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Editor: Asim Khan.

# QUETTA VOICE

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## Security Sources: Operation Ghazab lil Haq to Continue Until Terror Facilitation Ends

**NEWS DESK:**

Security Sources on Monday said that Operation Ghazab lil Haq will continue until Afghan authorities provide verifiable assurances that their territory is no longer being used by terrorist groups against Pakistan. Speaking to media, the security official stated that Afghan Taliban rulers must clearly decide whether they stand with Pakistan or with militant networks operating from Afghan soil. He said Pakistan's actions

are strictly linked to developments on the ground and there is no fixed timeline for ending the operation. The official alleged that Afghan territory is being used to facilitate multiple terrorist groups, posing a serious threat to regional peace and stability. He said Pakistan is not targeting civilians or random locations, but is striking specific infrastructure, hideouts, and launch pads used by militants involved in attacks inside Pakistan. According to the briefing, more than 180 militant positions

have been neutralised and over 30 tactically important posts captured during the ongoing operation. These locations were reportedly being used to support cross-border terrorism. The official added that Pakistan's actions have received support from affected Afghan communities and minorities who have suffered due to militant violence. Rejecting claims of interference, the official stressed that Pakistan has no agenda related to regime change in Afghanistan, calling it an internal

matter for the Afghan people. He also said the government is maintaining transparency, with regular updates being shared on the progress of the operation. Commenting on regional developments, the official said Pakistan is following a balanced foreign policy and seeks a stable and peaceful Iran. He dismissed speculation that Pakistan could be the next target of regional conflict, describing such narratives as misleading and baseless. On internal security, the

official noted that the armed forces' role has expanded due to governance gaps and incomplete implementation of the National Action Plan. He urged political leadership to strengthen institutions and improve governance, reiterating that the military has no political interests. Addressing recent protests, he said peaceful demonstrations are a constitutional right, but warned that violence and attempts to create disorder would be dealt with strictly under the law.

## Oil surges as Iran conflict disrupts Middle Eastern supply flow

**NEWS DESK:**

Oil prices surged by as much as 13 per cent on Monday after shipping in the crucial Strait of Hormuz was disrupted by retaliatory Iranian attacks following initial bombing by Israel and the United States that killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Brent crude futures rose to as much as \$82.37 a barrel, the highest since January 2025, before retreating to be up \$5.41, or 7.4pc, to \$78.28 by 06:05. US West Texas Intermediate crude climbed to an intraday high of \$75.33, up over 12pc and the highest since June, though it later pared gains and was up \$4.74, or 7.1pc, at \$71.76. Both benchmarks jumped as a sustained exchange of counter-attacks damaged tankers and sharply disrupted shipments in the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway between Iran and Oman that connects the Gulf to the Arabian Sea.



On a typical day, ships carrying oil equal to about one-fifth of global demand from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq, Iran, and Kuwait sail through the Strait along with tankers hauling diesel, jet fuel, and gasoline and other products from their refineries to major Asian markets, including China and India. "Markets are acknowledging the seriousness of the conflict, but are also signalling that, for now, this is a geopolitical shock, not a systemic crisis," said Priyanka Sachdeva, senior analyst at Phillip Nova. Prolonged effective closure of the Strait would push oil prices higher and cause shortages in supply to top importers, China and India. More than 200 vessels, including oil and liquefied gas tankers, have dropped anchor outside the Strait, shipping data showed on Sunday. Three tankers were damaged, and one seafarer was killed in attacks on Sunday in Gulf waters. Asian economies are assessing oil stockpile availability and ways to secure alternative supply.

## Quetta Police Detain Hundreds of Undocumented Afghan Nationals in Ongoing Crackdown

**Riaz Baloch, Qaseem Shah:**

Quetta: Police have stepped up action against undocumented Afghan nationals in the provincial capital, detaining more than 750 individuals over the past two days as part of a wider campaign against illegal residency. According to Asif Khan, Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations), the drive is aimed at improving law and order and ending unlawful residence and business activities in the city. He said the operation is part of a countrywide initiative against undocumented foreigners. Police officials said the detainees have been handed over to the Levies force and the Deputy Commissioner's Office. Earlier, more than 1,600 Afghan nationals were arrested in similar operations carried out across Quetta last week.



Authorities stated that after biometric verification, the detained individuals are being transferred to Chaman for repatriation to Afghanistan under the legal process. The operation is being conducted across all four divisions

of Quetta on the directives of senior police leadership. Police have also appealed to citizens to report the presence of undocumented individuals in their localities to support further enforcement efforts. Meanwhile, a separate crackdown was carried out in Chagai district, where police arrested over 250 undocumented Afghan nationals. Acting on the instructions of Muhammad Ali Khan, police teams conducted operations in different areas of Dalbandin. Officials said around 285 Afghan nationals, found traveling and residing without valid documents, were shifted to Dalbandin Saddar Police Station for further legal action. The campaign against undocumented Afghan nationals has been intensified nationwide, with authorities continuing efforts to enforce immigration laws and maintain public order.

## QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

## SBKWU Teacher Recruitment Scandal Raises Alarms for Pakistan's Education System

**Editorial:**

Serious questions have emerged over the secondary teachers recruitment process conducted by Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University (SBKWU), triggering widespread concern about merit, transparency, and accountability in Balochistan's education system.

It is essential to clarify a point that has caused public confusion: the advertised posts were NOT for SBKWU itself.

The university was only assigned the responsibility of conducting tests and interviews for Secondary School Teacher recruitment across Balochistan.

According to initial findings, many of the candidates who had failed were allegedly declared successful during the teacher recruitment process.

Given the scale of the exercise, involving thousands of applicants for secondary teaching positions across the province, such irregularities cannot reasonably be described as clerical mistakes.

The magnitude strongly suggests organised manipulation, carried out with the involvement of influential individuals rather than the actions of a single official.

This issue strikes at the heart of education governance in Balochistan. Secondary school teachers shape the academic foundation of students, and any compromise on merit directly damages learning outcomes.

In Balochistan, where literacy rates remain among the lowest in the country, flawed teacher recruitment further deepens an already critical education

crisis. Reports that deserving candidates were sidelined only intensify public frustration and mistrust.

All anti-corruption and accountability institutions must take immediate notice.

A transparent, independent, and time-bound investigation is necessary to identify those responsible for manipulating the recruitment process conducted under SBKWU's authority.

Accountability must reach every individual involved, regardless of status or influence.

This is not merely an administrative controversy; it is a matter of justice and the future of Balochistan's education system.

If credibility in teacher recruitment collapses, public trust in institutions will collapse with it. Balochistan cannot afford silence where integrity is at stake.

## Balochistan's education sector, implementation of article 25-A



Improving the education sector has always been the hallmark of all successive governments in Balochistan. Every government has allocated substantial funds to improve the education sector and quality of education to enable students to compete on national and international level. Health and education, all successive governments declared their priorities.

Former Chief Minister, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch led nationalist government allocated around 24 percent budget to bring the province at par with other parts of the country. Dr. Baloch's government also declared emergency and announced implementation of article 25-A of the constitution to enroll all out of school children in Balochistan. The number of out of school children in Balochistan is currently over 1 mil-

lion. However, independent sources put the number high as compared to the official data. There are conflicting figures about the exact number of out of school children in Balochistan.

To be precise, positive strides were made during Dr. Malik Baloch led government to improve the education sector.

For the first time in the history of Balochistan, 5000 teachers were appointed through national testing service (NTS), launching an effective campaign against growing cheating during examinations and introducing the education management and information system to ensure the presence of teachers in schools.

Track record shows, teachers were always recruited on political basis with no merit and transpar-

ency in the recruitment process. This has ruined the entire education sector. Dr. Malik Baloch, the then adviser on education

Sardar Raza Muhammad Bareech led rallies against cheating to create awareness among the people regarding the curse of cheating in educational institutions.

After the removal of Sardar Raza Bareech as an adviser on education and transfers of senior bureaucrats Ghulam Ali Baloch and Saboor Kakar, no effective step was taken to improve the quality of education in Balochistan.

Now again the portfolio of education has been awarded to Sardar Yar Muhammad Rind who belongs to Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI). Mr. Rind has made announcements to bring what he claimed

revolutionary changes. However, improvement in education sector, enrolling out of school children in schools and improving quality of education needs a multi-pronged strategy. Senior bureaucrat Ghulam Ali Baloch who had already served as secretary education has again been posted.

Mr. Baloch is taking a number of initiatives to improve schooling and trace out ghost schools and teaches across the province.

However, political speed breakers appear to be major obstacles in his way.

Despite being the poorest province of Pakistan, Balochistan spends over 70 billion rupees on primary, middle, secondary and higher education in the province.

The province spends thousands of rupees per month on a student. Unfortu-

nately, neither the quality nor the education standard meet national standards what to speak about international standards. Poor quality of education is the result of poor capacity of teachers that needs to be improved to compete on national and international level.

The Balochistan government has announced to enroll 70000 kids in government run schools in the province. However, ground realities negate claims of the provincial government. So far, the government has not been able to mobilize the civil society, media, political parties and tribesmen to make sure maximum enrollment of kids in educational institutions of the province. Coordinated efforts and combined strategy by all segments of society can ensure implementation of article 25-A of the Constitution.

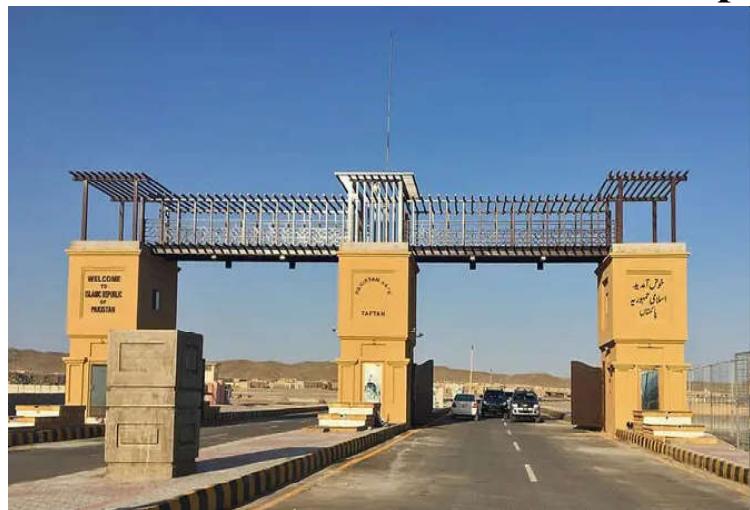
## Taftan border and Balochistan Govt's response

**Quetta Voice****Analysis**

The sudden arrival of thousands of Zaireen at Pak-Iran border Taftan posed a serious challenge for government of Balochistan to make sure their screening and conduct medical tests in the aftermath of outbreak of COVID-19 in neighboring Iran. The federal government closed the border with Iran at Taftan on February 23rd to halt the spread of deadly corona virus.

All of a sudden over 4,000 Zaireen, students, tourists and traders gathered at Taftan, Pakistan's bordering town with Iran. The poorly equipped health officials that too less in number tried to conduct screening and tests of those entered from Iran. However, many managed to flee from the administration and used their own means of communication to reach Quetta on way to their home provinces. The drivers were paid heavy fares by those fleeing the quarantine centers at Taftan.

Perhaps, in the beginning, the Balochistan government and Islamabad did not realize the gravity of situation. A wind-blowing tent quarantine center was established to keep the



Zaireen and others to halt the spread of novel corona virus. However, the laboratory to diagnose the deadly disease and conduct tests of novel corona virus could not be arranged at the border soon after the closure of border.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) dispatched machinery

and laboratory to conduct the diagnosis 10 days after the closure of the border. Before installation of the laboratory, the health officials used to send tests of suspected patients to Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi for diagnosis.

Though, it was imperative to install laboratory soon after

the closure of the border to make sure proper screening and diagnosis of the people.

Apart from corona virus, the Balochistan government appeared to be concerned about the security of Zaireen as well.

In the past, Zaireen were fre-

quently targeted by terrorists on Quetta-Taftan highway. Since then, the Balochistan government has been providing security and law enforcers escort long convoys of buses from Quetta to Taftan all the time.

The Chief Minister Balochistan, Jam Kamal Khan has been closely monitoring the

unfolding situation and all the time directing the concerned quarters to halt the spread of novel corona virus.

However, loopholes in the system caused the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country.

Although, the Chief Minister issued statements, precautionary measures through print, elec-

**Taftan.**

Opposition political parties in Balochistan in general and the Balochistan National Party ideology, Samaulah Baloch have strongly criticized the Jam Kamal led government for what they call its failure and incompetence to contain the corona virus.

Political parties, members of civil society and legal fraternity had also objected over the establishment of quarantine center at Mian Ghundi area of Quetta. They feared spread of deadly virus after establishment of center near the city rather they demanded of the government to shift the Zaireen to their home provinces directly from Taftan.

To be precise, the virus has already penetrated and now it is time for all political parties from left to right and religious to nationalists to join their hands to contain its spread.

The government needs to take all stakeholders including political parties, media, civil society and lawyers to evolve a combined strategy in the province to tackle the situation. It is not alone the job of government rather every individual to play his/her role to contain the virus before it is too late.

# Canada and India strike agreements on rare earth, uranium

**NEWS DESK:** India and Canada on Monday reached a string of agreements, including on critical mineral cooperation and a "landmark" uranium supply deal for nuclear power, the countries' leaders said in New Delhi.

The pacts, which also covered technology and promoting the use of renewable energy, were announced after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney hailed a fresh start in the relationship between their nations. "Our ties have seen a new energy, mutual trust, and positivity," Modi said.

Ties effectively collapsed in 2023 after Ottawa accused New Delhi of orchestrating a deadly campaign against Sikh activists in Canada, accusations India rejected.

Carney's visit — his first to India since taking office last year — is not only aimed to reset strained ties, but also to push efforts to diversify trade beyond the United States.

"There has been more engagement between the Canadian and Indian governments in the last year than in more than two decades com-



binced," Carney said in New Delhi, in a speech alongside Modi.

"This is not merely the renewal of a relationship. It is the expansion of a valued partnership with new ambition, focus, and foresight, a part-

nership between two confident countries charting our own course for the future."

"New opportunities" — energy-hungry India — the world's most populous country with 1.4 billion people — has

ambitious plans to expand nuclear power capacity from its current eight to 100 gigawatts by 2047. "In civil nuclear energy, we have struck a landmark deal for long-term uranium supply," Modi said, adding the

countries would also work together on small modular reactors and advanced reactors.

Carney said they had agreed the launch of a "strategic energy partnership with significant potential", including

\$1.9 billion uranium supply agreement "supporting India's nuclear ambitions". Carney added that Canada was "well positioned to contribute, as a reliable supplier" of liquefied natural gas (LNG), from its

west coast. "As India seeks access to critical minerals for its manufacturing, its clean-tech, and its nuclear plants, Canada's resource base and world-leading companies position it as a strategic partner," he

said. The two countries agreed last year to resume negotiations on a proposed free-trade deal, the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

"Our target is to reach \$50 billion in bilateral trade," Modi said. "This is why we have decided to finalise a comprehensive economic partnership soon," he added, saying it "will open new opportunities to invest and create jobs in both countries."

**Defence deal** Carney said he wanted to reach a deal on the "ambitious agreement" by the end of the year to "reduce barriers and increase certainty", also said the nations were renewing security cooperation through a "new defence partnership". Canadian pension and wealth funds have already invested \$73 billion in India. Before Carney took office last year, Ottawa accused Modi's government of direct involvement in the 2023 killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a naturalised Canadian citizen who was part of a group that advocated for an independent Sikh state called Khalistan.

## Death toll from girls' school attack in Iran surges to 148

**NEWS DESK:** The death toll from the Israeli strikes that hit a girls' school in southern Iran surged to 148, with nearly 100 others wounded, Al Jazeera reported.

While Iranian officials claimed the attack on the Shajareh Tayyebeh girls' elementary school in the Minab city killed more than 100 people, neither the United States nor Israel confirmed that any such attack has taken place.

Israel's military on Sunday said it was "not aware" of any US or Israeli strike on any school in Iran.

When asked about the strikes on school, Israel's military spokesman Lt-Col Nadav Shoshani said.

"At this point not aware of an Israeli or an American strike there."

"We're operating in an extremely accurate manner." However, The New York Times later quoted a CENTCOM spokesperson as saying: "We are aware of reports concerning civilian harm resulting

from ongoing military operations. We take these reports seriously and are looking into them."

"The protection of civilians is of utmost importance, and we will continue to take all precautions available to minimise the risk of unintended harm."

Video and photographs from the aftermath of the strike, which have been verified as authentic and geo-located to the site, show hundreds of people gathered around the partially

collapsed, smoking street and men digging through it for victims. Screams can be heard in some of the images, schoolbags and textbooks are being pulled from the debris.

Norway-based rights group Hengav said the Shajareh Tayyebeh school was holding its morning session at the time of the incident, which reportedly had about 170 students present.

The Nobel peace

prize laureate and street and men digging through it for victims. Screams can be heard in some of the images, schoolbags and textbooks are being pulled from the debris.

Today, their lives were brutally cut short.

Justice and accountability must follow.

All states and parties must uphold their obligations under international law to protect civilians and safeguard schools."



## Iran, Israeli hackers trade blows as war enters cyberspace

**NEWS DESK:** A wave of cyber-enabled operations took place early on Saturday morning alongside the joint US-Israeli attack on targets across Iran, according to cybersecurity experts and observers.

The operations included the hacking of multiple news websites to display various messages and the hack of Badesaba, a religious calendar app with more than 5 million downloads, which displayed hacking messages telling users its time for reckoning and urging armed forces to give up weapons and join the people.

Reuters could not establish contact with Badesaba's chief executive.

A spokesperson for US Cyber Command did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

M e a n w h i l e, Cybersecurity firm Anomali said in an analysis shared with



Reuters on Saturday that state-backed Iranian hackers groups were already carrying out "wiper" attacks that erase data on Israeli targets ahead of the strikes.

Internet connectivity in Iran dropped repeatedly, with minimal connectivity remaining, Doug Madory, director of internet analysis at Kenix, said in a post on X.

The cyberattack on Badesaba was a smart move because government supporters use it and they tend to be more

religious, said Hamid Kashi, a security researcher and founder of cybersecurity firm DarkCell.

Cyber operations also struck a variety of Iranian government services and military targets to limit a coordinated Iranian response, the Jerusalem Post reported on Saturday.

As Iran considers its options, the likelihood increases that proxy groups and

hacktivists may take action, including cyberattacks, against Israeli and US-affiliated military, commercial, or civilian targets, said Rafi Pilling, the director of threat intelligence with cybersecurity firm Sophos.

The attacks could include the amplification of old data breaches presented as new, un sophisticated attempts to compromise internet-exposed industrial systems, and potentially direct offensive cyber operations, Pilling said.

## Belgium seizes oil tanker sailing under 'false flag'

**NEWS DESK:** Belgium said on Sunday its special forces had boarded and seized an oil tanker from the 'shadow fleet'.

Russia uses it to circumvent Western sanctions over the war in Ukraine, in an overnight operation.

The Belgian government said the vessel was intercepted in the North Sea, with aerial support from French military helicopters.

Defence Minister Theo Francken said the tanker was escorted to the port of Zeebrugge after being intercepted in Belgium's exclusive economic zone.

Prosecutors identified the ship, which was said to be on its way back to Russia, as the "Ethera".

A spokeswoman for the Belgian federal prosecutor's office said the ship captain, a

Russian national, was being questioned by investigators.

The tanker flew the flag of Guinea, but an on-board inspection confirmed suspicions that it was sailing under a false flag, the office said, adding that authorities have opened a criminal investigation.

"If a ship sails un-

der a false flag, this means that it does not comply with several international regulations," the statement added. French President Emmanuel Macron confirmed on X that his country's naval forces assisted in the operation, calling it a "major blow" to Russia's so-called "shadow fleet".

Russia has used a flotilla of ageing tankers to get around restrictions on its lucrative crude exports imposed over its 2022 all-out invasion of Ukraine.

The Belgian defence ministry said the seized tanker was on the European Union's sanctions list.



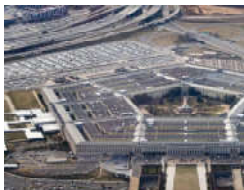
## Pentagon tells Congress no sign that Iran was going to attack US first, sources say

**NEWS DESK:** Trump administration officials acknowledged in closed-door briefings with congressional staff on Sunday that there was no intelligence suggesting Iran planned to attack US forces first, two people familiar with the matter said.

The United States and Israel launched their most ambitious attacks on Iran in decades on Saturday, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, among Iranian warships and hitting more than 1,000 targets so far, officials say. But Sunday's remarks to Congress appeared to undercut one of the key arguments for the war made by senior administration officials.

They told reporters the day before that President Donald Trump decided to launch the attacks in part because of indicators that Iranians might strike US forces in the Middle East "perhaps preemptively".

Trump, one of the officials said, was not going to "sit back and allow American forces in the region to absorb attacks." Pentagon briefings lasted more than 90 minutes. Pentagon officials briefed Democratic and Republican staff of



several national security committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives for more than 90 minutes of the unfolding US attack in Iran, White House spokesperson Dylan Johnson said earlier.

In the briefings, administration officials emphasised that Iran's ballistic missiles and proxy forces in the region posed an imminent threat to US interests, but there was no intelligence about Tehran attacking US forces first, the two sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters.

Trump said the attack, which is expected to run for weeks, aimed to ensure Iran could not have a nuclear weapon, contain its missile program, and eliminate threats to the United

States and its allies. He has urged Iranians to rise up and topple the government. Democrats criticised "War of Choice".

Still, Democrats have accused Trump of waging a war of choice and have taken aim at his arguments for abandoning peace talks that mediator Oman said still held promise.

Trump has argued, without presenting evidence, that Iran was on track to soon secure the ability to strike the United States with a ballistic missile. His missile claim was not backed by US intelligence reports, and appeared to be exaggerated, sources familiar with the reports have told Reuters. Questions about the justification for the war came as the US military revealed on Sunday the first Ameri-

can casualties of the conflict. Three US troops killed, five wounded.

Three US troops were killed, and five seriously wounded, US Central Command said on Sunday, adding that several other US troops suffered minor shrapnel injuries and concussions. US aircraft and warships have struck more than 1,000 Iranian targets since Trump ordered the start of major combat operations.

The strikes include B-2 stealth bombers dropping 2,000-lb (900-kg) bombs on hardened, underground Iranian missile facilities.

A Reuters poll on Sunday showed 27% of Americans approved of the strikes, while 43% disapproved and 29% were not sure.

# CERT starts probe into cyberattacks on Pakistani TV channels, websites

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) on Monday launched an investigation into reported cyberattacks targeting some private television channels and websites across the country.

A special meeting of the National CERT was held in Islamabad on Monday to review the cyber incidents that occurred during the previous night.

In the meeting, cybersecurity experts and officials of the national CERT discussed initiating a comprehensive probe into the breaches and assessing the scale of the disruption.

The national CERT authorities said efforts were under way to determine the motive and nature of the attacks, while coordination and consultation with relevant national institutions continued.

Officials have assured that a detailed report would be compiled once the investigation about the cyberattacks is completed. Officials said complaints were received regarding the hacking of multiple private television channels and websites late Sunday night, prompting an immediate security response. It is pertinent to note that some reports claimed Israeli and Indian intelligence-linked actors were behind the hacking of Pakistani private news channels, where anti-Pakistan content was allegedly broadcast. However, these claims have not been independently verified by authorities. In response, a group described as Pakistan's Cyber Force reportedly launched a retaliatory cyber operation targeting India. The Indian broadcaster RBP News was said to have been briefly compromised.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting regarding the regional situation and Pakistan's security situation.

## Landmark reform: PM&DC approves comprehensive new ethical framework

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a landmark advancement for patient safety and professional accountability, the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has formally approved and enforced a comprehensive revised Code of Ethics for all Registered Medical and Dental Practitioners (RMDPs) and recognized institutions nationwide.

The revision, endorsed by the Council after two years of rigorous review, marks a transformative step in strengthening ethical governance and providing clear guidance on managing conflicts of interest while upholding integrity in all professional interactions.

Highlighting the significance of the reform, Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj stated that the Council's foremost priority remains the protection of patients through competent, quality and weight of bakery items should be checked. The prices of basic necessities should be monitored and exported.

## DC reviews Ramadan arrangements

SARGODHA (INP): Deputy Commissioner Hussain Ahmed Raza Chaudhry chaired a meeting of additional deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners in which he was briefed on the arrangements for the second decade of Ramadan, distribution of Ramadan cards, price control and sanitation issues.

In the meeting, CEO SWMC Rana Muhammad Abu Bakar gave a briefing on the Clean Punjab Program and the Special Ramadan Cleaning Plan. It was informed that the cleaning arrangements at Maryam's guest tables and convenience markets have been further improved. From 21st Ramadan, special cleaning staff will be deployed in commercial markets and plazas across the district, who will perform duty from 11:30 pm to 2:30 am. Additional workers have been deployed in the densely populated urban areas of Sargodha City, while the location sharing system has also been activated.

The Deputy Commissioner directed that all assistant commissioners should improve their offices and the surrounding environment.

## Afghan Taliban violates 2020 Doha peace agreement despite commitment: Experts

PESHAWAR (INP): Showing no regards for international pacts and bilateral relations, the Afghan Taliban regime has violated all commitments made under the Doha Agreement, signed on February 29, 2020, in Qatar.

Under the agreement, the Afghan Taliban had pledged that Afghanistan should not be used by any terrorist group or individual to threaten the security of other countries, including Pakistan.

However, the security and diplomatic experts reiterated that the Afghan Taliban had committed not to allow their fugitive members, including Al-Qaeda, Tehreek-e-

hacking of multiple private television channels and websites late Sunday night, prompting an immediate security response. It is pertinent to note that some reports claimed Israeli and Indian intelligence-linked actors were behind the hacking of Pakistani private news channels, where anti-Pakistan content was allegedly broadcast. However, these claims have not been independently verified by authorities. In response, a group described as Pakistan's Cyber Force reportedly launched a retaliatory cyber operation targeting India. The Indian broadcaster RBP News was said to have been briefly compromised.

from Afghanistan in 2021 and the collapse of the government of Ashraf Ghani, he said Pakistani officials contend that militant and terrorist groups found space to reorganize and strengthen their networks in Afghanistan.

He maintained that those of Afghan Taliban and intensified attacks against Pakistan.

Former ambassador Manzoorul Haq termed the repeated violations of the Doha agreement a serious breach of international obligations, stating that Pakistan has all the right to take defensive measures for security of its people in response to cross-border terrorism. He said no sovereign country can allow that its people and territory should be targeted by terrorists and suicide bombers.

Following the hasty withdrawal of US forces

## Pakistan, IMF launch key economic review talks in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): Economic review negotiations between Pakistan's economic team and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) began, marking a crucial phase in ongoing financial discussions between the two sides.

The introductory session between the economic team and the IMF delegation has commenced, during which officials will brief the IMF mission on progress in the country's economic situation. The talks with the IMF mission are scheduled to continue until next week. According to the Ministry of Finance, the IMF delegation is being led by Mission Chief Eva Petrova and expert Maher Bennadi, while Pakistan's economic team is headed by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb.

## Punjab govt committed to preservation, development of Data Darbar

LAHORE (INP): Senior Member board of Revenue Punjab (SMBR) Nabeel Javed reaffirmed Punjab Government's unwavering commitment to preserving sanctity of the shrine of Hazrat Ali bin Usman Al-Hayveri renowned as Hazrat Data Ganj Bukhsh (RA).

He expressed the resolve to further improve facilities at the shrine for devotees through carefully planned development initiatives.

Chairing a high-level meeting to review the ongoing renovation and development works at the shrine, he declared Data Darbar (Shrine) a beacon of spiritual enlightenment and a timeless symbol of Punjab's expert Maher Bennadi, Director of Revenue Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta presented a comprehensive

## China Manned Space Agency confirms Pakistani astronaut for 2026 flight

ISLAMABAD (INP): A Pakistani astronaut will join a short-term mission aboard the China Space Station in 2026 as a payload specialist, conducting scientific experiments on behalf of Pakistan, according to a statement issued on Friday by the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

The announcement came as CMSA unveiled its 2026 space flight plans, which include two crewed missions and one cargo resupply flight to the orbiting station, according to a Gwadar Pro's report on Saturday.

Astronauts from the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions are also expected to participate in

upcoming missions as China expands international cooperation in human spaceflight.

Under the arrangement, the Pakistani astronaut will undertake a short-duration mission during a crew rotation period, serving as a payload specialist responsible for conducting scientific research and microgravity experiments.

The research will cover areas such as materials science, biological studies, and space technology applications, supporting Pakistan's growing interest in space science and innovation.

The development follows an agreement signed between China



KARACHI : A view of containers are placed on a road leading to the US Consulate in Karachi, Pakistan, 02 March 2026. Authorities enforced Section 144, banning protests, rallies, and public gatherings to maintain public order, and warned of strict legal action against violators following the Middle East conflict.

## Pakistan, Russia urged to explore new avenues to promote sustainable bilateral relations

Pakistan (INP): Pakistan and Russia should address emerging challenges, strengthen mutual understanding, and explore new avenues for collaboration to promote sustainable bilateral relations.

Speaking at the session titled "The Perspectives on the Bilateral Relations development between Russia and Pakistan" during the Bilateral Russia-Media Forum, Geopolitical analyst and head of the Scientific Center of International and Strategic Studies at the University of World Civilization, Dr Roxelana Zigon, highlighted the forum as a reflection of deepening cooperation between Pakistan and Russia.

She said global

power shifts influenced both nations to recognize shared strategic and geopolitical objectives.

Dr Zigon added that the forum aims to strengthen strategic collaboration through active global engagement.

Former Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry observed that Pakistan-Russia relations have witnessed a steady upward trajectory since the early 2000s, with both countries gradually building mutual trust and expanding cooperation across multiple sectors, including defense, energy, and regional connectivity.

Ms Sarwat Rauf, Head of the Department of International Relations at NIIM, noted a stronger ties in the future.



QUETTA: Jamiat-islami's Balochistan chapter emir and MPA Maulana Hidayat-ur-Kelman Baloch addressing on Donor conference.

### Balochistan Government Imposes Section 144 Across Province for One Month

**News Desk:** The Government of Balochistan has enforced Section 144 across the province for one month to maintain law and order, according to a notification issued by the Home Department Balochistan.

Under the orders, a complete ban has been imposed on the display and use of weapons, pillion riding on motorcycles, vehicles with tinted windows, unregistered vehicles, and public gatherings of five or more people.

The notification also prohibits covering of faces in public places, including the use of masks, mufflers, or any other means



That may hinder identification. The Home Department stated that Section 144 will remain effective across Balochistan from March 1, 2026, for a duration of one month, warning that strict legal action will be taken against violators.

### Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Notifies NA-251 Result After Supreme Court Ruling

**NEWS DESK:** The Election Commission of Pakistan has formally issued the notification declaring Khushal Khan Kakar as the elected Member of the National Assembly from NA-251 (Sherani-Zhob-Killa Saifullah), following clear directions from the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The notification comes after the Supreme Court overturned an earlier decision of the election tribunal and instructed the ECP to acknowledge Khushal Khan Kakar's success in the constituency, thereby resolving the long-standing electoral dispute.

With this development, Khushal Khan Kakar, who is also the chairman of the Pashtoonkhwa National Awami Party,

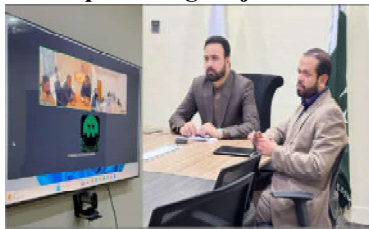


has officially secured his position in the National Assembly, strengthening his political mandate in the region. Political analysts view the move as an important milestone for constitutional supremacy and electoral integrity, while party supporters and democratic voices have welcomed the decision as a confirmation of the voters' mandate and the credibility of Pakistan's legal and electoral system.

### Balochistan Investment Board Reviews Power Supply for Shrimp Farming Project in Lasbela

**QUETTA:** Vice Chairman of the Balochistan Investment Board, Bilal Khan Kakar, and Chief Executive Officer Qaim Laishari held a virtual meeting with Relationship Manager of K-Electric, Muhammad Fasih ur Rehman, to discuss energy supply arrangements for the ongoing shrimp farming project in Damb area of Lasbela district.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held regarding the provision and development of reliable energy resources for the shrimp farming initiative. Participants



termed stable, sustainable, and uninterrupted electricity supply as essential for the project's success. Vice Chairman Bilal Khan Kakar stated that the shrimp farming project could play a significant role not only in boosting Balochistan's economy but also in increasing Pakistan's exports. He emphasized the urgent need to ensure electricity and other essential facilities for the project. He further highlighted the vast potential for aquaculture development along Balochistan's coastline and reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting investment in the provincial coastal areas.

### DICC Reviews BSDI Phase-I Projects in Nasirabad, DC Zulfiqar Ali Kakar Directs Timely Completion

**NASIRABAD:** A key meeting of the District Intelligence Coordination Committee (DICC) regarding the Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI) was held in Nasirabad under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Zulfiqar Ali Kakar.

The meeting was attended by Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Zafar Irfan Kakar, Sub-Divisional Officer Abd Ali Panhwar, PS to DC Manzoor Shirazi, and other concerned officials.

During the session, a detailed review of completed and ongoing development projects under BSDI Phase-I was conducted. Officials provided briefings on the pace of work, and financial matters related to various schemes. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Zulfiqar Ali Kakar directed that development activities, be-



carried out under the directives of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, must be completed strictly in accordance with approved standards. He further stated that contractor payments to contractors should be ensured on a work-done basis while maintaining close scrutiny of the technical quality and nature of work. He further stated that contractor payments would be made in proportion to development progress and that negligence or the use of substandard material would not be tolerated under any circumstances.

### Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail Offers Condolences at Iranian Consulate in Quetta

**QUETTA:** Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail visited the Iranian Consulate General in Quetta to offer condolences and recite

describing the recent situation in Iran and rising regional tensions as deeply concerning for Pakistan and the entire Muslim Ummah.

Governor Mandokhail prayed for the forgiveness of the late Ayatollah Khamenei and extended his condolences to the govern-



He highlighted the strong historical and Islamic bonds between the two neighboring countries, Pakistan and Iran, reaffirming the spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

During the visit, the Governor expressed heartfelt sympathy and solidarity with the Iranian nation, highlighting the importance of unity and regional stability.

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Sealed (grip) tender are invited from the approved Government Contractor/Firm of Public Health Engineering Department, Balochistan registered with BPPRA who are interested / renewed are their name for the current financial year 2025-26 for the following works.

S.	Name of Work	Qty	Estimated Cost	Eligibility of Bidder	Chalk Fee	Time Limit	TSE No.
1	CONSTR. WISE ALONG WITH SOLAR SYSTEM AT KILLI SANGAR ZAHIR KHAN DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.268						
I	DRELLING DEVELOPMENT OF BORE HOLE	1.50	4.502 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	SO OF SOLAR SYSTEM	1.50	4.718 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
III	SO LPVC PIPE	6000 RB	2.000 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
IV	CONCRW.	1.00	1.440 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
2	CONSTR. WISE ALONG WITH SOLAR SYSTEM AT KILLI BANJALAN TRAIAN WALI DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.268						
I	DRELLING DEVELOPMENT OF BORE HOLE	1.00	4.918 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	SO OF SOLAR SYSTEM	1.50	4.508 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
III	SO LPVC PIPE	5000 RB	1.200 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
IV	CONCRW. PISCINE CONCRW.	1.00	2.720 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
3	CONSTRUCTION OF CHSR TANK 2000 GALLON WITH PIPE LINE AT IRRIGATION COLONY DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.268						
I	SO OF PIPE LINE	3000 RB	5.500 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	CONSTRUCTION OF CHSR TANK 2000 GALLON	1.00	14.207 M	2%	3000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
4	CONSTRUCTION OF CHSR TANK 2000 GALLON WITH PIPE LINE AT MUHALLAN SHEER MUHAMMAD GHAMRABAD DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.268						
I	SO LPVC PIPE	4000 RB	1.600 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	CONSTRUCTION OF CHSR TANK 2000 GALLON	1.00	13.871 M	2%	3000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
5	CONSTRUCTION OF CHSR TANK 2000 GALLON WITH PIPE LINE AT SO GHAR QUETTA DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.268						
I	SO LPVC PIPE	4000 RB	1.500 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	CONSTRUCTION OF CHSR TANK 2000 GALLON	1.00	13.807 M	2%	3000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
6	CONSTR. WISE ALONG WITH SOLAR SYSTEM FOR KILLI UMAR SHAH GHILAM NABI SHAH JABER MINGAL DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.267						
I	DRELLING DEVELOPMENT OF BORE HOLE	1.00	4.902 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	SO OF SOLAR SYSTEM	1.50	4.302 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
III	SO LPVC PIPE	3000 RB	1.278 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
IV	CONCRW.	1.00	1.789 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
7	CONSTR. WISE ALONG WITH SOLAR SYSTEM FOR NUSKHI CITY DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.268						
I	DRELLING DEVELOPMENT OF BORE HOLE	1.00	5.907 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	SO OF SOLAR SYSTEM	1.50	6.000 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
III	SO LPVC PIPE	1000 RB	0.720 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
IV	CONCRW.	1.00	0.420 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
8	CONSTR. WISE ALONG WITH SOLAR SYSTEM FOR KILLI SAHARA DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.268						
I	DRELLING DEVELOPMENT OF BORE HOLE	1.00	5.907 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	SO OF SOLAR SYSTEM	1.50	6.000 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
III	SO LPVC PIPE	1000 RB	0.720 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
IV	CONCRW.	1.00	0.420 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
9	CONSTR. WISE ALONG WITH SOLAR SYSTEM FOR KILLI GAKAR ABAD NUSKHI DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.261						
I	DRELLING DEVELOPMENT OF BORE HOLE	1.00	5.907 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	SO OF SOLAR SYSTEM	1.50	6.000 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
III	SO LPVC PIPE	1000 RB	0.720 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
IV	CONCRW.	1.00	0.420 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
10	CONSTR. WISE ALONG WITH SOLAR SYSTEM FOR MADARSA GARDI DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.264						
I	DRELLING DEVELOPMENT OF BORE HOLE	1.00	6.700 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	SO OF SOLAR SYSTEM	1.50	4.718 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
III	SO LPVC PIPE	3000 RB	1.200 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
IV	CONCRW.	1.00	0.500 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
11	CONSTR. WISE ALONG WITH SOLAR SYSTEM FOR MUHALLAN MURTI KAFATULLAH SHAIH DASTAR DISTRICT NUSKHI PDP NO.265						
I	DRELLING DEVELOPMENT OF BORE HOLE	1.00	4.520 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
II	SO OF SOLAR SYSTEM	1.50	4.178 M	2%	1000/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
III	SO LPVC PIPE	3000 RB	1.200 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813
IV	CONCRW.	1.00	0.500 M	2%	600/-	30-08-2026	25300291813

The office of the Executive Engineer PHE District Nuskhi invites technical proposal of Contractor/Firm, along with sealed financial proposal (Single Stage-One Envelope) for above mentioned works. All interested bidders are required to submit documents to get following details in support of their technical/financial proposal. The procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Rules 2014 and Pakistan Engineering Council By-Laws. **ELIGIBILITY OF BIDDERS:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turnover of at least 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. **METHOD OF PROCUREMENT:** (Single Stage - One Envelope) bidding. Procurement will be invited. **BIDDING / TENDER DOCUMENTS:** Issuance. The bidders can obtain the bidding document from the address mentioned above on production of Green Chalk. Form for amount mentioned of above (Non-refundable) for each work shown against each deposited in the head of account 020728-02 through Govt. Treasury/National Bank of Pakistan Nuskhi or can be downloaded from the website of BPPRA (www.bppra.gov.pk) during working hour, from the date of publication of the invitation in newspapers till one day prior to the last date of submission. The contractors/Firms who obtain bidding documents by downloading from BPPRA website will also be required to procure deposit Green Chalk from of above mentioned Fee. The bids must accompanied bid security "Technical Bid" for each work in the form of call deposit or bank guarantee of amount specified above in the office name of the under signed from a scheduled bank. No any Bank Drafts & Banker Check will be accepted. **Deadline of submission:** Last date for submission of documents on date: 17-03-2026 at 11:00 AM Opening. The tender will be opened on the same day 17-03-2026 at 12:00 PM before procurement committee in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who choose to attend with authority letter. **Bids Validity:** Ninety (90) days. **Place:** The place of auction, submission, inquiry and opening will be: The office of the Executive Engineer PHE District Nuskhi. **CONDITIONS:** All the terms and conditions can be seen/borrow in the Office of the undersigned in any office hours.

**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT DISTRICT NUSKHI**

PRO No.3964-02-03-2026

# Oil surges as Iran conflict disrupts Middle Eastern supply flow

**NEWS DESK:** Oil prices surged by as much as \$2.37 a barrel, the highest since January 2025, before retreating to be up \$3.41, or 7.4pc, to \$78.28 by 06:05.

US West Texas Intermediate crude climbed to an intraday high of \$75.33, up over 12pc and the highest since June, though it later pared gains and was up \$4.74, or 7.1pc, at \$71.76.

Both benchmarks jumped as a sustained exchange of counterattacks damaged tankers and sharply disrupted shipments in the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway between Iran and Oman that connects the Gulf to the Arabian Sea.

On a typical day, ships carrying oil en route to about one-fifth of global demand from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq, Iran, and Kuwait are through the Strait along



with tankers hauling diesel, jet fuel, and gasoline and other products from their refineries to major Asian markets, including China and India.

"Markets are acknowledging the seriousness of the conflict, but are also signalling that, for now, this is a geopolitical shock, not a systemic crisis," said Priyanka Sachdeva, senior analyst at Phillip Nova. Prolonged effective closure of the Strait would push oil prices higher and cause shortages in supply to top

importers, China and India. More than 200 vessels, including oil and liquefied gas tankers, have dropped anchor outside the Strait, shipping data showed on Sunday. Three tankers were damaged, and one seafarer was killed in at-

producer is essentially producing at capacity except for Saudi Arabia, RBC Capital analyst Helma Croft said.

The International Energy Agency is in touch with major producers in the Middle East, director Fatih Birol said on Sunday. The energy watchdog coordinates the release of strategic petroleum reserves from developed countries during emergencies.

Globally, visible oil inventories stood at 7.827 billion barrels, enough for 74 days of demand, which is near a historical median, Goldman Sachs wrote in a note.

Citi analysts expect Brent to trade between \$80 and \$90 a barrel this week amid the ongoing conflict.

"Our baseline view is that the Iranian leadership changes, or that the regime changes sufficiently to stop the war within 1-2 weeks, or the US decides to de-escalate, having seen a change in leadership and set back Iran's missiles and nuclear program over the same time frame," Citi analysts led by Max Layton wrote.

## Gulf businesses reel as Iran strikes trigger regional shutdowns

**NEWS DESK:** Iran's retaliatory strikes across the Gulf have triggered the most widespread business disruption in the region since the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing airport closures, halting port operations and sending shockwaves through financial markets.

The attacks, launched in response to a joint United States-Israeli assault on Iran, landed across every major state in the global region that has spent decades building its reputation as one of the world's most reliable business hubs.

Three people were killed by the attacks in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and loud explosions were heard for a third day in Dubai and Abu Dhabi on Monday.

The strikes marked an unprecedented escalation for Dubai, whose modern identity was built on being insulated from the region's conflicts.

From humble beginnings as a small fishing village, the emirate of Dubai used modest oil revenue to build ports, airports and trade cen-

ters before pivoting in the 1990s to luxury tourism, real estate and financial services.

"Regionally, the impact across (Gulf) economies is mixed," said Vijay Valecha, Chief Investment Officer at Century Financial.

"Elevated oil prices provide a fiscal cushion for producers such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, strengthening revenues and liquidity.

However, trade, logistics and tourism, particularly in the UAE, would face pressure if

shipping risks rise or regional sentiment weakens. "Stock markets fell sharply when trading opened on Sunday, with Saudi Arabia's benchmark index dropping more than 4% at the open and closing down 2.2%. Oman closed down 1.4% and Egypt lost 2.5%, both piling earlier losses. Qatar's index was down 2% in early trading on Monday.

The fresh crisis has rattled global markets. Brent crude rocketed to just over \$78 a barrel on Monday, up from a Friday close of \$72.87.

Asian equities fell broadly, with Japan's Nikkei down 1.6%, Hong Kong's Hang Seng losing 1.8% and Taiwan's benchmark shedding 0.9%.

UAE, whose financial markets don't trade on Sundays, took the rare step of closing the exchange on Monday and Tuesday.

Kuwait was closed on Sunday and suspended trading until further notice.

## UAE halts stock markets for two days after Iran strikes

**NEWS DESK:** The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has ordered its stock markets closed on Monday and Tuesday as the country reels from Iran's retaliatory missile and drone strikes, in a sign of the growing economic disruption sweeping the Gulf.

Iran carried out the strikes in Gulf countries that have US bases and assets after the joint attacks on the Islamic republic by Israel and America.

The UAE Capital Markets Authority said the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange and Dubai Financial Market would remain shut on March 2 and March 3, citing its supervisory and regulatory role over the country's capital markets.

"The Authority will continue to monitor developments in the region and assess the situation on an ongoing basis, taking any further measures as necessary," it said in a

statement.

The UAE's two exchanges are home to some of the region's most valuable listed companies.

The closure keeps billions of dollars in listed assets in suspension as investors await clarity on the scale of damage from Saturday and Sunday's strikes, which hit airports, ports and residential areas across the UAE and broader Gulf region.

Gulf markets that

did open on Sunday saw sharp declines.

Saudi Arabia's stock market fell more than four per cent at the open, Oman dropped 2.5pc, and Egypt's main index shed 5.44pc, while Kuwait suspended trading entirely.

All parties were advised to follow official UAE Capital Markets Authority, ADX and DFM channels for updates on the resumption of trading.

## Inflation update: power bills and produce push inflation to 6.98pc

**NEWS DESK:** According to the monthly review of price indices released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the National Consumer Price Index for February 2026 increased by 0.27pc over January 2026 and was up by 6.98pc from the corresponding month of 2025. Analysts at Topline Securities noted that this increase is in line with their estimate of 6.75-7.25pc.

Arti Habib Limited observed that this is the highest increase since October 2024.

The report showed that the Urban Consumer Price Index for February 2026 increased by 0.27pc over January 2026 and by 6.79pc from the corresponding month last year.

The main contributors that increased from the previous month in terms of food were tomatoes (23.05pc), fresh fruits (11.48pc), pulse mash (8.19pc), beverages (1.65pc), meat (1.45pc), pulse moong (1.25pc), mustard oil (1.20pc), dry fruits (0.78pc), wheat products (0.69pc), readymade food (0.44pc) and pulse gram (0.34pc).

The main contributors that increased from the previous month in



terms of non-food were electricity charges (10.03pc), cleaning and laundering (2.09pc), tailoring (2.04pc), solid fuel (1.71pc), and doctor (MBBS) clinic fee (1.05pc). The main contributors that fell from the previous month were eggs (22.39pc), chicken (19.99pc), potatoes (15.89pc), pulse masoor (4.03pc), onions (3.90pc), fresh vegetables (3.88pc), besan (1.67pc), vegetable ghee (0.99pc), cooking oil (0.94pc), gur (0.39pc), sugar (0.35pc), gram whole (0.17pc), transport services (0.38pc) and stationery (0.03pc).

The Rural Consumer Price Index for February 2026 increased by 0.28pc over January 2026, and increased by 7.27pc over the corresponding month of the last year. The Wholesale Price Index for February 2026 increased by 0.66pc over January 2026 and by the corresponding month of the last year.

The sensitive price indicator (SPI), which tracks changes in prices of essential goods and services, showed month shifts across different income quintiles in February 2026.

Compared to January 2026, all quintiles recorded a slight decline, reflecting a marginal easing in short-term price pressures. Quintile 1 fell 0.15pc, quintile 2 edged down 0.02pc, quintile 3 declined 0.20pc, quintile 4 dropped 0.30pc, and quintile 5 decreased 0.27pc, while the combined index fell 0.12pc.

On a year-on-year basis, the SPI remained higher across all quintiles. The largest increase was seen in quintile 2 at 5.88pc, followed by quintile 3 at 5.02pc, quintile 1 at 4.50pc, quintile 4 at 4.35pc, and quintile 5 at 3.50pc.

## The cost of slowing solar transition

**NEWS DESK:** Once again, the government has introduced a controversial policy change that has created significant uproar among stakeholders in the energy sector as they brace for its impact. The net billing policy has replaced the net metering regime.

Previously, the consumers under net metering paid for the difference between the electricity they exported to the grid and the electricity they imported from it. Under the new regime, the consumers will pay differing rates for the units they purchase from the grid and those they sell back to it, with the selling rate considerably lower than the purchase rate.

This shift in policy on electricity generation and grid distribution, labelled as the Prosumer Regulations 2026, has fundamentally altered the economics of solar energy investments in Pakistan. It has far-reaching implications not only for consumers who invested heavily in rooftop solar panels in recent years but also for industrial units, particularly exporters, that adopted this technology to benefit from cheaper and cleaner energy.

A recent study on trade policy measures to encourage green trade in Pakistan, published by



the Consortium for Development Policy Research, states that the implementation of net metering created much-needed momentum for solar investment by households and industries. This momentum had the potential to improve consumer welfare, even among middle-income households, while also generating environmental benefits.

The 2024 report noted that solar energy was becoming a staple source of power generation due to its widespread adoption. Lower carbon intensity in the energy used by exporters can help increase exports to countries that impose stricter environmental regulations on trade, such as the European Union.

Although the surge in imports of solar panels and related environmental goods could adversely affect the trade balance, the economy stands to benefit through higher consumer welfare and increased exports as Pakistani firms comply with environmentally friendly regulations in destination markets. Therefore, any slowdown in the adoption of environmentally friendly energy production could adversely affect the economy, particularly as the government struggles to raise exports and reach the daunting \$100 billion threshold. According to statistics from ITC's

TradeMap.org, Pakistan imported approximately \$2.2 billion worth of photovoltaic cells in 2024, mainly from China at duty-free rates. However, solar imports in the first six months of FY26 declined sharply to \$450 million, according to Pakistan Single Window data. Uptake has decreased likely due to policy uncertainty in the current fiscal year.

Pakistan was the fourth-largest importer of assembled solar panels in the world in 2024, after the United States, Brazil and India. Between 2020 and 2024, the growth rate was 53%, with Pakistan accounting for roughly 3% of global solar panel imports.

# Samson's 97 puts India into T20 World Cup semi-final against England

**NEWS DESK:**Sanju Samson's sparkling unbeaten 97 kept alive India's dream of retaining the T20 World Cup at home as they knocked out the West Indies with a five-wicket win in Kolkata on Sunday to set up a semi-final against England.

Samson hit 12 fours and four sixes in his superb 50-ball knock in the winner-takes-all final Super Eight match to thrill a capacity 67,000 fans at a pulsating Eden Gardens.

After the West Indies snatched 70 off the last five overs to score 195-4 after being asked to bat, India lost two early wickets but were always up with the required rate.

Samson, opening for the second match in succession, led the way when India slipped to 41-2, he was joined by captain Suryakumar Yadav (18) and the pair



added 58 for the third wicket. Tilak Varma was next to join Samson and scored 27 off 15 before departing in the 15th over with the score 141-4 and India

still needing 55. Jason Holder and Rovman Powell earlier put on an unbroken stand of 76 for the fifth wicket to help the West Indies set the defending champions

target of 196 to stay alive. The West Indies sprang a surprise at the top of the order, promoting Test captain Roston Chase to open alongside T20

skipper Shai Hope. That enabled them to bring in an extra spinner, Akeal Hosen, with regular opener Brandon King left out. In their defeat to South Africa last

week, the West Indies slumped to 83-7 but the new-look opening partnership was more assured. Spinner Varun Chakravarthy got the first breakthrough, bowling Hope

for a sluggish 32. Shimon Hetmyer raced to 27 off 12 balls before falling to the faintest of edges off Jasprit Bumrah to make it 102-2.

After Chase fell for 40 and Sherfane Rutherford followed, Powell and Holder launched their brutal late assault. Powell finished on 34 not out from 19 balls with two sixes and three fours, while Holder was unbeaten on 37 off 22 balls with three sixes and two fours.

It could have been better for India but they dropped three regulation catches in a sloppy fielding display, including Chase when he had made just 15.

South Africa, the only unbeaten side in the tournament, beat Zimbabwe by five wickets earlier on Sunday and will face New Zealand in Kolkata in the first semi-final on Wednesday.

## Sadaf, Fatima star as Pakistan thrash South Africa for consolation victory



**NEWS DESK:**Sadaf Shamas started with the bat while skipper Fatima Sana delivered an all-round show to help Pakistan women thrash South Africa in the third and final One-day International for a 119-run consolation victory at the Kingsmead Cricket Ground on Sunday.

Sadaf scored a 71-ball 97 (16 fours and a six) while Fatima added a late 60 off 41 (three fours and five sixes) to 306 before Sadia Iqbal's 3-41 and Fatima's 2-29 saw

South Africa bundled out for 187. Put in to bat first, Pakistan lost opening batter Gul Feroza early before Sadaf and Sidra Amin (41) stitched a 130-run partnership.

Pakistan stood at 164-3 following the duo's departure but lost two quick wickets, which required a rescue effort of sorts and Fatima, along with Najiba Alvi were up to the task.

The pair put up 65 for the sixth wicket before Najiba was dismissed in the 48th over. Fatima brought up her

fifth ODI half-century and remained unbeaten. For the Proteas, Sune Luus bagged 3-42 while Nonkululeko Mabha returned figures of 2-36.

In reply, Tasmia Rubab (1-19) provided Pakistan with the first breakthrough as she dismissed Lazim Brits in her first over. Fatima continued the momentum with her pace as she bagged the scalps of her counterpart Laura Wolvaardt and Luus for a duck in space of three deliveries to reduce the hosts to 7-3 after 27

overs. First drop Faye Tunnicliffe (47) and top-scorer Annerie Dercksen (54) then stitched an 85-run alliance for the fourth wicket, before the former was out caught and bowled by Nasra Sundu (2-25).

Sinalo Jafra (33) joined Dercksen at the crease and put together 50 runs before being removed by Sadia. Umm-e-Hani (2-35) sent Dercksen back in the but six deliveries later to leave the hosts to 147-6 after 27

## Lukaku saves Napoli's blushes



**NEWS DESK:**Romelu Lukaku kept Napoli on course for a Champions League spot with a last-gasp winner in Saturday's 2-1 victory over rock-bottom Verona, the Belgium forward's first goal of the season.

Lukaku forced home Giovane's cross to give third-placed Napoli all three points with the last kick of the game at the Stadio Marcantonio Bentegodi.

Napoli had looked like dropping points in northern Italy when Jean-Daniel Akpa Akpro levelled Rasmus Hojlund's early opener in the 65th minute. But Lukaku, who

only played his first game of the season in late January, gave Napoli a huge win with both Como and Atalanta pushing for a top-four placing.

However Napoli's title defence is all but over as they trail runaway league leaders Inter Milan, who host Genoa in Saturday's late match, by 11 points after an injury-ravaged season.

Napoli were missing key midfielders Scott McTominay, Kevin De Bruyne and Andre-Frank Anguissa on Saturday, as well as captain Giovanni Di Lorenzo.

Verona, under interim coach Paolo Sammarco following the sacking of Paolo Zanetti earlier this month, are 10 points from safety after a 12th straight match without a win.

Como, who face Inter in the first leg of the Italian Cup semi-finals on Tuesday, strolled to 3-1 victory over strugglers Lecce to continue their push for a first-ever qualification for European football.

Cesc Fabregas's team are two points behind Roma, in fourth and Juventus' opponents on Sunday, and five behind Napoli.

Star man Nico Paz started on the bench for Como ahead of that

clash with Inter, the Argentine starlet coming on midway through the second half with the hosts already two goals to the good.

Como went behind early to a fine Lassana Coulibaly header, but Jasson Douvikas, Jesus Rodriguez and Marc Oliver Kempff all netted before half-time to secure a simple three points.

Como moved two points ahead of sixth-placed Juve who face Roma trying to stay in touch with the Champions League places after being eliminated from Europe's elite club competition by Galatasaray on Wednesday.

## United climb to third, Fulham sink sorry Spurs

**NEWS DESK:**Benjamin Sesko stretched his hot streak with the winning goal as Manchester United beat Crystal Palace 2-1 to go third in the Premier League, while Tottenham Hotspur failed to dispel relegation fears after defeat at Fulham.

Sesko was handed his first start in seven games since Michael Carrick took charge at Old Trafford and rewarded his boss with another vital goal to edge United closer to a return to the Champions League.

Palace had taken an early lead at Old Trafford

when Maxence Lacroix outmuscled Leny Yoro to guide in a header from Brennan Johnson's corner.

But United hit back to remain unbeaten under Carrick and take their tally to 19 points from a possible 21.

The game swung on the incident as Lacroix was sent off and conceded a penalty for pulling back Mathew Cunha just before the hour mark.

Bruno Fernandes confidently stroked the resulting spot-kick past former team-mate Dean Henderson. Fernandes was then the creator for

the second as his curling cross was powered in by Sesko.

The Slovenian has now scored seven times in his last eight appearances to quieten critics of his 74 million (\$100 million) price tag after a slow start to his career in England.

Manchester United remain perilously poised just four points above the relegation zone as interim boss Igor Tudor again failed to halt their alarming slide after a 2-1 defeat at Craven Cottage.

Harry Wilson and Alex Iwobi gave Fulham a deserved half-time lead

as they moved up to ninth and back into contention for European football next season.

Richardson headed in a late consolation for Tottenham, but they remain the only Premier League side without a win in 2026.

The one crumb of comfort for Spurs was defeat for relegation rivals Nottingham Forest, 2-1 against Brighton and Hove Albion.

All three goals arrived in the first 15 minutes as Diego Gomez and Danny Welbeck netted for the Seagulls either side of Morgan Gibbs-White's reply.

Forest sit two points above the drop zone ahead of a daunting trip to Manchester City on Wednesday. On Saturday, Manchester City shrugged off the absence of Erling Haaland to keep on top of Premier League leaders Arsenal with a 1-0 win against Leeds United.

Haaland was absent for the trip to the city of his birth due to a minor injury that Pep Guardiola described as "not a big problem".

Without the Norwegian, City were far from their best but ground out a vital three points against a Leeds side that had lost just twice in their previous 16 games.

## Bangladesh tackle gender barriers

**NEWS DESK:** Bangladesh's national football team face daunting odds at their first-ever Women's Asian Cup, but have already scored a major victory by qualifying.

In the South Asian nation of 170 million, social stigma, family expectations, poverty and religious fundamentalists have long relegated women and girls to sports sidelines. The first women's football league matches took place in 2011, and the squad, known to fans as the Red and Green, have kept pressing forward despite deeply embedded prejudices.

"Many more girls would have joined us if the community had been even slightly supportive," she said. "Bitter words" would have ruined us if arranged marriages.

"Families often cannot bear the social pressure, so they stop their girls from playing," she said. "Bitter words" Emboldened by upsurge in political turmoil have only increased the obstacles. heavily since the 2024 uprising that overthrew

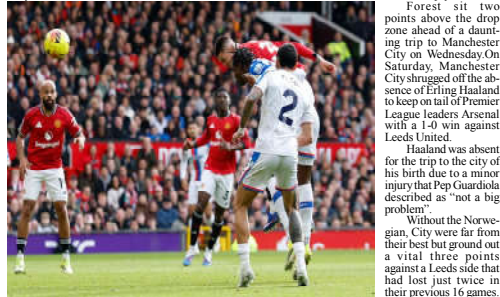
the government, Islamist activists have directed much of their attention towards Bangladesh women, accusing them of insufficient modesty. Several women's football matches were cancelled last year after pitch invasions and threats of



violence. While the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which won last month's general elections, has vowed to back women's rights, and it is often not possible for them to provide financial support," said Prince, a women's football organiser. "Some of their parents are rich-shaw pullers, labourers, or tea vendors... Some cannot afford it and quit football. I feel like quitting too every time I see a girl leaving the game."

Shifting attitudes While on a break from passing drills at an early morning training session at the National Stadium in Dhaka, Bangladesh Football Federation coach Saiful Bari Titu, 53, said "just talking about the women's privilege for me."

My sister and I both wanted to be footballers, and for that my parents - especially my mother - had to endure bitter words," said the 20-year-old, who started playing at the age of five. Her father, Khandaker Arif Hossain Prince, backed his daughters' athletic ambi-





## Will not allow any entity to use neighbouring territory to destabilise our peace, president says in joint sitting

**NEWS DESK:** President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday addressed a joint sitting of Parliament amid a ruckus by members of the opposition, saying that Pakistan would not "allow any entity, domestic or foreign to use neighbouring territory to destabilise our peace".

This was his ninth address to a joint session of Parliament in his capacity as president. His address was punctuated with sloganeering from the opposition, who chanted, "Go, Zardari, go" and "Khan karo (free Iman Khan)".

At one point, the opposition gathered in front of the speakers' chairs and continued to raise slogans. President Zardari began his address by saying that it was his "singular privilege" to address the house for the ninth time at the beginning of the new parliamentary year. "Each such address is a reminder of the continuity of the democratic system and the responsibility we carry as representatives of the people of Pakistan," he said. "The past year has reminded us that the strength of our republic lies in its Constitution," he said. "As we gather here today, we stand on the foundation laid by those who shaped our national journey," he said. He said that the founder of the nation, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had envisioned a democratic state rooted in constitutionalism and the rule of law. "The last time I was president, I unilaterally returned the powers given to the president back to the House of Par-

liament as envisioned in the 1973 Constitution, through the 18th Amendment," he said. "Today, the presidency stands as a symbol of unity... a bridge between federating units and a guardian of constitutional law," he said.

"Past 10 months have tested our nation," he further said that the past ten months had tested the nation in "profound and complex ways". He said that when the country's sovereignty was challenged, "Pakistan responded with 'strategic restraint and firm resolve'".

He said that confrontations with "unprovoked attacks on both our borders one after the other", the armed forces responded with professionalism and discipline.

Talking about Marka-Haq, he said that they turned India's attack on the motherland into a strategic victory. "On the western border, when the Taliban regime ramped up a long line of attacks, on the night of Feb 26, our security forces acted decisively," he said. "The political leadership stood united, the people stood resolute," he said. He expressed gratitude to the armed forces for defending the country's border. "It is because of their vigilance, bravery and service that we are sitting here secure in our workplaces and homes," he said. He said that the sacrifices of the country's armed forces and law enforcement agencies in both conflicts could not be reduced to mere numbers. "We only see their actions on the media

with pride. We don't really see their blood and sweat and tears that go into their training and service. Each operation reflects planning, discipline and restraint. Each martyr represents a family that has borne the ultimate [sacrifice] for Pakistan's stability," he said.

He said that 2025 marked a turning point for Pakistan, defined by the resounding military victory in Marka-Haq. He also talked about occupied Kashmir, saying that nobody in South Asia would be free or safe until the Kashmiris won their freedom. He said that India's leaders had said they were preparing for another war.

"As a life-long advocate for peace, I would not recommend it. At the same time, I will also say that any aggressor should prepare for another humiliating defeat; make no mistake, we are ready for you. Move away from warfare to meaningful negotiation. That is the only path for regional security," he said. "Pakistan is a responsible nuclear state and understands the weight of that responsibility. At the same time, we are a state that defends itself when required. Our conduct reflects maturity, confidence and clarity of purpose," he said. "Will not allow any entity to use neighbouring territory to destabilise peace".

He said that last week, when India began to amplify proxy operations via Afghanistan, the Taliban regime saw what Pakistan can do when pushed past the red line. "Official communication from Doha about the latest situation was, however, still awaited. LNG supplies would nevertheless not be

## \$60bn Indian plan for river storage raises alarm

**NEWS DESK:** Around \$60 billion in investment by New Delhi on storage projects along the two major western rivers — the Jhelum and Chenab — flowing from India-held Kashmir could soon become a lethal weapon against Pakistan, potentially causing both floods and droughts.

A recent federal-provincial dialogue on water storage projects, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chair-man retired Lt Gen Muhammad Saeed reported that India's \$60bn investment plan was estimated to increase New Delhi's storage capacity on these rivers to 5.5-6.5 days, up from around 15 days at present.

"Such capacity could cause drought in Pakistan, given a nearly two-month window to stop normal flows, particularly when crops need crucial water downstream," a participant at the briefing told Dawn. "Conversely, India can trigger floods at will during monsoon or heavy rainfall by releasing stored water, something it has been doing recently even with its existing 1.5-day storage capacity," he added.

Therefore, Pakistan must urgently build large reservoirs as preparedness measures to capture future floodwaters for use when India disrupts flows, and to hold substantial quantities in case of sudden discharges to avoid devastation.

The Wapda chair-man stressed that Pakistan would need new flood reservoirs to conserve surplus water and mitigate potential shocks. An official said Pakistan must aggressively develop water storage to capture repeated annual floodwaters that otherwise flow into the sea. Weaponisation of river flows by India through ongoing investments, the official warned, could pose existential challenges.

Held on Feb 17, the session was presided over by Water Resources Minister Mian Moeen Wattoo and at-



tended by the AJK PM and the GB CM, but not the provincial chief ministers. The prime minister had also asked chief secretaries and irrigation secretaries to attend. Sindh's irrigation minister and secretary warned that Pakistan was already water-deficient and that river flows did not justify a large dam. They added that receiving enough drinking water under the current situation and that additional dams could aggravate conditions. Therefore, detailed feasibility and economic assessments should be prepared before taking any decision.

They also noted that projects developed in urgency in response

to Indian actions might not prove to be a bankable solution — perhaps an indirect reference to the Rs500bn Neelum-Jhelum Hydro-power Project that remains mostly out of order.

The GB leadership suggested the region should be granted membership of the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) to ensure national lower riparians were not least observer status to participate in decision-making.

The AJK PM said given Kashmir's status as the source of river flows, it would welcome more dams, storage facilities and hydropower projects. However, he stressed the need for financial incentives so that the Kashmiri popu-

lation not only took pride in its contributions but also benefited economically.

Punjab fully supported new flood storage projects and offered to sit down with Sindh's leadership, providing assurances and institutional guarantees to address grievances and reservations.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa demanded that its Chashma Right Bank Canal lift-cum-gravity project be developed at the earliest, noting that the province had been unable to utilise its water share without it.

The Wapda chairman assured representatives that tenders had already been issued and that the project would be prioritised.

## Govt to translate impact of rising global oil prices to consumers under existing fortnightly mechanism

**NEWS DESK:** Amid disruption to LNG imports from Qatar, the government on Monday decided to keep translating the impact of rising global oil prices to consumers through the existing fortnightly pass-through mechanism to avoid a fiscal bulge amid close monitoring of supplies.

A meeting of the newly created 18-member cabinet committee on energy, constituted by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to monitor petroleum prices in the wake of the emerging situation in the region, was told that petrol and diesel stocks in the country were sufficient to amply proxy operations via Afghanistan, the Taliban regime saw what Pakistan can do when pushed past the red line.

Official communication from Doha about the latest situation was, however, still awaited. LNG supplies would nevertheless not be

available beyond a few cargoes that had already crossed the Strait of Hormuz towards Karachi.

The 18-member cabinet body constituted by the prime minister included the ministers concerned were directed to explore alternate supply routes. It was reported that while there was no emergency situation, Saudi supplies of finished products could be routed through the Red

Sea, while UAE imports through Fujairah were beyond the troubled route.

According to an official handout, the committee also undertook a comprehensive stock-taking exercise and deliberated on all matters within its mandate.

Members reviewed trends in forward and futures prices of petroleum products, assessed the resilience of regional and international supply chains amid the evolu-

tion of geopolitical environment, examined potential short and medium-term foreign exchange implications of price volatility, and evaluated measures to prevent supply disruptions while ensuring uninterrupted domestic availability of petroleum products.

The possible fiscal impact of a prolonged conflict was also considered, but there was a lack of visibility due to uncertainties.

A detailed assessment of global oil market conditions was presented, including movements in international benchmarks, freight and insurance costs, shipping route dynamics, and alternative sourcing options. Various supply and pricing scenarios were evaluated to ensure preparedness under different contingencies. It was, however, noted that these costs would become clear once the London market started business.

## Punjab CM approves province's first cybercrime investigation unit

**NEWS DESK:** Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday approved the establishment of the province's first cybercrime investigation unit and made e-tagging mandatory for all vehicles, including motorcycles. According to an official press release, during a special meeting to crack down on digital terrorism and bring cyber networks under strict surveillance, the Punjab CM said the state's surveillance across Punjab would be significantly intensified in the coming days. She also directed the establishment of a "micro security iron shield" within seven days. Further, CM Maryam also gave the go-ahead for the establishment of a "Punjab Cybercrime Investigation Unit (CIU)" and

also approved the appointment of its head, the handout said.

Further, she also approved a special protection cell for women affected by cybercrime. She also approved district-level cybercrime centres across Punjab, saying that no "safe routes" would be allowed for criminal groups in the province, it added.

During the meeting, the Punjab CM said that e-tagging would be mandatory for all vehicles in the province, including motorcycles.

Further, she directed to block movement through non-traditional provincial entry points, and the installation of searchlights at entry points also gave the go-ahead for the establishment of a "Punjab Cybercrime Investigation Unit (CIU)" and

also directed rooftop monitoring systems at check

posts and ordered the department concerned to procure an advanced drone defence system, the press release said.

She also stressed on the regulation and restriction of unauthorised drone usage. CM Maryam stated that combining operations would continue to identify terrorists and criminal elements.

She also gave instructions to enhance training and equip the Riot Management Police with modern gear.

"We must remain united and proactive to eliminate terrorism. We cannot afford complacency as everyone must remain vigilant," she was quoted as saying.

"The nature of warfare has changed, and we must adapt and prepare accordingly," she added.



## Pakistan making 'full diplomatic efforts' to de-escalate situation in Middle East, says Dar

**NEWS DESK:** Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday said Pakistan was making "full diplomatic efforts" to de-escalate the regional situation following attacks by the United States and Israel on Iran.

"This recent escalation... has significantly heightened tensions in an already volatile and fragile environment. We are making full diplomatic efforts and requesting all parties to de-escalate," Dar said during a media briefing in Islamabad.

He recalled Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Austria and noted that he held discussions with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), saying that the "feedback was positive". He said that "serious developments" had taken place at a time when "diplomatic efforts were underway to a peaceful and negotiable... solution".

"But what triggered all of a sudden engulfed... almost all countries," he said.

He then referred to a high-level meeting chaired by the prime minister on Sunday, which reviewed the regional environment and the situation between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

## STRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Commenting on the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and said: "We are concerned about the violation of UN norms as well as international law... that the heads of state and the international community... have been targeted."

The foreign minister said Pakistan had expressed its position through the door to dialogue and diplomacy must not be closed.

Pakistan's position has been clear and persistent that all countries must abide by the principles of the UN Charter and international law, including re-

spect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states, as well as international humanitarian law," he said.

He said that during his conversation with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi last week and said "I conveyed Pakistan's condemnation of the attacks, called for diplomacy, restraint and dialogue, to which he positively responded."

However, he said, "only for this region but wherever there is any conflict," he said.

The Foreign Minister also talked about the emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

held on the situation in the Middle East, saying "Pakistan's permanent representative at the UN also reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of the attack on Iran."

The deputy prime minister further stated that he spoke with the foreign ministers of several countries in this regard. "I think I have not talked to anyone who disagrees that dialogue and diplomacy are the only way forward, not only for this region but wherever there is any conflict," he said.

"Pakistan also stands in full solidarity with all our brotherly countries and under-

scores the need to exercise maximum restraint," he said, adding that this was the message Pakistan's leadership was giving in conversations with others.

He acknowledged that while Iran's retaliation strikes were in self-defence, Pakistan regretted and condemned the strikes against Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

"We can't have double standards," he said. He said that while Iran had stated that it was not an "outlet" for its anger in these countries, there was "no justification".