signs and promises from the Egyptian side to re-operate Rafah border crossing as soon as possible. "We don't expect that there is an agreement between Egypt and the PA to keep the crossing closed and we are looking forward that Egypt won't cooperate with the PA's decision to keep the crossing closed," he said.

## **9. Fighter jet vanishes from radar in eastern France**

- A French Mirage 2000-D fighter jet has disappeared from radar in a mountainous region of eastern France, prompting fears it may have crashed.
- French officials said the plane vanished from radar at around 11:00 local time on Wednesday. It had taken off from the Nancy-Ochey air base shortly beforehand with two crew on board. The crew members have not made contact and a search operation has been launched, officials say. The plane vanished in the mountains between the regions of Doubs and Jura, near the eastern border with Switzerland. Newspaper L'est Republican reports that debris was found in the area, including a parachute and map. It quoted one local resident who said they heard an explosion in the early morning - but believed it to be the sonic boom of an aircraft going faster than sound.

## **January 10, 2019: Sports Current Affairs**

### **10. Morkel retires from all forms of cricket**

- All-rounder Albie Morkel, brother of former South Africa fast bowler Morne, has brought his 19-year playing career to an end.
- The seam bowler and powerful batsman made his international bow in 2004, and went on to play more than 100 white-ball games for South Africa. Career highlights include an ODI high score of 97 against Zimbabwe, and appearing at three successive World T20s. His all-round exploits made him a sought-after

T20 player, and he was one of the most expensive buys in the inaugural IPL auction.

- Morkel was always renowned more as a white-ball player, but registered excellent first-class stats, averaging 44 with the bat and 30 with the ball. He played one Test, against Australia in 2009, and made 58 in his only innings, giving him the rare distinction of never being dismissed for less than 50 in a Test match.
- Morkel's last international appearance came in 2015, and he has since been captain of South African domestic side Titans in limited-overs cricket.

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