

US, Russia to re-establish high-level dialogue

Pentagon says after New START treaty expires

REUTERS

The US military said that Washington and Moscow yesterday agreed to reestablish high level military-to-military dialogue, following talks in Abu Dhabi, over four years after suspension.

"This channel of communication was suspended in the fall of 2021, just prior to the onset of the conflict," the United States European Command said in a statement, referring to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"The reestablishment follows meetings in the United Arab Emirates' capital between Gen Alex Grynkeiwich, Commander of US European Command, and senior Russian and Ukrainian military officials."



Residents queue to collect OSB boards to cover broken windows at their apartment building, damaged during a Russian overnight drone strike in Kyiv yesterday. Ukraine and Russia concluded a second day of US-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi, agreeing to a major prisoner swap — the first such exchange in five months, officials said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

FUNDING CRISIS UN human rights agency in 'survival mode': Turk

AFP, Geneva

UN human rights chief Volker Turk said yesterday his agency was "in survival mode" due to funding shortfalls, as he launched a \$400 million appeal to tackle global rights crises in 2026.

"Our reporting provides credible information on atrocities and human rights trends at a time when truth is being eroded by disinformation and censorship," Turk said.

"We are a lifeline for the abused, a megaphone for the silenced, and a steadfast ally to those who risk everything to defend the rights of others."

In 2025, the UN Human Rights Office's approved regular budget was \$246 million, but it received only \$191.5 million.

It also requested \$500 million in voluntary contributions, of which it received around \$260 million. "We are currently in survival mode, delivering under strain," said Turk.

Iran's Khamenei 'should be very worried'

Trump tells NBC News; Iran Guards seize two foreign-crewed tankers in Gulf

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump said Wednesday that Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei should be "very worried," as Washington builds up its military forces in the region.

"I would say he should be very worried, yeah, he should be," Trump said in an interview with US broadcaster NBC News. "As you know, they are negotiating with us."

Trump's comments came as a report by the Axios news outlet said that US-Iran talks planned for today were "collapsing" after US officials declined to move the location of the talks or shift the format.

Trump has sent a US aircraft carrier to the region and has not ruled out new military action to follow the US attacks on Iranian nuclear sites during Israel's June war against the Islamic republic.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said nuclear talks were now "scheduled" for today in Muscat. "I'm grateful to our Omani brothers for making all

necessary arrangements," he said on X. A White House official also confirmed to AFP that the meeting would happen in Oman today.

But there was no indication they had found common ground on the agenda. Iran has pushed to restrict the negotiations to discussing its long-running nuclear dispute with Western countries, reports Reuters.

» White House confirms US-Iran nuclear talks in Oman today

» Talks should include missile programme, other issues: Rubio

» Iran arrests foreign national, seizes weapons shipment

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio presented a different view on Wednesday. "If the Iranians want to meet, we're ready," Rubio told reporters. But he added that talks would have to include the range of

Iran's ballistic missiles, its support for armed proxy groups around the Middle East and its treatment of its own people, besides nuclear issues.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards have seized two oil tankers with their foreign crews in Gulf waters for "smuggling fuel," the Tasnim news agency reported yesterday. It was not immediately clear what flags the tankers were carrying nor the nationalities of the crew.

Iranian authorities have arrested a foreign national and seized a shipment of hand-to-hand weapons in the country's northwest, state media reported on Wednesday.

"A 14-tonne shipment of various types of professional weapons and items that can be used in riots was discovered and seized upon entering Iran," the official IRNA news agency said.

"A foreign national was detained," it added, without specifying the individual's nationality. The shipment allegedly included stun guns, batons, knives and weapon accessories.

Pak military concludes ops against separatists

216 militants killed

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan's military said yesterday that it had concluded a week-long security operation against separatists in Balochistan, killing 216 militants in targeted offensives across the troubled southwestern province.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and poorest province, was brought to a virtual standstill on Saturday when the separatist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) stormed schools, banks, markets and security installations across the region in one of their largest operations ever.

The military said 22 security personnel and 36 civilians were killed in the attacks. The BLA's coordinated strikes in over a dozen locations began after the military launched its "intelligence driven" Radd Al Fitna I (countering chaos) operation, which the army said began on January 29.

Xi calls for 'mutual respect' with Trump

Both leaders, in a phone call, discuss trade, Taiwan, Russia's war in Ukraine, Iran

AFP, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping discussed Iran and other thorny subjects Wednesday with both US counterpart Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin, hailing tighter ties with Moscow and calling for "mutual respect" with Washington.

Trump and Putin both played up their nations' good relations with China after their respective calls with Xi, highlighting the Asian giant's centrality on the global stage.

But there were stark differences in the readouts of the two calls, with Xi warning Trump to proceed with "caution" on the touchy issue of Taiwan, shortly after he and Putin hailed the strengthening of bilateral ties in the face of a "turbulent" global situation.

Trump said his conversation with Xi was "excellent". "The relationship with China, and my personal relationship with President Xi, is an extremely good one, and we both realize how important it is to keep it that way," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

The Republican said he and Xi had discussed trade, Taiwan, Russia's war in Ukraine and Iran, as well as a planned trip to China, which he said "I very much look forward to".



MANDELSON APPOINTMENT UK PM apologises to Epstein victims

REUTERS, London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer yesterday apologised to the victims of Jeffrey Epstein and said he was sorry for having appointed Peter Mandelson as US ambassador, who was a close friend of the late sex offender.

Starmer said he had not known about the strength of the relationship between Mandelson and Epstein when he appointed him to the role in December, 2024.

Starmer has previously said he will release the vetting advice he was given when he selected Mandelson for the Washington role, but yesterday he said he also needed to abide by a police request not to release anything that could prejudice an investigation.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said yesterday it did not want to waste time answering questions about unproven suggestions in Western media and by Poland's premier that Epstein may have been some sort of Russian intelligence asset.



Temporary police officers practice during training ahead of Nepal's parliamentary elections in Kathmandu yesterday. Former chief justice Sushila Karki is serving as interim prime minister until the vote on March 5. PHOTO: AFP

'Softer touch' needed on immigration: Trump

US to remove 700 agents from Minnesota

AFP, Minneapolis

US President Donald Trump suggested Wednesday that a "softer touch" may be needed on immigration, as his administration said 700 federal officers would be pulled from Minnesota but that mass deportations would not stop.

The fatal shootings of two protesters by federal officers in Minneapolis last month sparked widespread outrage in the United States and calls for an end to immigration raids in the Midwestern

city, but Trump's administration has been reluctant to shift course.

"I learned that maybe we could use a little bit of a softer touch. But you still have to be tough," Trump said in an interview with NBC's "Nightly News" when asked what he had learned from Minneapolis.

Trump's border chief Tom Homan had earlier announced that 700 federal officers would be withdrawn from Minnesota, but said the contentious deployment would continue.

OIL SHORTAGE UN warns of humanitarian 'collapse' in Cuba

AFP, United Nations

UN chief Antonio Guterres warned that Cuba risks humanitarian "collapse" if it is denied oil, his spokesman said Wednesday as the United States threatens to cut energy supplies as part of a pressure campaign.

"The secretary-general is extremely concerned about the humanitarian situation in Cuba, which will worsen, if not collapse, if its oil needs go unmet," spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Communist Cuba has been under a US trade embargo for decades and relied on oil supplies from Venezuela until the American military ousted its socialist leader Nicolas Maduro last month.

President Donald Trump has since claimed he controls the country's oil and threatened to cut off Cuba, as well as impose tariffs on any other nation stepping in to help Havana.

He has said he wants to "make a deal" with Cuba's leadership. Trump said Monday that Mexico would stop sending oil to Cuba — which he described as "a failed nation."

Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat Administration Section

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1225
www.parliament.gov.bd

Invitation for Tender

1.	Ministry/Division	Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat.
2.	Procuring entity name	Senior Assistant Secretary, Administration Section, Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat.
3.	Invitation for	Supply of medical equipments.
4.	Invitation Ref. No.	11.00.0000.000.604.07.0139.25/73 Date: 05.02.2026
5.	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National)
6.	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget.
7.	Tender package name and short description of goods	Package 14 (Lot-4): Hematology Analyzer, Laboratory Centrifuge, Dental Unit, IRR, Micro Wave Diathermy, Tens+Ultra Sount, Slit Lamp, Auto Refractometer & Ophthalmic Unit etc.
8.	Tender selling place	Reception Room (Inside Tunnel), Parliament Secretariat.
9.	Tender selling date	10/02/2026-25/02/2026 (Time: 10:00am-4:00pm).
10.	Tender submission date, time and place	Submission date: 26/02/2026, Time: 9:30am-12:00pm, Reception Room (Inside Tunnel), Parliament Secretariat.
11.	Tender opening date, time and place	Opening date: 26/02/2026, Opening Time: 12:05pm, Deputy Secretary (Admin-1), Level-7, Block-East, Room No. 7, (Lift-13, 14, 15 & 16).
12.	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	Reputed Firms/Suppliers having valid trade license (2025-2026), income tax clearance certificate (2025-2026) (for company 2024-2025), BIN, experience certificate & original Manufacturer Authorization/Distributor Authorization/Reseller Authorization. (b) Detailed terms & conditions will be mentioned in tender schedule.
13.	Price of tender schedule	Price of schedule Tk. 5000/- (Five thousand) only (As mentioned in the schedule).
14.	Tender security & tender validity period	2,00,000/- (Two lac). Validity period: 120 days.
15.	Name, designation, address & phone number of official inviting tender	Md. Mohidul Haque, Senior Assistant Secretary (Administration), Block: North-East, Ground Floor, Room No. 131, Parliament Secretariat (Phone: 55029007).
16.	Special instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings. Lot based lowest bidders will be selected.

GD-266

Md. Mohidul Haque
05.02.26
Md. Mohidul Haque
Senior Assistant Secretary
Phone: 55029007