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Iran Conflict Day 4: 787 Dead in Iran, 6 US Troops Killed, 10-12 in Israel – Gulf States Report Limited Casualties

News agencies, Monitoring Desk:

The Middle East conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran has entered its fourth day on March 3, 2026, marked by ongoing airstrikes, missile barrages, and ground operations that have caused mounting casualties across multiple countries.

Figures remain preliminary, with variations across sources due to the fluid situation and challenges in independent verification.

Iran reports the highest toll from U.S. and Israeli strikes on military, nuclear-related, leadership, and other sites. The Iranian Red Crescent Society states at least 787 people killed (including civilians and military), with hundreds injured; incidents include a strike on a girls' school in Minab with significant child casualties.

In Israel, Iranian missiles and drones, plus related threats from Hezbollah, have killed at least 10-12 people, with hundreds injured, mainly in areas

like Beit Shemesh near Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Air defenses have mitigated many impacts. The United States confirms six service members killed (from Iranian strikes on bases, including in Kuwait) and 18 seriously wounded, per U.S. Central Command.

Iran's retaliatory strikes have targeted U.S. assets and sites in Gulf states including the UAE (Dubai and others), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman—hitting bases, airports, ports, and energy infrastructure. Verified deaths remain limited, around 6-8 total (e.g., three in the UAE, isolated cases elsewhere), with dozens injured; effective defenses have prevented larger civilian losses.

In Lebanon, Israeli operations against Hezbollah have killed at least 31-52 people, displacing tens of thousands. Fighting persists: Israel conducts simultaneous strikes on Tehran and Beirut while advancing in southern Lebanon; Iran launches additional missiles and threatens the Strait of Hormuz.

The U.S. has closed embassies in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, evacuated nonessential personnel, and issued broad travel warnings. President Trump indicates the campaign—focused on degrading Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities—may continue for weeks, while international calls urge de-escalation to prevent further regional catastrophe.

Oil prices rise sharply, and civilians endure widespread fear, displacement, and grief in promoting de-escalation and dialogue," he said. "We agreed that maximum restraint by all parties is imperative to prevent further escalation. We also exchanged views on recent developments in Afghanistan and resolved to remain in close and frequent contact in our shared pursuit of peace and stability in the region," he said. According to Radio Pakistan, PM Shehbaz also said during the phone call that Pakistan had conveyed its readiness to play a constructive role in efforts aimed at resolving the crisis in the Middle East. "Both leaders underscored the importance of maximum restraint by all parties to prevent further escalation," it said. The report further added that PM Shehbaz also took President Erdogan into confidence on the context of Afghanistan. "The two leaders agreed to remain in close and frequent contact in this regard while continuing their efforts to bring peace and stability in the region," the report said. Relations between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban are at their lowest point in the four years since the group came to power.

Imran Khan's vision has 'improved remarkably': PIMS

NEWSDESK:

The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) said on Tuesday that former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has shown significant improvement in his vision following his second dose of intravitreal anti-VEGF injection.

"The results are encouraging. His vision has improved remarkably, and it is at a substantially good level at this stage," read a statement issued by PIMS.

It added that the examination of the PTI founder was conducted today at Adiala jail, involving the following medical professionals: Dr Nadeem Qureshi, the head of the Vitreoretinal Department at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, Rawalpindi, and Prof. Dr Arif Khan, the head of the Ophthalmology Department at PIMS, Islamabad. The statement further said that the medical board performed comprehensive tests, including visual acuity checks, funduscopy, slit-lamp examinations, and optical coherence tomography on both of Imran's eyes.

"The board also provided recommendations for further care, advising Imran to continue with the previously planned treatment regimen," it stated.

Meanwhile, PTI has strongly rejected the statement issued by the PIMS concerning the health of founder, Imran Khan, arguing that any medical examination conducted without the presence of Imran's personal physicians and immediate family lacks the necessary transparency and credibility.

"Any medical examination conducted without the presence of his personal physicians and immediate family lacks transparency and credibility," the statement said. "For months, serious concerns have been raised regarding his health, access to independent medical care, and the denial of family-supervised evaluations."

PTI reiterated its non-negotiable demand that Imran be immediately examined in the presence of his personal physicians and family members. "As per the wishes of his family, he must be shifted without delay to Shifa International Hospital for independent, transparent and comprehensive medical evaluation and treatment," it said. The party condemned the continued refusal to grant independent medical access, stating that it only deepens public concern and raises serious questions about the handling of Imran's health.

Turkiye will contribute to re-establishment of Pak-Afghan ceasefire, Erdogan tells PM Shehbaz

NEWSDESK:

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday held a telephone conversation with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in which the latter said Türkiye would "contribute to the re-establishment of the ceasefire between Pakistan and Afghanistan".

According to a post on X by the Turkish Presidency, the two leaders discussed ties between Pakistan and Türkiye and also "regional and global issues".

"Condemning the terror attacks carried out in Pakistan, President Erdogan said Türkiye will continue to stand by Pakistan in its anti-terror fight, and that it will contribute to the re-establishment of the ceasefire between Pakistan and Afghanistan, reached through Türkiye's initiatives as well," the Presidency said.

"Stressing that engaging once again in diplomacy in the region regarding the conflicts that began with the attacks against Iran will be extremely beneficial, President Erdogan noted that Türkiye stands ready to provide all the support it can to that end," it added.

Meanwhile, PM Shehbaz said that in the phone call with



Erdogan, the two discussed the "escalating situation in the Middle East". "I strongly condemned the Israeli attack on Iran and the subsequent regrettable attacks on brotherly Gulf coun-



tries. I apprised President Erdogan of my outreach to the brotherly Gulf leadership and re-

affirmed Pakistan's full solidarity with them, as well as our readiness to play a constructive role

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Balochistan's Tree Plantation Drive Must Go Beyond Ceremonies



Editorial: Every spring, usually between February and March, Balochistan witnesses the launch of tree plantation campaigns. Saplings are planted at official ceremonies, photographs circulate on social media, and hopeful statements are issued about a greener future.

While these efforts matter, they fall short of what the province truly needs.

Balochistan is one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in Pakistan and ranks among the hardest-hit areas globally by climate change.

Rising temperatures, recurring droughts, shrinking water resources, and disappearing wildlife are no longer distant threats—they are daily realities for communities across the province.

In such circumstances, tree plantation cannot remain a symbolic activity limited to headlines and hashtags.

What is required is a serious shift toward sustainable plantation. Planting a sapling is only the first step.

Ensuring its survival—through protection, irrigation, monitoring, and community ownership—is what makes a difference.

The success of plantation drives should be measured by how many trees survive after one, three, or five years, not by the number of photo sessions held.

The Forest and Wildlife Department must move beyond publicity-driven campaigns and focus on long-term environmental impact.

Native and drought-resistant species should be prioritized, while schools, universities, and local communities must be made partners in protecting and nurturing plantations.

At a time when climate change threatens livelihoods, Balochistan does not need unnecessary construction projects or decorative infrastructure.

It needs a large-scale, province-wide plantation initiative—similar to a plantation tsunami—with clear targets aimed at reducing the effects of global warming, improving air quality, and restoring ecological balance.

A genuinely sustainable tree plantation campaign can help secure Balochistan's future. The province's environment cannot wait for another season of symbolic planting; it needs action that takes root and grows.

BUIITEMS Organizes Open Day to Inspire Students Across Balochistan

Syed Dara Shikoh Amir, QUETTA: The Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Man-

agement Sciences (BUIITEMS) Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez reaffirmed the university's mission of inclusive education and knowl-

edge sharing. He stated: "BUIITEMS is the university of every student from across the province by hosting a vibrant 'Open Day', showcasing its modern academic facilities, innovative programs, and lively campus culture. Delivering a spe-

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South-West Asia and the War Against Narcotics: Where Does Pakistan Stand?

By Dr. B. Sultan: Lady Macbeth once remarked that "a little water clears us of this deed" after the assassination of the King. Yet, with time, she remained haunted, obsessively rubbing her hands in an attempt to cleanse the imagined stains of blood. The persistence of narcotics production and trade in South-West Asia resembles this unending struggle—a dark reality that cannot be easily washed away.

Afghanistan has long been recognized as the world's largest producer of opium, with its roots tracing back to the early 1900s. Over the decades, the repercussions of this industry spilled into neighboring Pakistan and Iran. In the late 2000s, Taliban leader Mullah Omar imposed a strict ban on poppy cultivation through threats, forced eradication, and severe punishments. However, as revealed by the UNODC Opium Survey 2007, the ban primarily targeted cultivation while the trade continued. After the fall of the Taliban, opium again became a major source of funding for logistics, weapons, and militia payments.

In 2022, the Taliban leadership once again announced a ban on poppy cultivation, with Hibatullah Akhundzada officially declaring significant reductions. Some Western reports, supported by satellite imagery, showcased de-



clining poppy fields in southern Afghanistan. However, this raises critical questions: Can Afghanistan realistically abandon such a central economic resource while facing sanctions? And what consequences does this shift have for Pakistan? While certain

international outlets hastily claim that Pakistan has become a new hub for narcotics, such narratives ignore key realities. The issue is not a simple matter of "shifting sands" but a complex regional security challenge. The porous border between Pakistan and Afghani-

stan, coupled with cross-border networks of drug traffickers, means temporary shifts in cultivation are often strategic rather than permanent. Moreover, Afghanistan's pivot towards methamphetamine production—highlighted by satellite

evidence of expanded ephedra processing hubs—reflects adaptive strategies of traffickers rather than genuine eradication. In Pakistan, however, the situation is markedly different. Since 2001, the country has largely maintained its "poppy-free"

status, despite sporadic spillovers from Afghanistan. Following the Taliban's 2022 ban, some illicit cultivations did emerge in border areas, particularly within Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Yet, these were swiftly addressed through

Pakistan's Poppy Elimination Campaign (PEC-2025). This multi-agency effort, led by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and provincial administrations, successfully destroyed thousands of acres of illegal poppy fields. Over 250 FIRs were registered,

dozens of arrests were made, and awareness campaigns were launched across educational institutions. Importantly, independent surveys after March 2025 confirmed the effectiveness of these eradication drives.

Pakistan's determination to combat narcotics often remains under-reported internationally, overshadowed by outdated or selective portrayals.

The fact remains: Pakistan continues to fight this menace not only for its own stability but also for global security.

What is urgently needed is greater recognition of these efforts by the international community and enhanced cooperation from agencies such as the UNODC.

As South-West Asia remains at the heart of global narcotics trade routes, Pakistan's role is both frontline and decisive. Balochistan, in particular, holds the potential to transform from a vulnerable transit zone into a hub of opportunity, stability, and resilience. Just as Lady Macbeth's imagined guilt could not be washed away with water, the global community cannot absolve itself of responsibility by ignoring Pakistan's sacrifices and achievements in this ongoing struggle. The fight against narcotics requires collective recognition, support, and action—not selective narratives.

Israeli troops carry out incursions along parts of Lebanese border

NEWS DESK: Israeli troops were carrying out incursions along some parts of the Lebanese border, a Lebanese official told Reuters on Tuesday.

Witnesses said the Lebanese army had pulled out of at least seven forward operating positions along the border.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency confirmed the Lebanese army was evacuating "advanced positions" along the Israeli border after Israel's military said its troops were operating in southern Lebanon in what it described as a "forward defence posture".

Separately, an attack by two drones early Tuesday on the US embassy in Riyadh sparked a small fire, a Saudi defence ministry spokesman said in a statement, while Iran pressed on with retaliatory strikes across the Gulf.

According to Reuters, there were no reported injuries, two of the people familiar with the matter said, given that the building was empty in the early morning hours.

The US and Israeli air war against Iran began with attacks against Tehran on Saturday, killing Iranian Su-



preme Leader Ali Khamenei, and prompting Iranian retaliation against Israel and missile attacks at Arab nations with US bases across the Middle East.

The US Embassy in Riyadh was attacked by two drones, according to initial assessments. The attack resulted in a limited fire and minor material damage to the building," the statement said.

Two witnesses told AFP they saw fire engines around the embassy. Earlier, witnesses said they had seen smoke over the building housing the US mission and heard loud explosions in the diplomatic quarter, home to foreign embassies in the

Saudi capital. A source close to the Saudi army, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive issue, told AFP that Saudi air defences intercepted four drones targeting Riyadh's diplomatic

quarter in the attack. In the aftermath, the US embassy issued shelter in place notifications for Jeddah, Riyadh and Dhahran and limited non-essential travel to any military installations in the region. Later on

Tuesday, the Saudi defence ministry said it had intercepted more than half a dozen drones near the capital Riyadh and the city of Al-Kharj.

of Riyadh and Al-Kharj," said defence ministry spokesman Major General Turki al-Malki on X. US CENTCOM has said in a post on X that American forces have destroyed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps facilities, air defences, missile and drone launch sites, and military air-

fields. "US forces have destroyed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) command and control facilities, Iranian air defense capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and military airfields during sustained operations." The attacks in Saudi Arabia coincided with a wave of missiles and drones launched at Gulf states, with the UAE defence ministry saying it was dealing with a barrage of ballistic missiles coming from Iran.

In Qatar, the military intercepted two ballistic missiles early Tuesday morning, the country's defence ministry said in a statement.

Iran's salvos have hit ports, airports, residential buildings and hotels along with military sites across the wealthy region of oil giants.

On Monday, smoke poured out of Kuwait City's US embassy, an AFP correspondent saw.

Netanyahu says war against Iran may take 'some time', but not years

NEWS DESK: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that the US and Israel's war against Iran may take "some time", but it will not take years.

The US and Israeli air war against Iran began with attacks against Tehran on Saturday, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei,

and prompting Iranian retaliation against Israel and missile attacks at Arab nations with US bases across the Middle East.

President Donald Trump initially projected the war to last four to five weeks, but added it could go on longer, and has since sought to justify a broad, open-ended war on Iran.

Netanyahu rejected the idea of the conflict lasting years, like previous wars in the region.

"I said it could be quick and decisive. It may take some time, but it's not going to take years.

"It's not an endless war," Netanyahu said on Fox News' "Hammy" program.

The assault on Iran formed part of a list of Trump's foreign policy

actions that have marked a striking shift from his "America First" rhetoric against US interventions when he campaigned in the 2024 elections.

Netanyahu said he saw the war as an opportunity for lasting peace in the Middle East, including between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

"Yes, I do," he said, when asked if he saw a lasting path to peace in the region.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll showed over the weekend that only one in four Americans approved of US strikes on Iran that have plunged the Middle East into chaos.

US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that lasted several years made many Americans sceptical of Washington's direct involvement in wars on foreign soil.

Netanyahu said the US and Israel's war against Iran was creating a scenario for the Iranian people to topple their government.

"Now, of course, it's up to the people of Iran in the final count to change the government, but we are creating - America and Israel together are creating - the conditions for them to do so," he said.

Trump's stated aims and timeline for the war have shifted

since it began over the weekend. On Saturday, when he announced the strikes, he urged Iranians to "take back your country" and implied a goal of toppling the government.

In comments on Monday, Trump made no mention of toppling Iran's government and said the war was needed to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

Israel is widely believed to be the only Middle Eastern country with nuclear weapons.

Washington also has nuclear weapons.

Satellite imagery shows apparent attack on Iranian nuclear site, report says

NEWS NEWS: Commercial satellite imagery has captured what appears to be the first known strike on an Iranian nuclear site since the start of the US-Israeli air operation, an independent policy institute said on Monday.

The Institute for Science and International Atomic Energy Agency produced by Colorado-based Vantor showed two strikes on an underground uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, which Tehran denies seeking, and to thwart its long-range ballistic missile program.

Israel is widely believed to be the only Middle Eastern country with nuclear weapons.

imagery of the Natanz strikes. The US and Israel launched their air war against Iran early Saturday, triggering Iranian retaliatory strikes around the region.

Albright's findings appeared to corroborate an earlier statement by Reza Najafi, Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency, that Natanz was hit on Sunday. Najafi was disputing a comment by IAEA chief Rafael Grossi, who said there was no sign that any nuclear site had been hit. Albright said it was likely that Grossi had re-

lated on imagery produced before the pictures obtained by his institute.

The IAEA did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The White House and US Central Command also did not immediately respond.

Iran's nuclear programme is among the reasons Israel and the US have given for the attacks, alleging Iran was getting too close to being able to eventually make a nuclear bomb.

Iranian nuclear site, report says

showed that three buildings at Natanz had been destroyed.

Two were personnel entrances to two underground halls housing thousands of centrifuges, machines that enrich uranium for use in power plants or weapons, depending on the duration.

Even though the US attack was getting too close to indicate that the halls still contained "recoverable centrifuges" or other related equipment, the report said.



David Albright, a former UN nuclear inspector and founder of the institute, said the strikes appeared to have occurred sometime between Sunday afternoon and Monday morning local time, based on the satellite imagery his group reviewed.

He was unable to identify whether the US or Israel hit the Natanz complex, one of the main facilities of Iran's nuclear program.

He credited Ben Tzion Macales, an Israeli geo-analyst, as being the first to find satellite

169 killed in South Sudan massacre

NEWS DESK: At least 169 people have been killed and buried in a mass grave in northern South Sudan, two local officials said on Monday, as the country sees a dramatic increase in violence.

South Sudan, the world's youngest country, has been beset by civil war, poverty and massive corruption since it was formed in 2011.

The United Nations wants a return to "all-out civil war" as a power-sharing deal between President Salva Kiir and his long-time rival, Riek Machar, has unravelled over the past year.

The desperately poor east African country also faces chronic ethnic violence and violent cattle-raiding.

MSF says 26 members of staff are missing following an air strike on one of its facilities.

The latest massacre happened early on Sunday in Abiemom County near the Sudan border.

"A total of 169 bodies have been laid to rest in a mass grave," Eliza-beth Achol, health minister in north-her Ruweng administrative area, told this news agency by phone.

in revenge for the killing of some traders, the diplomatic source added, though no group has claimed responsibility.

Humanitarian workers hit

Many residents have fled to nearby villages, while others have sought protection at a local UN compound.

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Clashes between government and opposition forces have focused on Jonglei state in the last two months, where some 280,000 have been displaced according to the UN.

Humanitarian workers have also been targeted.

On Monday, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said 26 members of staff were missing following an air strike on one of its facilities. The organisation has suspended medical services in Lankien and Pieri in Jonglei state.

UN rights chief Volker Turk voiced alarm at the country's deteriorating situation, calling for swift action to avert a return to full-scale civil war.

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Israeli strikes massacre 52 in Lebanon

NEWS NEWS: Hours after Israeli air strikes massacred at least 52 people across Lebanon on Monday, the Israeli military issued an evacuation warning for several towns, signaling another imminent strike.

Monday's attacks marked a brutal escalation of hostilities following Israeli strikes by the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah for the US-Israeli assassination of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Israel's military vowed to intensify its unremitting assault on the country and make Hezbollah pay a "heavy price". It launched several strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs and south Lebanon, both strongholds of the resistance.

The Israeli strikes wounded 154 on Monday, the Lebanese government said in an updated toll. A previous toll shared by the health ministry said 31 people were killed and 149 wounded.



In the capital's southern suburbs, Israeli strikes tore through the top two floors of at least two buildings, an AFP photographer reported.

A fire blazed in one targeted apartment as the bombings triggered a mass exodus from the area.

Families hastily fled their homes on motorcycles or in cars.

Further south, an AFP journalist in Sidon saw huge lines of cars packed with families escaping the attacks.

Hezbollah's re-

sponse came hours earlier, fulfilling a promise to avenge the death of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The operation, it said, was "retaliation for the pure blood" of Khamenei, whose assassination on Saturday was the result of a joint US-Israeli operation against Iran. It was the

first time Hezbollah had claimed an operation against the Zionist entity since a November 2024 ceasefire.

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"A total of 169 bodies have been laid to rest in a mass grave," Eliza-beth Achol, health minister in north-her Ruweng administrative area, told this news agency by phone.

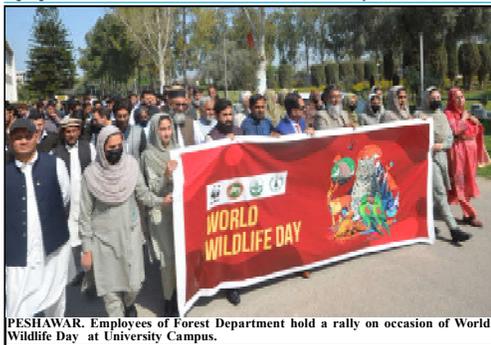
KP Police announce to suspend arrests of illegally residing Afghans

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police has announced the temporary suspension of arrests of illegally residing Afghan nationals in view of the ongoing border closure and the prevailing situation.

According to the KP Police, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) has taken notice of the current border conditions and issued special directives to this effect.

Under these orders, officers in the concerned districts have been clearly instructed to immediately halt further arrests of illegal Afghan residents until further instructions. The IGP has directed officers to strictly avoid initiating any new arrests during this sensitive period.

The spokesperson clarified that the decision is temporary in nature and has been taken solely due to the existing border situation. Reiterating the police stance, the spokesperson said that while arrests have been suspended, the KP Police will continue to take all necessary measures to protect citizens' rights and maintain law and order across the province.



PESHAWAR. Employees of Forest Department hold a rally on occasion of World Wildlife Day at University Campus.

Pakistan stands wholeheartedly with Iran: Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has stated that Pakistan stands wholeheartedly with Iran, arguing that the matter should not be given a wrong color domestically and emphasizing efforts to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. Speaking in the Senate, Ishaq Dar said Pakistan issued its first reaction to the situation on February 28. He added that news later emerged regarding the martyrdom of Ali Khamenei, after which Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif released a statement expressing grief over the tragic development.

He noted that when Iran was attacked in June, Pakistan had also attempted to defuse tensions. Following the recent attack on Iran, Pakistan once again tried to resolve the matter through backdoor diplomatic

Objective behind war against Iran to bring Israeli influence closer to Pakistan's borders: Khawaja Asif

ISLAMABAD (INP): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has stated that the objective behind the war against Iran is to bring Israeli influence closer to Pakistan's borders, alleging that the conflict was imposed on Iran despite its willingness to agree to a deal.

In a post on the social media platform X, the defence minister wrote that Zionism poses a threat to humanity. He said that since the establishment of Israel on Palestinian land, every major crisis and war imposed on the Islamic world has, directly or indirectly, reflected Zionist ideology and state influence.

He further claimed that Zionism has dominated the global economic system for over a century and that major powers remain hostage to it. Referring to Pakistan, he said the country is a nuclear power and its armed forces are respected worldwide by the grace and help of

48-kilometre Karachi-Rohri railway section to be upgraded: Hanif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi on Tuesday informed the House that, under the directives of the Prime Minister, a decision has been taken to upgrade the 48-kilometre Karachi-Rohri railway section, with work on laying a new track expected to commence by the end of July.

Responding to a question during question hour, the minister said Pakistan Railways has witnessed consistent growth in freight and passenger revenues over the past few years, reflecting gradual financial im-

provement in the department. He said freight earnings stood at Rs 23 billion in 2020-21, Rs 17 billion in 2022-23, and Rs 28 billion in 2023-24.

During the ongoing fiscal year 2024-25, freight revenue has reached approximately Rs 31.73 billion, he added. Sharing passenger revenue figures, he said the department earned Rs 30 billion in 2020-21, which increased to Rs 34 billion in 2022-23 and Rs 49 billion in 2023-24. The upward trend has continued in the current fiscal year, he added.

He said if pension liabilities are excluded, Pakistan Railways posted a profit of around Rs 3 billion during the first nine months of fiscal year 2024-25. He said reforms and infrastructure development cannot be achieved overnight, particularly as railway tracks dating back to 1861 and 1871 require replacement. The minister expressed confidence that with sustained efforts and strategic planning, Pakistan Railways would continue its journey towards financial stability and operational efficiency.

Annual exams in Lahore govt schools to begin on March 9

LAHORE (INP): The annual examination schedule for government schools in Lahore has been announced, with exams set to begin on March 9, 2026.

The exams will be conducted in two shifts, with the morning shift running from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and the afternoon shift from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. On Fridays, however, the afternoon shift will take place from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

The first exam on March 9 will be for English for students in 1st grade, while General Mathematics will be the first paper for 2nd-grade students. The 3rd grade will start with Islamic Studies/Ethics, and 4th-grade students will have Mathematics as their first subject.

116 flights from various international airports in Pakistan to ME destinations cancelled

ISLAMABAD (INP): A total of 116 flights from various international airports in Pakistan to Middle Eastern destinations have been cancelled, affecting thousands of passengers. The cancellations involve flights to the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and other countries.

From Jinnah International Airport, 32 flights to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain were cancelled. Islamabad International Airport saw 28 cancellations, Alama Iqbal International Airport had 20, and Bacha Khan International Air-



PESHAWAR: A security persons removing black paper from car glass at Ashraf road.

Pakistan calls for urgent action to curb illegal wildlife trade

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan calls for urgent action to curb illegal wildlife trade and unsustainable harvesting practices that are placing Pakistan's rich biodiversity under increasing threat.

Wildlife trafficking remains a serious conservation challenge globally, with Pakistan functioning both as a source and transit route for illegal wildlife trade. Endangered species and weakening already fragile ecosystems, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

The day is observed on March 3 around the globe to celebrate wild animals and plants and recognize the unique roles

and contributions of wildlife to people and the planet. The statement said from reptiles and mammals to high-value plants, illegal extraction continues to erode natural resources and ecosystem services that communities rely on. To address this challenge, WWF-Pakistan is working with partners and government departments to strengthen enforcement systems, improve inter-agency coordination, and build the capacity of frontline wildlife staff and judicial actors to effectively prevent and prosecute wildlife crimes.

"We have developed a comprehensive training curriculum and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Wildlife Department, have rescued and released of several species, including rook pythons, Indian pangolins, barking deer, and Alexandrine parakeets—demonstrating the impact of coordinated enforcement and community stewardship." "Effective conservation cannot succeed without strong enforcement and informed communities," said Rab Nawaz, Senior Director Programmes at WWF-Pakistan. "By strengthening institutional capacity and engaging local stakeholders, we are improving Pakistan's ability to prevent wildlife crime and protect vulnerable species before they disappear from the wild," he said.

Taliban attacks repelled under Operation Ghazab-ul-Haq: Tarar

ISLAMABAD, March 03 (INP): Afghan Taliban launched ground attacks at 16 locations in northern Balochistan, including Qila Saifullah, Noshki, and Chaman districts, while carrying out fire raids at 25 other sites targeting Pakistani forces. Federal Information Minister Attullah Tarar stated that all Taliban attacks were effectively repelled under Operation Ghazab-ul-Haq, resulting in the deaths of 27 Taliban militants and injuries to several others.

In the defense of the motherland, one soldier of the FC Balochistan North was martyred, and five others sustained injuries during the confrontations.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Taliban attempted a ground assault at one location and carried out fire raids at 12 points, all of which were thwarted without any casualties.

During overnight operations, 40 Afghan Taliban fighters were killed in the province. Minister Tarar confirmed that follow-up operations remain ongoing.

So far, during Operation Ghazab-ul-Haq, 435 militants have been killed, 630 wounded, and Taliban have lost 188 checkpoints completely, while Pakistani forces captured 31 enemy posts.

Additionally, 188 tanks and armored vehicles of the Taliban were destroyed, and effective airstrikes were carried out at 51 different locations across Afghanistan. The operation highlights Pakistan's sustained commitment to neutralizing Taliban aggression and securing national borders against militant threats.

reported that in response to Taliban aggression, Pakistani forces have conducted effective and destructive counterattacks.

The Pakistan Air Force carried out airstrikes in Jalalabad, destroying ammunition depots and drone storage, inflicting heavy losses on Afghan Taliban and extremist factions.

Pakistani forces successfully targeted the Khogani base in Nangarhar province during air operations in Afghanistan.

So far, during Operation Ghazab-ul-



RAWALPINDI: Director Asia Public School System Iftikhar Mahmood Chaudhry in a group photo with students and staff, children who secured positions in the annual examination at Asia Public School Chaman Abad Main Campus.

Quetta Press Club, Balochistan Journalists Condemn Police Interference, Demand Action

NEWS DESK: The Quetta Press Club and the Balochistan Union of Journalists have strongly condemned police interference inside the press club premises, accusing law enforcement personnel of entering the facility, stopping journalists from coverage, and harassing media workers.

In a joint statement issued on March 2, 2026, the leadership of both bodies demanded strict action against the police officials involved and called on Mir Sarfraz Bugti and the Inspector General of Police, Balochistan, to take immediate notice of the incident, terming it a violation of press freedom and freedom of expression.

The meeting unanimously condemned the police action, stating that enter-



ing the press club and obstructing journalists from performing their professional duties was unacceptable and against democratic norms. The joint statement said that freedom of the press and freedom of expression are fundamental rights,

They expressed serious concern that, despite those assurances, police once again entered the press club, stopped journalists from covering the BYC media talk, and harassed media personnel.

The Quetta Press Club and BUJ leadership also urged Additional Chief Secretary Home Hamza Shaqiqat and the provincial police leadership to ensure accountability of those responsible and to take concrete steps to prevent such interference in the future.

The statement concluded by warning that if effective measures are not taken to protect the sanctity of the press club and the independence of journalists, the leadership would soon announce its future course of action.

Bilawal Bhutto, CM Sarfraz Bugti Discuss Balochistan Development in Islamabad

NEWS DESK: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti in Islamabad to review the province's political landscape, development strategy, and ongoing projects.

Bugti briefed the PPP Chairman on infrastructure upgrades, education and health initiatives, communication improvements, and coastal development. He emphasized that the provincial government is prioritizing underdeveloped and remote areas, ensuring transparency and effective monitoring for optimal resource utilization.



and holding press conferences or media talks at press clubs is a legitimate right of citizens. It added that nowhere in the world is police action inside press club premises allowed, as such spaces are considered neutral and protected for journalistic activity.

Secretary Communications & Works Reviews Departmental Performance, Directs Improved Efficiency

QUETTA: An important meeting regarding the performance of the Communications and Works Department was held under the chairmanship of Secretary Babar Khan.

The meeting was attended by senior officers and relevant staff of the department.

The primary objective was to review effective and practical measures for implementing the directives issued by the Chief Secretary during the recent Secretaries' Committee meeting



concerning the department's performance. During the session, detailed discussions were held on overall departmental performance, ongoing development projects, utilization of funds, timely completion of schemes, the e-filing system (FTS), and other administrative challenges.

Chief Secretary Reviews AI-Based Appointments, Development Projects and Public Complaint Redressal



QUETTA: A meeting of the Secretaries' Committee was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakkal Qadir Khan, where key administrative matters were reviewed, including AI-based recruitment for vacant posts, redressal of public complaints, implementation of Google Workspace, ensuring staff attendance, and measures to improve the quality of life for citizens.

He made an important decision to prioritize merit-based appointments. He emphasized that sincere, hardworking, and competent individuals must be appointed to improve public service delivery.

He directed all departments to ensure that upcoming vacant positions are filled through Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based recruitment processes within two to three months, enabling transparent and merit-driven appointments for youth. During a briefing, it was informed that appoint-

ment orders have so far been issued to 14,000 candidates. The Chief Secretary termed the timely completion of development projects as a top priority and instructed all secretaries to ensure that projects are completed within stipulated timelines to enhance public living standards.

He also issued strict directives to ensure regular attendance of officers and staff in the Secretariat and line departments. The meeting was informed that attendance levels among officers have shown significant improvement. Furthermore, he

District Coordination Committee Reviews Security Situation in Chaman Amid Border Tensions

CHAMAN: A meeting of the District Coordination Committee was held in Chaman under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Habib

Chaman, along with heads of land departments and other relevant officials. Participants discussed in detail the overall security situa-

tion of all concerned institutions. He stated that in a sensitive border district like Chaman, effective coordination and harmony between



Ahmed Bangulzai to review the overall law and order situation in the district.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Headquarters Chaman Scouts, Commanding Officer 40 Frontier Force (FF) Chaman, SP Chaman, Commanding Officer ISI Chaman, IW Chaman, CT Chaman, MI 304 Chaman, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Chaman, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Chaman, Assistant Director IB Chaman, District Officer CTD Chaman, Circle Officer Special Branch Chaman, District IT Officer

in Chaman, recent Pak-Afghan border tensions, and the prevailing high-alert conditions in the district. Matters related to strengthening surveillance systems, crime prevention, intelligence sharing, public safety measures, inter-departmental coordination, and district-level security and administrative challenges were thoroughly reviewed.

Addressing the meeting, DC Habib Ahmed Bangulzai emphasized that strict implementation of the directives issued by the Government of Balochistan is the collective responsibility

of all concerned institutions are essential. He stressed that all departments must work under a unified strategy to ensure protection of life and property, maintain peace, and strengthen the writ of the state.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed that decisions taken under the District Coordination Committee platform must be implemented promptly and effectively. He instructed all departments to fulfill their responsibilities diligently and enhance mutual cooperation to resolve public issues and maintain stability in the district.

Spring Tree Plantation Campaign 2026 Launched at Balochistan Civil Secretariat

QUETTA: A nursery across the province. On the occasion, Secretary S&GAD Agha Faisal Ahmed, Chairman CMIT Muhammad Ali Kakar, Secretary Environment Bashir Bangulzai, Member CMIT Manzoor Zehri, President of Balochistan Civil Secretariat Officers Welfare Association Ameer Hamza Muhammad Shahi, and President Staff Association Comrade Younas Zehri were also present.

The distinguished officers jointly inaugurated the nursery and reaffirmed their commitment to promoting a green revolution in the province. It was announced that each employee of the Civil Secretariat would be provided with five saplings to plant at their

homes, in neighborhoods, or at other suitable locations, enabling them to actively participate in the plantation drive.

Speakers at the ceremony highlighted that tree plantation not only enhances environmental beauty but also improves air quality, regulates temperature, and positively impacts public health.

They stressed that every individual should consider it their responsibility to plant and care for trees, as a single tree symbolizes life, freshness, and hope.

The event concluded with a collective resolve to continue such initiatives to entailing a greener, healthier, and more beautiful Balochistan for future generations.

Table with 5 columns: S.No, Vehicle No, Type, Model, and Status. Lists various vehicles and their details.

CORRIGENDUM notice regarding a recruitment advertisement for the Directorate General Social Welfare, Balochistan, Quetta. Reference to RIT published vide PRO No. 3891/20-2026.

Oil rises as expanding US-Israeli conflict with Iran elevates supply risks

NEWS DESK: Oil prices rose for a third day on Tuesday as the widening US-Israeli conflict with Iran and threats to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz heightened fears of supply disruptions from the key Middle East producing region.

Brent crude futures were at \$79.44 a barrel, up \$1.70, or 2.2 per cent, by 04:00 GMT. On Monday, the contract surged to as high as \$82.37, its highest since January 2025, though it pared those gains to settle 6.7pc higher.

US West Texas Intermediate crude jumped \$1.17, or 1.6pc, to \$72.40 a barrel. In the previous session, the contract initially climbed to its highest since June 2025 before sliding back to still settle up 6.3pc.

"With no quick de-escalation in sight, the Strait of Hormuz effectively closed and Iran showing a willingness to target energy infrastructure in the region, upside risks remain and they grow the longer the conflict drags on," Tony Sycamore, ING market analyst, said in a note.

The US and Israeli



war against Iran widened on Monday with Israel attacking Lebanon and Iran responding with strikes against energy infrastructure in Gulf countries and

against tankers in the Strait of Hormuz. Tankers and container ships are also avoiding the waterway as insurers have cancelled their coverage for

vessels, while global oil and gas shipping rates have soared. Concerns about transiting the waterway increased after Iranian media reported on Monday that a senior

Iranian Revolutionary Guards official said the Strait of Hormuz is closed and warned Iran will fire on any ship trying to pass.

About 20pc of the world's oil and gas passes through the Strait of Hormuz. "The market continues to digest the risk of escalation in the Middle East," said ING analysts in a Tuesday note.

energy infrastructure in the region. This could lead to more prolonged outages," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed on Monday that the US and Israel's war against Iran may take "some time," but it will not take years.

Analysts expect oil prices to remain elevated over the coming days while markets focus on the impact of escalating Middle East conflict. Bernstein on Monday raised its 2026 Brent oil price assumption from \$65 to \$80 a barrel, but sees prices reaching \$120-\$150 in an extreme case of prolonged conflict.

Refined product futures are also gaining as the Middle East is a key supplier of fuels, and their processing facilities are at risk. On Monday, Saudi Arabia shut its biggest domestic oil refinery after a drone strike. US ultra-low-sulfur diesel futures were up 4.2pc at \$3.0207 per gallon after reaching a two-year high on Monday, while gasoline futures were up 1.7pc at \$2.4113 per gallon after climbing 3.7pc in the previous session.

Country has 28 days of fuel

NEWS DESK: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) has increased stocks of oil to meet 28 days of consumption requirement of the country following preventive measures to import surplus fuel.

Owing to the US-Israeli and Iran war, however, two cargoes of crude oil have been stuck after the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. This channel is 21 miles (33 km) wide and a fifth of the world's oil passes through it.

The Strait of Hormuz was used to ship an average of 20 million barrels of crude, condensate and fuel per day last year. OPEC members like Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq depend on this shipping lane to export most of their crude, mainly to Asia.

"We have ample stocks of petrol and diesel to meet the country's requirement," officials said, adding that the country could meet fuel needs of consumers for 28 days.

They said the regulator had feared an escalation in Middle East tensions, "therefore we maintained oil stocks for over 25 days in January

and 28 days in February following surplus fuel imports." However, experts say the entire world could encounter an oil crisis if the war continued for a week. "Our two crude oil cargoes have been stuck due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz," sources said, adding that remaining imports were scheduled to arrive later. The Petroleum Division had earlier directed Ogra to ensure the availability of adequate stocks of crude and petroleum products to avoid any supply-dis-

ruption. Imports of petrol, diesel and LPG may also be tracked for timely deliveries given the emerging security situation in the Gulf, it said. The government on Friday assured the nation that Pakistan had ample crude and petroleum product stocks and there was no cause for panic. The assurance came during a high-level meeting jointly chaired by Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The State Bank

governor emphasised that there would be no delay in oil-related payments, enabling refineries and oil marketing companies to continue smooth import operations.

Meanwhile, international oil markets have shifted focus to supply risks. OPEC+ is considering a significantly larger output increase in the wake of supply threats. Crude producers could raise production by 411,000 barrels per day in April - triple the previously expected increase of 137,000 bpd.



IMF cuts Pakistan visit short

NEWS DESK: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) decided on Monday to prematurely end its visit to Pakistan due to heightened security conditions and will now hold virtual discussions from Turkey to reach a staff-level agreement for the \$1.2 billion worth next loan tranches.

The mission left Pakistan soon after holding its first face-to-face meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday morning. The development came a day after the United States issued a security update placing Pakistan at Level 3, advising its citizens to reconsider travel.

The US has advised its citizens to reconsider travel to Pakistan and "exercise caution, avoid large gatherings", while declaring some areas Level 4, which are prohibited for travel.

"An IMF mission led by Iva Petrova has started discussions with the authorities in Karachi and Islamabad on the third review of Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement and the second review of the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)," accord-

ing to a brief statement issued by Mahir Binici, the IMF's Resident Representative for Pakistan.

Binici said that "discussions will continue to be held virtually." Finance ministry officials said that the IMF team would hold virtual discussions from Turkey, hoping that the change would not impact the programme re-

newals. The IMF mission had arrived in Pakistan on February 25 till March 11. But due to the United States and Israel's "illegal and unprovoked" attacks on Iran, the war has spread to the Middle East region.

Protesters have also

marched towards US missions and consulates in Pakistan, resulting in the killing of a few protesters and damage to public property. Sources said that Pakistan's interior minister had assured full security to the IMF mission, but it nevertheless decided to call off the face-to-face meetings.

According to a statement issued by the US embassy in Pakistan on Monday, the embassy was "monitoring reports of ongoing demonstrations at the US Consulates General in Lahore and violent protests at the US Consulate General in Karachi, as well as calls for additional demonstrations at US Embassy Islamabad and US Consulate General Peshawar." US government personnel were directed to restrict their movements until further notice, and its citizens in Pakistan were advised to monitor local news, observe good personal security practices, including being aware of surroundings, and avoid large crowds.

Country has 28 days of fuel

During the opening session with the finance minister, Iva Petrova, the IMF's Mission Chief for Pakistan, emphasised the need for implementing sustainable reforms to back the recent momentum in economic growth.



Strait of Hormuz crisis triggers cost surge fears

NEWS DESK: Escalating military conflict in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have forced global shipping companies to adopt precautionary measures for the movement of goods by sea as well as for their staff and crew, while some firms have indicated the imposition of war-risk and contingency surcharges on cargo.

The Strait of Hormuz is a strategic maritime corridor through which nearly 25 per cent of the world's oil passes. Any disruption to traffic through the narrow passage, including the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman could lead to increases in crude oil and LNG prices, as well as higher shipping insurance costs.

"Given that a large proportion of Pakistan's trade transits through the Gulf region and the fact that most major shipping lines have already announced service disruptions, Pakistan's trade will suffer delays and additional costs," Pakistan Ships' Agents Association (PSAA) Chairman Mohammad A. Rappor told Dawn, warning that "there is also a threat of disruption to our LNG and oil supplies."



Terminal Limited (KGTL), in an advisory, shipping lines operating Gulf services had temporarily suspended booking acceptance from Pakistan and placed their services on hold until further notice. Accordingly, KGTL has suspended the acceptance of all new export cargo for Gulf services with immediate effect.

Hapag-Lloyd, a maritime transport company, stated on its website that due to operational and security constraints in the Upper Gulf region, measures had been taken to ensure cargo safety, secure equipment placement

and maintain operational standards. The company has implemented a booking stop, with immediate effect and until further notice, for all cargo types from Africa to the Upper Gulf region, including the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

In addition, all cargo moving via Jebel Ali on the MIA East-bound and EA2 North-bound services is included in the booking stop. A contingency surcharge for shipments through the Red Sea and North Europe, the Mediterranean and MECL (Middle East-India to US East Coast) services will be introduced for all container types for sailings commencing March 3

until further notice. The surcharge has been set at \$1,500 per TEU for standard containers and \$3,500 per container for special containers and reefers equipment.

Citing the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East amid escalating military conflict, Maersk announced on March 1 that it had decided, in coordination with its security partner, Trans-Suez sailings through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Until further notice, sailings on the ME1 (Middle East-India to Mediterranean) and MECL (Middle East-India to US East Coast) services will be rerouted around the Cape of Good Hope.

Gold extends gains as Middle East war prompts flight to safety

NEWS DESK: Gold prices rose for a fifth consecutive session on Tuesday as investors sought safe-haven assets amid an escalating US and Israeli air war against Iran, raising fears the conflict could spiral into a protracted regional war and deepen uncertainty.

Spot gold was up 0.7 per cent at \$5,362.90 per ounce, as of 04:52 GMT. In the previous session, bullion climbed to its highest point in more than four weeks after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran over the weekend.

US gold futures for April delivery were up 1.2pc at \$5,376.50. "The scope and duration of the conflict remain very much open-ended, and with those uncertainties in play, gold is capturing the lion's share of safe-haven demand," KCM Trade chief market analyst Tim Waterer said.

Iranian media reported that a senior official from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Monday that the Strait of Hormuz was closed and warned that



Iran would fire on any ship trying to pass through the strategic waterway.

This is Iran's most explicit warning since telling ships it was closing the export route on Saturday, a move that threatens to choke a fifth of global oil flows and send crude prices sharply higher.

The dollar hovered close to a more than five-week high reached on Monday, supported by firm demand and cautious market sentiment.

While a firmer greenback typically makes dollar-denominated assets such as bullion more expensive for holders of other

currencies, that inverse relationship is not absolute. In times of heightened uncertainty, such as escalating conflict or broader market volatility, investors often buy both the dollar and gold as safe-haven assets.

"Gold would arguably be trading higher than current levels were it not for dollar appreciation since the conflict intensified. Inflation worries are front and centre for traders right now, given the direction of oil prices and reduced shipping volumes through the Strait of Hormuz," Waterer added.

US President Donald Trump has vowed to pursue the conflict for as long as necessary and warned of a "big wave" of further attacks coming soon, without providing specific details.

The attack on Iran has pitched the Gulf into war, killing scores of civilians in Iran, Israel, and Lebanon, thrown global air transport into chaos, and shut down shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Spot silver edged 0.2pc higher to \$89.64 per ounce on Tuesday, after climbing to a more than four-week high in the previous session.

South Africa, India eye T20 World Cup rematch

NEWS DESK: Unbeaten South Africa continue their quest for a maiden World Cup title in the first semi-final of the T20 World Cup against New Zealand in Kolkata on Wednesday, with a potential repeat of the 2024 final against India awaiting.

Should Aiden Markram's side inflict their second defeat of the tournament on New Zealand -- they beat them comfortably in the group stage -- then a rematch against India for the trophy could be on the cards.

Suryakumar Yadav's defending champions will first have to get past Harry Brook's England in Mumbai on Thursday -- a blockbuster clash that is being talked about excitedly across the cricket-mad city.

But South Africa are unbeaten and are a team on the up after decades of gaining a reputation for "choking" on the big stage.

They finally won their first global cricket trophy when they lifted



the World Test Championship last year, among eight members of that side are in the T20 World Cup squad. South Africa have been strong in all departments and appear to have the form to break their white-ball duck after their agonising final defeat to India two years ago. Chasing 177 in Barbados, South Africa had one hand on the trophy with 26 needed from the last four overs with six wickets in hand.

on 169-8 as India won by seven runs.

Markram has led from the front, scoring 86 not out in a seven-wicket romp past semi-final opponents New Zealand in the group phase, easily chasing 176 with 17 balls to spare.

South Africa are the only team to have won all seven of their matches so far.

While they topped their Super Eight table, beating India and the West Indies en route, Mitchell Santner's New Zealand lost to England and had to rely on run rate to squeeze ahead of Pakistan and into the final. England won all three of their Super Eight matches and appear ominously to be growing into the tournament.

Captain Brook has begun to stamp his authority on the side, moving up to bat at number three and scoring a sparkling century to lead a successful chase of 165 against Pakistan.

England played two

of their group games in Mumbai, so will be familiar with the conditions, despite having all their Super Eight matches on turning tracks in Sri Lanka.

India played their first match of the tournament at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium when they were in deep trouble at 77-6 against the USA until Suryakumar's 84 dragged them to a winning total.

They not only have the expectations of 35,000 cricket-obsessed fans in a packed Wankhede stadium, and hundreds of millions more watching on TV to withstand, but also the weight of history.

India, the world's top-ranked T20 team, are attempting to become the first to win back-to-back T20 World Cups and the first to lift the trophy on home soil.

After losing against South Africa in the first match of the Super Eight, India have played their best cricket with their backs to the

Getafe deal flat Real Madrid La Liga title race blow

NEWS DESK: Real Madrid fell to a damaging 1-0 defeat by Getafe at home in La Liga on Monday, leaving them four points behind leaders Barcelona.

Alvaro Arbeloa's side, beaten by a superb volley from Martin Satriano, suffered a second consecutive loss in the Spanish top flight for the first time since 2020.

Madrid forward Franco Mastantuono was sent off in stoppage time for apparent dissent to make a bad night worse for Los Blancos.

"Obviously it's a match where we could have done things better, but I think my players tried and we had more clear chances than them," Arbeloa told reporters.

"However in football deserving is not enough, and Getafe played a great game."

With French superstar Kylian Mbappe in France to treat a knee sprain, Madrid lined up with Gonzalo Garcia in attack alongside Brazilian forward Junior at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Real Madrid were beaten at Osasuna last weekend, allowing rivals Barca to overtake them in the title race, and Hansi Flick's side



stretched their lead by thrashing Villarreal on Saturday. Vinicius, in excellent form in 2026 after an inconsistent start to the season, spurred a fine early chance.

The winger burst through on goal but David Soria saved well with his leg.

A brilliant roulette from Arda Guler nearly earned Madrid the breakthrough, but Soria tipped over to a knee sprain, Madrid lined up with Gonzalo Garcia in attack alongside Brazilian forward Junior at the Santiago Bernabeu.

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Hesson's grip blamed for Pakistan's World Cup exit

NEWS DESK: In the T20 World Cup, Mike Hesson's arbitrary decisions proved costly for the Green Shirts. The head coach reportedly took on the roles of selector and captain as well, leaving Salman Ali Agha as merely a figure-head while tactical decisions were made by Hesson himself.

According to sources, the selection committee had initially not included Babar Azam in the squad, but Hesson insisted on his inclusion. During matches, messages were reportedly sent to the captain, creating unnecessary pressure. Decisions such as dropping Fakhar Zaman for the opening innings, or delaying Usman Tariq's bowling in different games -- or removing him despite taking wickets -- were also attributed to the coach and bowling coach Ashley Noffke.

During the West Indies tour, responsibility does not lie solely with the players; head coach Mike Hesson is also said to have played a significant role.

Highly reliable sources claim that Hesson not only assumed the role of selector but also effectively acted as captain, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi had granted him authority, but he allegedly overstepped his limits, and the team paid the price in the form of defeats.

Sources revealed that before the World Cup, the selectors' chosen squad did not include Babar Azam, but Hesson pushed strongly for his inclusion, arguing that the middle order looked weak during the Asia Cup and required an experienced batter. The decision backfired, as Babar ended a disappointing tournament.

Despite consistent failures, Saïm Ayub continued to be played, which resulted in Fakhar Zaman being sidelined. Similarly, the decision to



His continuation in the role beyond that, though, appears uncertain. According to details, Pakistan failed to progress beyond the Super Eight stage of the T20 World Cup. Players are facing widespread criticism for substandard performances, and the PCB has imposed fines of Rs 5 million each. However, responsibility does not lie solely with the players; head coach Mike Hesson is also said to have played a significant role.

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PSB lists 53 non-affiliated federations

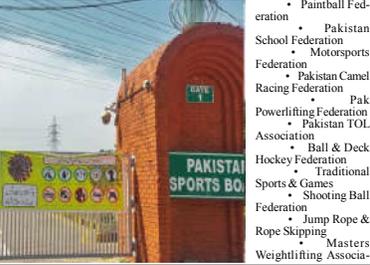
NEWS DESK: The official website of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), a subsidiary of the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, has uploaded a list of 53 federations and associations operating in the country that are not registered or affiliated with the Board.

According to the details published on the website, all these federations are considered non-affiliated organizations and have no legal connection with the official sports structure.

The federations not affiliated with PSB include:

- Kickboxing Federation (2 groups)
- Pakistan Bocce & Volleyball Federation
- Pakistan Hang Gliding & Paragliding (other)
- City Express International
- Pakistan Mass Wrestling Federation
- Pakistan Amateur Circle Kabaddi
- Pakistan Scrabble Association
- Pakistan Fencing Federation
- Mixed Martial Arts (3 groups)
- Pakistan Target Ball Federation
- Pakistan Racing Pigeon Federation (2 groups)
- Pakistan Chaubkhal Federation
- Pakistan Soccer Futsal Federation
- Pakistan Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association

- Pakistan Pencak Silat Federation
- Horse & Digi Toca Federation
- Pakistan Lacrosse Federation
- Modern Pentathlon Federation
- Pakistan Students Olympic Association
- Air Sports Foundation
- Pakistan Paddle Federation (3 groups)
- Pak Horse & Mounted Archery
- Pakistan Gymnastics Federation
- Pakistan Women Federation
- E-Sports Federation (2 groups)
- Triathlon Federation
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan Grappling Federation
- Paintball Federation
- Pakistan School Federation
- Motorsports Federation
- Pakistan Camel Racing Federation
- Pak Powerlifting Federation
- Pakistan TOL Association
- Ball & Deck Hockey Federation
- Traditional Sports & Games
- Shooting Ball Federation
- Jump Rope & Rope Skipping
- Masters Weightlifting Association



Five things about the 2026 F1 season

NEWS DESK: The 2026 Formula One season gets underway in Melbourne on March 8 with McLaren's Lando Norris looking to retain his world championship title while Max Verstappen aims to rip it back off him.

Predictions are difficult to make ahead of the 24-race season, which is scheduled to finish in Abu Dhabi at the start of December, because of the sweeping changes in chassis and engine regulations.

But the clash between favourites could provide one of the most fascinating seasons yet.

AFP Sport picks out five names to look out for in the pit lane:

Deny The fingers have been pointing the accusations made -- and nobody has stepped forward to admit that, yes, they were "sandbagging". That's the pit lane parlance for dialling back on performance in pre-season testing.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen took aim at Mercedes. "Just wait until Melbourne and see how much power they suddenly find... see how fast they suddenly go on all the straights," said the four-time champion.

Meanwhile, Williams boss James Vowles put the spotlight back on Red Bull in Bahrain,



suggesting that "games are being played" when their pace suddenly slows. It is, of course, only normal to try and conceal an advantage, no matter how tiny, for when they line up in Melbourne but this is just the first of the many rows which are bound to erupt during this first season under new rules.

Americans are coming! First it was Haas joining the grid in 2016 and now it is Cadillac, one of the most famous names in the auto business, who are angling to set the "standard of the world".

It's not quite their first foray into F1, although in 1952 and 1953 they provided engines only during this first season under new rules.

Brand new Cadillac Watch out, the Americans are coming! First it was Haas joining the grid in 2016 and now it is Cadillac, one of the most famous names in the auto business, who are angling to set the "standard of the world".

It's not quite their first foray into F1, although in 1952 and 1953 they provided engines only during this first season under new rules.

of the Indy 500 -- which counted as part of the world championship.

As new boys, the General Motors-financed team will be relying on experience in the cockpit, where Valtteri Bottas and Sergio Perez will launch the team, and under the bonnet.

Cadillac will not be making their own power units until 2029 so will be relying on Ferrari until then.

"I firmly believe we've got a platform that, as a team, we can really start moving forward on," said team principal Graeme Lowdon in the pre-season.

"That's probably the most that you could ever ask for from a new team, unless there's some complete miracle."

The right profile Another new team to look out for is Audi who have a rich history in motorsport -- winners of Le Mans, the Dakar Rally and the World Rally Championship -- but are dipping their toes in the F1 waters for the first time.

The German team acquired the Sauber slot and have retained the driving skills of veteran Nico Hulkenberg, who finally got his first podium last season at Silverstone after 15 years and 239 races, and 21-year-old Gabriel Bortoleto.

Audi had a good pre-season workout and may surprise a few people although team principal Jonathan Wheatley is making no promises.

PPP delegation meets with PM Shehbaz, discusses prevailing local and regional situation

NEWS DESK: A PPP delegation met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Tuesday to discuss the political situation in the country as well as the regional situation.

A release issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that a delegation of PPP parliamentarians met with the premier today.

The Pakistan People's Party is an important coalition party of the government," PM Shehbaz said according to the statement. "The PPP supported the government in every step in important decisions for national development and progress, for which it is grateful."

The meeting discussed the current political situation in the country as well as the prevailing regional situation in the Middle East, but the statement



PPP delegation met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Tuesday to discuss the political situation in the country as well as the regional situation. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal and Azam Nazeer Tarar, and PM's Advisor Rana Sanaulah also participated in the meeting.

US Marines fired on protesters storming consulate in Karachi, US officials say

NEWS DESK: United States Marines opened fire on demonstrators during the storming of the Karachi consulate over the weekend, two US officials said on Monday—a rare use of force at a diplomatic post that could sharply escalate tensions in the country amid widespread protests over the assassination of Iran's leader.

On Sunday, 11 people were killed when protesters breached the compound's outer wall after Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was assassinated in strikes on Iran. Citing initial information, the two US officials said it was unclear whether rounds fired by Marines struck or killed anyone.

They also did not know whether shots were also fired by others protecting the mission, including private security guards and local police.

This would mark the first confirmation by US officials that Marines were involved in firing at the protesters. A Sindh government spokesman, Sukhdev Assardas Hemmani, said "security" personnel had opened fire, without specifying their affiliation.

Daily security operations at US diplomatic missions are often carried out by private contractors and local forces, and the involvement of Marines in the incident under review how seriously the consulate viewed the threat.

Protesters on Sunday chanted "Death to America! Death to Israel!" outside the consulate.

late, where Reuters reporters heard gunfire and saw tear gas fired in surrounding streets. A video on social media appeared to show at least one protester firing a weapon toward the consulate and bloodied demonstrators fleeing as shots rang out.

A Karachi police official told Reuters that the shots were fired from inside the consulate premises.

The US Marines referred questions to the US military, which in turn referred questions to the State Department. The State Department did not respond to a request for comment.

Fact-finding report incident "expected in 15 days."

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon has said that a high-powered joint investigation team (JIT) has been constituted to investigate the incident at the US Consulate in Karachi in which 10 people were killed.

In comments to Geo News, he said that a fact-finding report was "expected in 15 days" and that once it's done, one would be able to tell "exactly how this happened and whose bullets hit whom."

Memon noted that different CCTV footage showed that some of the people at the site had also been carrying weapons, but added that he was "not a technical expert" and that the technical experts were the investigation teams and police who were present at the scene.

"We will be known for strength" for whom?

Vic Mellor, a Republican candidate for

Rhode Island, said on X that "armed rioters tried to storm our US Consulate in Karachi, Pakistan."

"They breached the perimeter. They set fires. They thought this was 1979. It's not," Mellor, a US Marine veteran, added.

"The days of America not defending itself are OVER," he wrote. Mellor further said, "We will be known for strength. And anyone who wishes to harm Americans will learn the cost. As a Marine, I'll tell you what every Marine already knows: you don't touch American soil. Not in Karachi. Not anywhere on earth."

On Monday, large gatherings were banned across Punjab, Islamabad and Karachi after protests over the strikes on Iran spread, with 26 people reported dead across the country. Police have registered a case against "unidentified 150-200 protesters" for vandalising the US Consulate building and resorting to firing and arson.

The IHC also fixed the main appeal in the Toshiakhana criminal case—in which the PI founder was first arrested on Aug 5, 2023—for hearing on March 10.

A division bench comprising Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Khadim Hassan Soomro heard the matter along with objections raised by the Registrar's Office.

Senior counsel Latif Khosa, assisted by Salman Akram Raja and other lawyers, appeared before the court. The bench inquired about the nature of objections raised by the Registrar's Office on the miscellaneous application.

Responding to the court, Khosa submitted that one of the objections pertained to the non-provision of a certified copy of the power of attorney. Justice Tahir observed that two of the objections were valid.

The court subsequently directed the office to number the application together. The court also inquired whether the paper book in the appeal was ready and directed the office to prepare the same, noting that it would take two to three days.

However, the IHC directed that the application and the Toshiakhana appeal be fixed for hearing on March 10. "Come prepared for the next hearing," Justice Tahir remarked.

In Iran's legal, medical troubles Imran — imprisoned since Aug 5, 2023 for concealing details of Toshiakhana gifts — is serving a 14-year sentence at Rawalpindi Adiala jail in the £190 million corruption case. Although the IHC had suspended the PI founder's three-year sentence in the Toshiakhana case on Aug 29, 2023, his incarceration continued in the cipher case, in which he was acquitted later.

He was convicted in another Toshiakhana case in December 2025 and also faces pending trials under the Antiterrorism Act related to the May 9, 2023, riots. The IHC is also set to hear Imran and Bushra's petitions seeking the suspension of their sentences in the £190m case on March 11.

IHC to hear Imran's plea seeking hospital transfer on March 10

NEWS DESK: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday directed the registrar's office to fix PI founder Imran Khan's plea — seeking permission to undergo medical treatment at Shifa International Hospital — for hearing on March 10.

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He regretted that the joint US-Israeli air strikes were carried out days ahead of another round of US-Israel nuclear talks.

He condemned US President Donald Trump for violating the international law, making global forums like United Nations irrelevant and taking actions that were causing instability in the world.

Opp leader condemns assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei; Opp leader condemned the assassina-

tion of the Ayatollah Khamenei and said that late Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei had previously said that Iran will not make nuclear weapons, and hence the issue was not of Iran going nuclear.

In contrast, he said now the words of America and Israel have no credibility, having announced to occupy more countries to realise their plan of Greater Israel.

"Crosses of Shia follow Ayatollah Khamenei and his killing is like killing of Pope of Vatican City. No man in the world can have the courage to do this."

He strongly con-

demned this attack on the top leader of Iran, who did not run away anywhere and was martyred in his office in Tehran.

He also referred to the remarks made by the US Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, who in a recent interview said that Israel would be justified in taking over a vast stretch of the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia on

Biblical grounds. "A person has assumed power in America who is creating instability in the world by use of force at his whims," he lamented.

Previously, Senator Abbas said, issues used to be referred to institutions like United Nations Security Council, which has now been made meaningless.

"Donald Trump wishes prevail, as he considers his desires to be the law," he said.

Today (Tuesday) after Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said parliamentary parties of PM, N and PPP were scheduled to meet.

Karachi's MT Khan Road again closed in view of security situation

NEWS DESK: Karachi's MT Khan Road was closed again on Tuesday in response to the prevailing security situation in the city, according to the traffic police.

Ten people were killed in Karachi on Sunday as protests erupted against the assassination of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in US-Israeli attacks. A ban on gatherings and rallies has also been extended across Sindh.

An alert issued by the Karachi Traffic Police for District South at 5:30am said that both sides of MT Khan Road remained

closed from the PIDC signal towards Jinnah Bridge for security reasons.

As an alternative route, traffic from PIDC has been diverted towards Khajoor Chowk and Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed Road, and from Jinnah Bridge towards II Chundrigar Road, it said.

Subsequently, the police issued another alert at 9:21am for traffic congestion on both sides of II Chundrigar Road from Jinnah Bridge towards Tower and Shaheen Complex due to the MT Khan Road closure.

However, the road was opened later in the day.

zens to call the Traffic Helpline at 1915 for alternative routes to avoid inconvenience and to stay tuned to FM 88.6 for updates.

"Traffic police are present and managing the flow of traffic," it added.

Yesterday, a road closure alert was issued for both sides of the road from Sultanabad Traffic Section towards Mai Kolachi, as well as both sides of MT Khan Road, from Jinnah Bridge towards II Chundrigar Road towards Shaheen Complex due to the MT Khan Road closure.

However, the road was opened later in the day.

Senate defers agenda to discuss evolving regional situation

NEWS DESK: The Senate on Monday deferred private members' day agenda to discuss the evolving regional situation.

At the outset, the House offered fatha for the departed soul of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who was martyred in joint US-Israeli strikes on Tehran the other day.

Taking the floor, Leader of Opposition Raja Nasir Abbas strongly condemned the US and Israeli attack on Iran which led to martyrdom of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei days after Iran declared it would not develop nuclear weapons.

He condemned US President Donald Trump for violating the international law, making global forums like United Nations irrelevant and taking actions that were causing instability in the world.

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