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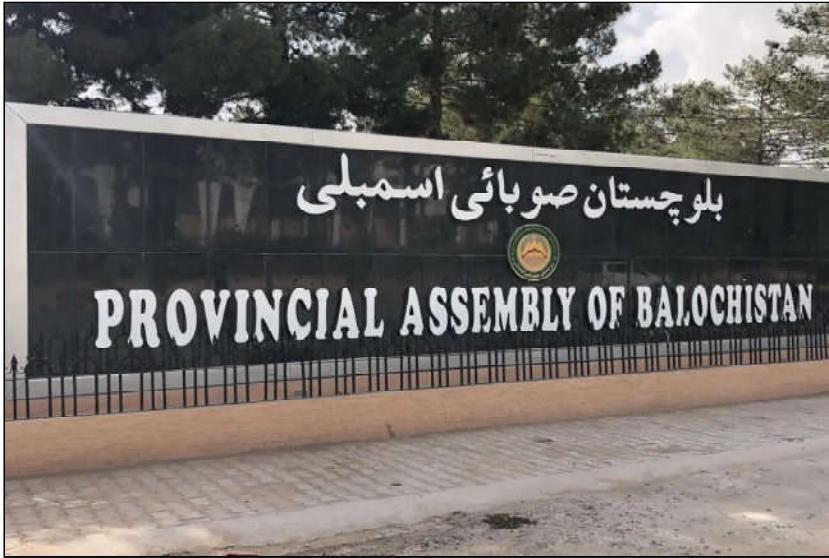
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QUETTA VOICE



Balochistan Assembly Denounces Terrorism, Calls for Unity Against Violence

Staff Reporter:

Quetta: The Balochistan Assembly on Tuesday strongly condemned the acts of terrorism and violence witnessed on January 31 across Quetta and other districts of the province, describing the attacks as a direct assault on innocent civilians and security personnel. The House unanimously passed a resolution condemning terrorism in all its forms and reaffirming support for the state's efforts to restore peace and stability in Balochistan.

Lawmakers from both government and opposition benches

participated in the discussion, agreeing that violence against unarmed citizens could not be defended under any political or social justification.

They also stressed the need for political unity and institutional coordination to counter militancy and protect the lives of ordinary people.

Addressing the House at the conclusion of the debate, Chief Minister Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that terrorism could not be legitimised by claims of deprivation or underdevelopment.

He emphasised that the Constitution of Pakistan obligated citizens to remain loyal to

the state and made it clear that armed rebellion was unacceptable in any form.

"Dialogue is possible, but it cannot be forced through violence. Any engagement must remain within constitutional limits," he said.

The chief minister condemned the killing of labourers and civilians in Karachi and other affected areas, questioning how such acts could be linked to political grievances.

Referring to ongoing development efforts, he noted that thousands of previously non-functional schools had been restored across the province, in-

cluding in Gwadar, arguing that progress was underway despite security challenges. He reiterated that terrorism must be condemned and rejected without ambiguity.

Opposition member Zahid Ali Reki urged the government to address economic and political concerns through negotiations. He pointed to prolonged border closures with Iran and Afghanistan and demanded that the government be held accountable for its actions.

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Non-bailable warrants issued for Aleema Khan, Sohail Afridi

NEWS DESK:

Courts in twin cities on Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants in two separate cases involving former senator Saima Khan, sister of party founder Imran Khan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi.

The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Rawalpindi issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Ms Khan in connection with the November 26 PTI protest case registered against her and others.

ATC Judge Amjad Ali Shah ruled that there was no legal justification for Ms Khan's absence from court proceedings, noting that she neither appeared nor sought an exemption.

Her counsel, Faisal Malik, also failed to attend the hearing, prompting the court to proceed with the case in their absence.

The court accepted the request of Special Prosecutor Zaheer Shah to include NCCI official Salman Niaz as a prosecution witness and adjourned the hearing until Wednesday (today).

Earlier, the same court rejected Ms Khan's petition seeking removal of terrorism charges, dismissing her application to the court's jurisdiction under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA).

Judge Amjad Ali Shah ruled that the case fell within the scope of the ATA, rejecting the defence's argument that protest-related charges should not be tried in an anti-terrorism court.

Malik had earlier been delaying a message from her brother Imran Khan from Adiala jail, allegedly calling for nationwide protests, which prosecutors claim led to violence.

Special Prosecutor Zaheer Shah argued that the Faizabad protest turned violent, resulting in the killing of protesters and gunfire striking a police van – actions that, he said, met the legal threshold for terrorism.

The prosecution also accused the defence of employing delaying tactics, including seeking adjournments due to a lawyer's strike.

During earlier proceedings, the court seized the unfreezing of bank accounts belonging to the Shaikat Khanum Memorial Trust and Namal University, clarifying that prosecutors had never requested their freezing.

The November 26 protests saw PTI supporters march towards Islamabad despite government restrictions, clashing with security personnel in the Red Zone.

Following the unrest, multiple cases were registered under the PPC and Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act at Taxila, Sadiqabad, and Naseerabad police stations.

Proceedings in the Sadiqabad case continue at the ATC Rawalpindi.

KP CM's warrant Meanwhile, an Islamabad court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi in a case pertaining to misleading statements against state institutions and damage to their properties.

The case was registered by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Authority (NCCIA) under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), 2016, following allegations that the chief minister made false and defamatory claims against state institutions.

During the hearing, Senior Civil Judge Sajid Ali Khan noted that CM Afridi had once again failed to appear despite being summoned multiple times. Subsequently, the judge ordered his immediate arrest and directed law enforcement authorities to ensure his production before the court. The hearing was then adjourned till Feb 21.

Akhtar Mengal Officially Steps Down from National Assembly

Muhammad Zeeshan:

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker of the National Assembly has formally accepted the resignation of senior politician and Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Sardar Akhtar Mengal, bringing an official end to his term in the lower house of parliament.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal, who was elected from the Khuzdar constituency, had submitted his resignation from the National Assembly in 2024.

After completion of procedural requirements, the resignation has now been approved, parliamentary sources confirmed. Following the acceptance, relevant authorities have been notified, and the Khuzdar National Assembly seat has been declared vacant.

The development paves the way for further steps in line with electoral laws and parliamentary rules. Akhtar Mengal, a prominent political figure from Balochistan, has remained an influential voice on provincial rights and national political matters. His departure from the National Assembly is being viewed as a significant moment in the country's parliamentary landscape, particu-



larly in the context of the federal level. Political observers believe

the move could have implications for future political alignments and electoral dynamics in the province.

10 dead after shooter opens fire at high school in Canada

NEWS DESK: Ten people including the shooter are dead after an assailant opened fire at a high school in western Canada on Tuesday in one of the country's deadliest mass-shootings events in recent history.

The outburst brought to Canada the type of mass shooting more common in the neighboring United States and carried out by a shooter described as female, police said. Six people were found dead inside a high school in the town of Tumbler Ridge, in northwestern British Columbia. Two more people were found dead at a residence believed to be connected to the incident, and another person died on the way to hospital, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said.

At least two other people were hospitalized with serious or life-threatening injuries, and as many as 25 people were being treated for non-life-threatening injuries, police said.

A suspected shooter was also found



dead from what appears to be a self-inflicted wound, and police said they did not believe there were any more suspects or an ongoing threat to the public.

"It's hard to know

what to say on a night like this night. It's hard to imagine what happens in other places, and not close to home," British Columbia Premier David Eby told reporters. Police released

almost no details about the shooter except to say he was described as a female, "potentially an unusual development as mass shootings in North America are almost al-

ways carried out by men," police said. The suspect was described as "female in a dress with brown hair."

Police Superinten-

dent Ken Floyd later confirmed at a news conference that the suspect described in the alert was the same person found dead in the school. Police did not say how many of the victims may have been

in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in northern British Columbia, approximately 1,155 km (717 miles) northeast of Vancouver.

Images of the town show a snow-covered landscape filled with pine trees.

Tumbler Ridge Secondary School has 160 students in grades seven through 12, according to its website.

The school was closed for the rest of the week and counselling will be made available to those affected, school officials said.

Officials said the town's small police force was on the scene within two minutes of receiving a call, and that victims are still being assessed hours after the incident.

Darian's mother, Shelley Quist, also intervened, saying she embraced her son when they finally connected after the site was declared safe.

"He's not going to be out of my sight for while," she said. The alert was the same person found dead in the school. Police did not say how many of the victims may have been

"This is a small, tight-knit community with a small RCMP detachment as well, who responded quickly and no doubt saving lives today," Nina Krieger, British Columbia's public safety minister, told reporters.

Warming climate threatens Greenland



NEWSDESK: Standing in his boat with binoculars in hand, hunter Malik Kleist scans the horizon for seals. But this February, the sea ice in southwestern Greenland has yet to freeze, threatening traditional livelihoods like his.

"Normally the seals are on the ice or in the more calm waters. But today we had to sail all the way into the fjords to find them," the 37-year-old tells AFP.

The Arctic region is on the frontline of global warming, heating up four times faster than the rest of the planet since 1979, according to a 2022 study in scientific journal *Nature*, causing the sea ice to retreat.

An investigation published this week revealed the web of deception into which four men were pulled, including a ground fell, forced to sign contracts with the Russian army and swiftly sent to the front lines in Ukraine.

"It's unacceptable for them to be part of this conflict," foreign minister Kori Sing Oei said.

The four, three of whom returned wounded, were given contracts with the Russian army. One had expected to work as a salesman, two as security guards and the fourth as a high-level athlete.

"These individuals are used as cannon fodder on the war front," Sing Oei said. "No Kenyan would voluntarily enter into that kind of engagement."

gating into the fjords for several hours to find them.

Traditionally, hunters' boats would head straight out to sea, slowly pushing through the ice and creating holes that attract seals coming up for air.

But without any

ice, "it's too windy and the waves are too big," Kleist says.

Last year was ex-

ceptionally warm in

the vast autonomous

territory, with several

temperature records

broken, according to

the Danish Meteorolog-

ical Institute (DMI).

US, Azerbaijan sign strategic partnership



NEWS DESK: US Vice President JD Vance on Tuesday visited Azerbaijan, arriving from Armenia as part of a regional trip aimed at concluding a US-backed peace process between the two countries.

The visit follows US President Donald Trump's one-year of a peace agreement between the historical rivals Baku and Yerevan, which have fought two wars over the Karabakh region.

Trump sparked controversy by delisting him and his wife had laid a wreath "at the Armenian Genocide memorial to honor the victims of the 1915 Armenian genocide," offices said the post was published in error by staff not of the delegation.

In Baku, Vance met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and the two signed a strategic partnership agreement between the United States and Azerbaijan.

Vance said the agreement "will formalise our partnership and make it clear that the United States-Azerbaijan relationship is one that will stick." The United States will "ship some new tanks to Azerbaijan to help with territorial waters protection," he told Aliyev as they made statements to the press.

Aliyev said relations between the two countries "are entering

a new phase," including in defence cooperation, "through equipment sales."

"We will continue to cooperate in the field of security and will work together on counterterrorism operations."

On Monday, Vance held talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Nikol Pashinian in Yerevan. The visit is expected to advance a flagship transport communications project integrating a new east-west corridor between the two countries.

The visit is also expected to help secure the release of Armenian detainees in Azerbaijani jails.

Karabakh refugees held a rally in Yerevan with the two leaders.

and Prosperity (TRIPP).

The TRIPP is a proposed east-and-north corridor designed to link Azerbaijan with its Nakchivan exclave, cut off from the mainland by Armenian territory, while integrating the region into the east-west trade route connecting Central Asia and the Caspian basin to Europe. Washington has presented the project as a confidence-building measure following decades of conflict between the two countries.

Aliyev said the TRIPP "will make another contribution to peace, development and prosperity in the region." Azerbaijan sees the opening of regional communications as the main precondition for signing a comprehensive peace treaty with its rival.

Ramaphosa, Putin discuss return of South African fighters from Ukraine

NEWS DESK: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa held talks on Tuesday with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on returning South African lured into fighting for Russian forces in Ukraine, his office said.

The South African government said in November it had received "distress calls" from 17 men who were reportedly in the epicentre of the fighting in Ukraine's Donbas region after being tricked into joining mercenary forces.

President Ramaphosa pledged their support to the process of returning South African fighters alongside

travelling to Russia under false pretences of well-paying jobs.

In December, Kenyan authorities said around 200 citizens had been sent to fight in Ukraine, of whom 23 had since been repatriated, it said.

This is an underestimate, said the four Kenyan recruits. The daughter of South African former president Nelson Mandela is among several accused of recruiting men to join Russian mercenaries in the Ukraine war.

Pretoria warned its citizens last year not to fall for such recruitment scams, after multiple social media influencers shared campaigns promising young women jobs

in a Russia-based programme that has been accused of abuses.

"Cannon fodder," Kenya's

Kenya on Tuesday condemned it as "unconscionable" recruiters hunting Kenyans to Russia with promises of lucrative jobs, only to send them to Ukraine's front lines as "cannon fodder."

In recent weeks, mounting reports indicate that Kenyans deceived into travelling for high-paying work in Russia are dying on the battlefield, with others sustaining serious wounds.

An investigation published this week revealed the web of deception into which four men were pulled, including a ground fell, forced to sign contracts with the Russian army and swiftly sent to the front lines in Ukraine.

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Chinese captain pleads not guilty to damage charge in Baltic Sea cable case

NEWS DESK: The Chinese captain of a Hong Kong-registered cargo ship pleaded not guilty on Wednesday to a charge of criminal damage, following allegations that his vessel damaged an underwater natural gas pipeline and submarine telecommunication cables between Finland and Estonia on October 8, 2023, according to a Hong Kong charge sheet reviewed by Reuters.

The charge sheet stated that Wan had been "reckless" and "without the necessary damage to the property belonging to another." Finnish investigators said the container vessel had dragged its anchor to sever the Balticconnector gas pipeline. Finnish police later retrieved a broken anchor from the seabed

near the pipeline, and technical examinations showed it belonged to the container vessel that was missing a front anchor.

A lawyer for Wan, earlier called 18 prosecution witnesses called to testify in the case that includes one charge of criminal damage, as well as two

charges of failing to ensure the ship complied with safety regulations under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea.

Wan also pleaded not guilty to two other charges. These witnesses include crew members, Hong Kong officials, and experts in maritime matters, Chung added.

The Baltic Sea region has been the site of a series of outages involving power cables, gas pipelines and telecom lines since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

NATO has boosted its military presence with frigates, aircraft and naval drones.

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ECC agrees to sell old PASSCO wheat stock

NEWS DESK: The government decided to clear the liabilities of banks and employees of the Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (Passco) by disposing of the old stored wheat through competitive bidding.

Passco has been holding stocks of imported wheat since 2022 and paying billions of rupees in interest costs.

During discussions in a recent meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), the Ministry of National Food Security & Research explained the background of the case and the factors behind the decision to go for competitive bidding for the sale of wheat stock.

These factors included prevailing prices of local wheat in the market, probable escalation in prices, quality and ageing of imported wheat, cost of storage, reluctance of buyers and the Passco winding-up process.

It was highlighted that the date for the award of a contract would be February 15, with the lifting of wheat by March 15, once the decision was finalised. The food security ministry and Passco held a series of meetings and consultations to determine the reserve price



while taking into account all the relevant factors.

The ECC was told that wheat prices had risen by Rs100 per 40 kg in recent days, and the increase may be added to the reserve price for local wheat. Accordingly, they recommended the price of

Rs4,400 per 40 kg for imported wheat and Rs4,100 for imported wheat.

The committee inquired about the disposal plan for the remaining stock, responding by explaining that proceeds of the sale should be used to cover the employee severance package and pay off bank li-

abilities at that time and the potential of the new crop.

The ECC agreed to review the situation by the end of February. It recommended that proceeds of the sale should be used to cover the employee severance package and pay off bank li-

abilities. The ECC considered the summary submitted by the Ministry of National Food Security regarding the disposal of 500,000 metric tons of Passco wheat stock through competitive bidding and ap-

proved the proposal with the stipulation that the reserve price per 40 kg of local

wheat shall be Rs4,450 and the price of imported wheat shall be Rs4,070 per 40 kg to fetch maximum price.

The ECC directed the ministry to share

the proposed financial burden on account of storage, handling and handling costs, compounded by the slow lifting of allocated wheat by government agencies. Owing to very low demand from agencies, the ministry had recommended the disposal of wheat stock through open competitive bidding as a viable option in its 15th meeting held on August 11, 2025.

Keeping in view the prevailing market conditions, the ECC was apprised by the Ministry of National Food Security that the aging imported stock and the need to avoid market distortion, the Passco board of directors, in its 16th meeting held on December 8, 2025, approved the disposal of 500,000 metric tons of wheat (imported

and local) on a First-In-First-Out (FIFO) basis through open competitive bidding.

Passco revealed that in April 2025, it was holding 2,489,000 metric tons of wheat. Of this stock, Azad Jammu & Kashmir had been allocated 300,000 metric tons and Gilgit-Baltistan 16,000 metric tons, leaving 1,988 million tons for disposal.

At present, Passco is bearing a heavy financial burden on account of storage, handling and handling costs, compounded by the slow lifting of allocated wheat by government agencies. Owing to very low demand from agencies, the ministry had recommended the disposal of wheat stock through open competitive bidding as a viable option in its 15th meeting held on August 11, 2025.

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and local) on a First-In-First-Out (FIFO) basis through open competitive bidding.

The food ministry said that on January 2, 2026, Passco management proposed a reserve price of Rs3,400 per 500 kg for local wheat and Rs3,300 for imported wheat. These prices were based on prevailing market rates at that time.

Local wheat prices rose in the local market from January 8 to 15. Consequently, the ministry constituted a committee for fresh determination of reserve prices.

The committee met on January 16 and after detailed deliberations and consideration of all relevant factors, it recommended indicative reserve prices ranging from Rs3,180 to Rs2,290 per 40 kg for local wheat and from Rs3,900 to Rs4,070 for imported wheat (inclusive of taxes).

Based on these prices, the estimated financial loss from the disposal of 500,000 tons ranged from Rs13 billion to Rs22.11 billion. Separately, the carrying cost of the proposed maximum price was estimated at over Rs1 billion.

Auto sales soar to 43-month high

NEWS DESK: Sales of cars, pickups, vans and sport utility vehicles clocked in at 23,055 units in January, marking a 43-month high, reflecting a 36 per cent year-on-year (YoY) and 74pc month-on-month (MoM) increase.

Cumulative sales rose 43pc to 111,377 units in 7MFY26, up from 77,686 units in 7MFY25. Mysha Sohail of Topline Securities said the MoM surge was largely driven by new year registrations, as customers typically delay deliveries to secure January registrations for better resale value.

The strong YoY growth was supported by new market entrants, lower interest rates, easing inflation, and improving macroeconomic sentiment, she said.

Saggar Engineering Works Ltd (SEWL) reported all-time high sales of 2,004 units in January, up 72pc MoM. SEWL sales in 7MFY26 were 9,214, up by 49pc YoY.

Tractor demand shrinks, truck and bus surge to record high. Indus Motor Company (IMC) and Honda Auto Cars Ltd (HACL) recorded 43-month high sales in January, up 36pc MoM.

Atlas Honda Ltd (AHL), the maker of the popular CD70 truck, yet again recorded all-time high monthly volume.

This took cumulative 7MFY26 sales to 1.1m units, up 32pc YoY.

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State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) chief sees growth up to 4.75% despite IMF downgrade

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's central bank chief expects the economy to grow as much as 4.75% this fiscal year, pushing back against a recent downgrade by the International Monetary Fund.

Governor Jameel Ahmad, in written responses to Reuters, reiterated the divergence in growth rates between the central bank and the IMF, which has caused significant volatility in the economy.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) raised its FY26 growth forecast to 3.75-4.75%, 0.5% points higher than its previous projection.

"All these sources and indicators, along with FY26-Q1 data, point to a broad-based recovery in all three sectors of the economy," he said.

The governor said differences in projections were not unusual and reflected timing issues, including the central bank's incorporation of flood-related assessments in its latest outlook.

He added that the central bank believed that

agricultural activity had remained resilient despite floods, and it is even performing better than its targets.

Financial conditions had eased significantly, leading to a 1.15-mbps-point cut in the policy rate since June 2024, and that the full impact was still feeding through. This, he said, was supporting growth while preserving stability and the sustainability of the

central bank's key

benchmark rate at 10.5%, defying expectations for a cut.

The divergence with the IMF comes at a difficult time for Pakistan, which is emerging from a balance-of-payments crisis under a \$7 billion IMF programme.

Export drag, remittance cushion and previous growth spurts have often led to currency pressure, making it difficult for the central bank to hold its

stability.

He said the current

account deficit should stay within 0-1% of GDP, as strong remittances offset the wider trade gap and lift reserves above the July-November point to strength.

Additionally, the government decided to tap global capital markets for any debt issuance that would be on the upside of current assessment," he said.

Pakistan plans to issue panda bonds, a yuan-denominated debt sold in China's capital market around the upcoming Lunar New Year, as part of efforts to diversify external financing and broaden its investor base.

He said the central bank has been consistently active in the interbank market to strengthen foreign exchange buffers, with data published regularly.

He said that while economic stability has improved, structural reforms remain key to sustaining stronger growth and improving productivity.

Oil gains on US-Iran tensions, better India demand

NEWS DESK: Oil prices gained on Tuesday, buoyed by easing risks as US-Iran talks remained tenuous, while signs of an easing surplus spurred by better demand support from India also added strength.

Brent crude oil futures were up 57 cents, or 0.83 per cent, at \$69.37 a barrel by 07:11 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate oil rose 56 cents, or 0.84 per cent, to \$64.52. "Oil retains a bullish tail-risk bid as US-Iran talks continue but remain fragile, keeping the Strait of Hormuz risk premium elevated and easing sanctions pressure," said a market analyst.

Mr Bhatti said the industrial tariff would now come down to around 11.50 cents per unit from around 13, although it was still higher than regional competitors, but involved no cross-subsidy.

Separately, the financial advisory firm Open Capital Management said that the average power tariff for protected consumers in the first 100-unit slab, increasing by 76pc or Rs8 per unit due to the fixed charge.

Diplomats from Iran and the US held talks in Oman last week in an effort to revive diplomacy, said in a note.

Trump said on

Tuesday he was considering sending a second aircraft carrier to the Middle East even as

Biden sent a trade pact with Washington in turn stepping up purchases of oil from the Middle East and West Africa.

Also supporting oil prices were signs of easing surplus as India absorbed some surplus barrels seen in the last quarter of 2025. "With mainstream oil on water returning to normal levels and demand for it expected to remain strong in the near term," Vortexa market analyst Xavier Tang said.

Indian refiners are avoiding Russian oil purchases to help New Delhi set a trade pact with Washington in turn stepping up purchases of oil from the Middle East and West Africa.

Traders are also waiting for weekly US oil inventories data from the Energy Information Administration on Wednesday. Analysts polled by Reuters estimated on average that crude inventories rose by about 1.5 million barrels last week to February 6, while distillate and gasoline inventories likely fell by about 1.3 million barrels and 400,000 barrels, respectively.



NEWS DESK: The government on Tuesday reluctantly conceded that the industrial sector had, for the first time, been fully freed from cross-subsidies to compete globally, as it disclosed a higher-than-previously known financial impact of the newly imposed fixed charges on residential electricity consumers.

At an almost one-way hearing on Rs4.04 per unit average cut in power rates for industrial consumers, power division and the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) were all praise for each other for a long overdue "great move" and "fine step in the right direction".

No representative appeared on behalf of more than 28.5 million residential consumers who will be subject to the fixed charges.

The industrial division team, led by Additional Secretary Mehfuzz Bhatti and comprising the chief financial officer of Power Planning and Management and a management

minimised their incentive to move away from the national grid, while the remaining Rs10.1bn would be used to ease the industrial tariff, he said.

Mr Bhatti said the industrial tariff would now come down to around 11.50 cents per unit from around 13, although it was still higher than regional competitors, but involved no cross-subsidy.

Separately, the financial advisory firm Open Capital Management said that the average power tariff for protected consumers in the first 100-unit slab, increasing by 76pc or Rs8 per unit due to the fixed charge.

Diplomats from Iran and the US held talks in Oman last week in an effort to revive diplomacy, said in a note.

Trump said on

Tuesday he was considering sending a second aircraft carrier to the Middle East even as

Biden sent a trade pact with Washington in turn stepping up purchases of oil from the Middle East and West Africa.

Also supporting oil prices were signs of easing surplus as India absorbed some surplus barrels seen in the last quarter of 2025. "With mainstream oil on water returning to normal levels and demand for it expected to remain strong in the near term," Vortexa market analyst Xavier Tang said.

Indian refiners are avoiding Russian oil purchases to help New Delhi set a trade pact with Washington in turn stepping up purchases of oil from the Middle East and West Africa.



Terrorist attack on police post in Bannu foiled; 3 attackers killed, 9 injured

NEWS DESK: A major terrorist attack on a police post in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district was foiled on Wednesday, with security forces killing three attackers and injuring nine others.

The terrorist attack was launched on a Khonha Khel Police Post in the district's Wazir sub-division with heavy weapons, intending to seize control of the facility. A large number of attackers attempted to storm the police post, however, police personnel deployed at the installation were alert and responded to the threat promptly.

The effective response by the law enforcers forced militants to retreat.

On the directives

of RPO Bannu Sajid Khan and DPO Bannu Yasir Arifid, additional police contingents, along with Quick Response Force (QRF) and Rapid Response

Local PML-N leader's residence attacked in Bajaur

NEWS DESK: unidentified assailants attacked the house of a local PML-N leader, Naib wazir-e-dan, Waheeduddin Khan, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district late on Tuesday night, damaging the main gate, police and party sources said.

The bombing occurred at around 1:30am at Waheed's residence in the Haji Lawang area on the outskirts of Khar tehsil.

According to preliminary investigations, the attack was carried out with hand grenades allegedly thrown by unknown assailants.

SHC orders govt to withdraw MPO notification

NEWS DESK: The Constitutional Bench of the Sindh High Court (SHC) has ordered the provincial government to withdraw the Maintenance of Public Order notification, terming it unconstitutional and in violation of established legal principles.

The bench gave the order while hearing petitions filed against the "preventive detention" of PTI workers on Tuesday.

The counsel for the petitioners, Barrister Ali Tahir, informed the court that the illegal detentions were affecting more than

Police (RPF) units were immediately dispatched to the scene, compelling the militants to flee.

According to a press release issued by the police, three terrorists were killed and nine others were arrested during the operation, dealing a significant blow to their network.

One of the slain militants was identified as terrorist commander Umar Azam alias Khizmeti, while another was identified as Shaukatullah.

The identification process of the third militant is underway.

During the exchange of fire, one police officer sustained minor injuries but is reported to be out of danger.

Police further stated that, in an apparent attempt to avenge the killing of their associates, militants also tried to attack Ahmadzai Police Station and Fatah Khel Police Station.

On the directives

of RPO Bannu Sajid Khan and DPO Bannu Yasir Arifid, additional police contingents, along with Quick Response Force (QRF) and Rapid Response

units

Post last night, however, both attempts were thwarted, and the attackers fled the scene.

RPO Bannu Sahay Khan praised the bravery and professionalism of the police personnel who announced commendation certificates and cash rewards for the officers involved.

He reiterated that operations against anti-state elements will continue without discrimination.

Bannu district has been the scene of repeated security incidents in recent months, with both civilians and local security forces coming under attack amid a broader surge in militant violence.

Violence in Bannu has increased after the police and jirga members, prompting targeted operations by police and security forces in various localities to disrupt militant networks.

A senior police official told Dawn that a team from a nearby police post was immediately dispatched to the area to search for the attackers.

He added that an investigation was underway to determine the motive behind the attack and identify those responsible. No group had claimed responsibility for the incident at the time this report was filed.

In a post on his official Facebook page, PML-N provincial secretary vice-president Shaukatullah Khan strongly condemned the attack on the house of his brother and party sources.

Waheed, a member of the notable Nawab of Khar family, was not at home at the time of the attack and is currently in Peshawar. Expressing concern over the incident in a social media post, he said his family members were safe.

Providing figures

Punjab govt pledges Rs10bn for Frontier Corps to bolster Balochistan's security

NEWS DESK: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has announced a Rs10 billion allocation for the Frontier Corps (FC) to enhance the force's capacity-building and border security in Balochistan.

Addressing FC headquarters during her visit to Balochistan on Tuesday, she paid tribute to those serving in Balochistan under difficult and dangerous circumstances.

In her speech, which was delivered on Wednesday, Maryam shared that she found out a few months ago that the FC required Rs10 billion for "capacity building".

"I was asked to contribute whatever Punjab could," she stated. "I decided it was not a favour... it was a responsibility. I said we will provide them the entire Rs10bn."

The chief minister highlighted that the allocation aimed to enhance operational readiness of the force.

Balochistan has been the scene of repeated security incidents in recent months, with both civilians and local security forces coming under attack amid a broader surge in militant violence.

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Providing figures



CM Maryam Nawaz came in the wake of a spate of attacks on Balochistan on January 31, which brought parts of the restive province to a standstill.

Security forces had responded by killing 216 terrorists during "Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-1" in the province.

During her speech, Maryam expressed deep concern for the safety of security personnel and acknowledged the sacrifices being made daily to defend the country.

"I worry about your safety because you are fighting for me, for the nation, and for this country," she told the FC gathering.

CM Maryam Nawaz

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unity and mindset.

"It's not just physical warfare that we are facing. We are facing fifth-generation warfare, which is psychological warfare. They have come with great preparation and attacked our minds," Maryam said.

Calling for political homogeneity, she emphasised the importance of acknowledging past realities in the light against terrorism.

Recalling the Islamabad incident, the Punjab CM said that even places of worship were not spared.

"Until some of our leaders keep calling terrorists 'our brothers' — which happened in 2018-2020 — I am not saying anything political, but this is a decision that the nation must make," she added.

"The day the Islamabad attack happened, I immediately posted on my Twitter account that we ought to make a tough decision as a nation, which is that the country is black and white if it is black, and white if it is white; there is no grey area in our minds," Maryam said.

country."

Referring to Afghan migration, Asif said: "No longer does a foreigner sit at the helm of Afghanistan. It is their own government made of Afghans, so they should return. The reasons for Afghan migration have ended."

Earlier, Asif said, the country has shed blood in the fight against terrorism.

We have no differences regarding the Constitution and principles. We will accept for every single drop of our blood," he said.

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He criticised past remarks about ethnic groups and provinces, saying that when in Balochistan, our relations cannot be right. You had Bengalis are not fit for the army."

"You gave us punishments for supporting democracy."

Army is national force, not of any district, Asif tells Achakzai

NEWS DESK:

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told the National Assembly on Wednesday that the Pakistan Army does not belong to any single province or district but represents the entire nation.

Responding to a

question by Leader of the Opposition Mohammad Khan Achakzai, who purportedly said the army belongs to only four districts, Asif said: "While Mohammad Khan Achakzai has held his views, he should not attack the military. The Pakistan Army is not the army of any province or district. Its character is national."

He said that in the past five years, 3,141 personnel have been martyred across Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh.

"In this war against terrorism, we suffer losses every day," he added.

Providing figures

from 2021 to February 2026, Asif said: "From 2021 to February 2026, 170 officers have laid down their lives. 1,000 commissioned officers have given 212, and soldiers 2,759 martyrs."

He said: "Azad Jammu and Kashmir accounted for 2,034 deaths, Balochistan 1,000, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh 539."

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