

1301



Edward of Caernarfon (later Edward II) becomes the first English Prince of Wales

1842

Battle of Debre Tabor: Ras Ali Alula, Regent of the Emperor of Ethiopia, defeats warlord Wube Haile Maryam of Semien

1856

Colonial Tasmanian Parliament passes the first piece of legislation, the Electoral Act of 1856, anywhere in the world providing for elections by way of a secret ballot

1992

The Maastricht Treaty is signed by 12 countries from the European Community (EC) to create the European Union (EU)

# Deadly blast hits Islamabad

Suicide blast at Islamabad mosque kills at least 31, wounds over 130



Security personnel stand guard outside a mosque following an explosion

group or other militants.

The attack was the deadliest in the Pakistani capital since September 2008, when 60 people were killed in a suicide truck bomb blast that destroyed part of the five-star Marriott hotel.

## Bodies, bloodied clothing debris

AFP journalists at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences hospital saw several people including children being carried in on stretchers or by their arms and legs.

Medics and bystanders helped unload victims with blood-soaked clothes from the back of ambulances and vehicles. At

least one casualty arrived in the boot of a car.

Friends and relatives of the wounded wept and screamed as victims -- dead or alive -- arrived at the hospital's heavily guarded emergency ward.

Another team of AFP journalists saw armed security forces outside the mosque, where pools of blood were visible on the ground.

Yellow crime scene tape surrounded an investigation area, with shoes, clothing and broken glass scattered around the site.

Videos shared on social media, which AFP was not able to verify immediately, showed several bodies lying near the mosque's

front gate, with people and debris also strewn across the red-carpeted prayer hall.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar branded the attack "a heinous crime against humanity and a blatant violation of Islamic principles".

"Pakistan stands united against terrorism in all its forms," he said in a post on X.

## Growing insurgencies

The attack comes as Pakistan's security forces battle intensifying insurgencies in southern and northern provinces that border Afghanistan.

Islamabad has said separatist

armed groups in southern Balochistan, and the Pakistani Taliban and other Islamist militants in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, near Islamabad, have used Afghan territory as a safe haven from which to launch attacks.

Afghanistan's Taliban government has repeatedly denied Pakistan's accusations.

Bilateral relations have plummeted, with forces from both sides regularly clashing along the border.

The last major attack in Islamabad took place in November when a suicide blast outside a court killed 12 people and wounded dozens, the first such incident to hit the capital in nearly three years.

In Balochistan, attacks claimed by separatist insurgents last week killed 36 civilians and 22 security personnel, prompting a wave of counter-operations in which authorities said security forces killed almost 200 militants.

The world is making progress to #EndFGM - yet falling behind on reaching the 2030 Global Goal. This International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, let's recommit to scale-up efforts proven to work. Because every girl and woman deserves a life free from FGM.

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KNOW WHAT

The bombing is Islamabad's deadliest attack since 2008, when a truck blast destroyed part of the Marriott Hotel and killed around 60 people

02



Vice President Vance and Italian Prime Minister @GiorgiaMeloni met this morning prior to the Olympic Opening Ceremony this evening in Milan

@VP

03



Russia will only come to the table with genuine intent if it is pressured to do so. So we are tabling our 20th package of sanctions against Russia covering energy, financial services and trade

@vonderleyen

04



Progress on Syria humanitarian access and efficiency last year meant we reached 3.5 million people with vital support every month, despite deep funding cuts. We need to sustain this life-saving aid while we help communities move from relief to recovery. #87MillionLives

@UNReliefChief

## Trump tried to name airport, rail station after himself: US media

AFP | Washington



Travelers sit on the floor inside Penn Station waiting for their trains

US President Donald Trump offered to unfreeze federal infrastructure funding if the top Senate Democrat would help rename a major airport and train station after him, US media reported Thursday.

Trump, a real estate mogul who plastered his name on buildings around the world, has sought to leave his mark on the country in an unprecedented image and building campaign.

In December, Trump's hand-picked board of the Kennedy Center, an arts complex and memorial to late president John F. Kennedy, voted to rename itself the "Trump-Kennedy Center."

Meanwhile he has pushed for the construction of an "Independence Arch" similar to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and launched the construction of a new White House ballroom, tearing down the storied building's East Wing to make way.

But New York's Penn Station and Washington's Dulles International Airport are also in Trump's sights, CNN and NBC

## Trump posts election conspiracy video with Obamas depicted as monkeys

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump on Thursday posted an election conspiracy video that depicted former president Barack Obama and his wife Michelle as monkeys, drawing condemnation from prominent Democrats.

Near the end of a one-minute-long video posted on Trump's Truth Social platform, the Obamas are shown with their faces on the bodies of monkeys for about one second.

The song "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" plays in the background when the Obamas appear.

The video repeats false allegations that ballot-counting company Dominion Voting Systems helped steal the 2020 election from Trump.

As of early yesterday morning, the video had been liked several thousand times on the president's social media platform.

The office of California Governor Gavin Newsom, a potential 2028 Democratic presidential candidate and a prominent Trump critic, slammed the post.



Donald Trump speaks with Barack Obama as Melania Trump looks on (file photo)

"Disgusting behavior by the President. Every single Republican must denounce this. Now," Newsom's press office account posted on X.

Ben Rhodes, a former top national security advisor and close confidant to Barack Obama, also condemned the imagery.

"Let it haunt Trump and his racist followers that future Americans will embrace the Obamas as beloved figures while studying him as a stain on our history," he wrote on X.

Obama is the only Black president in American history and backed Trump's opponent Kamala Harris on the campaign trail in the 2024 presidential election.

In the first year of his second term in the White House, Trump ramped up his use of hyper-realistic but fabricated visuals on Truth Social and other platforms, often glorifying himself while lampooning his critics.

He has used the provocative posts to rally his conservative base.

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)