

# Independent

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Operation Marg Bar Sarmachar:

## Pakistan carried out effective strikes against terrorists' hideouts inside Iran: ISPR

Sole objective of act was in pursuit of Pakistan's own security and national interest- FO; PM Kakar cuts short World Economic Forum visit in Davos; China offers to mediate as Pakistan-Iran border tensions flare

**Bureau Report**  
RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Armed Forces, in the early hours on Thursday, carried out effective strikes against hideouts during an intelligence-based operation inside Iran, used by terrorists, responsible for recent attacks in Pakistan. The precision strikes were carried out using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons whereas maximum care was taken to avoid collateral damage, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The hideouts used by terrorist organisations, namely Balochistan Liberation Army and Balochistan Liberation Front, were successfully struck in an intelligence based operation, code name 'Marg Bar Sarmachar'.

The targeted hideouts were being used by notorious terrorists including Dostalias Chairman, Bajjar alias Soghat, Sahil alias Shafiq, Asghar alias Basham and Wazir alias Wazi, amongst others.

Pakistan Armed Forces remain in a perpetual state of readiness to ensure safety of Pakistan citizens against acts of terrorism.

"Our resolve to ensure that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan is respected and safeguarded against any misadventure, remains unwavering. We reaffirm our determination to defeat all enemies of Pakistan with the support of the people of Pakistan," the ISPR said. It added that going forward, dialogue and cooperation were deemed prudent in resolving bilateral issues between the two neighbouring brotherly countries.

Meanwhile Pakistan on Thursday morning carried out a series of "highly coordinated" and "specifically targeted precision military strikes against terrorist hideouts in Sistan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran, killing a number of terrorists. "This morning Pakistan undertook a series of highly coordinated and specifically

targeted precision military strikes against terrorist hideouts in Sistan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran. A number of terrorists were killed during the intelligence-based operation - codenamed 'Marg Bar Sarmachar'," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in a statement.

She said that over the last several years, in bilateral engagements with Iran, Pakistan had consistently shared its serious concerns about the safe havens and sanctuaries enjoyed by Pakistani-origin terrorists calling themselves Sarmachars on the unoccupied spaces inside Iran.

Pakistan also shared multiple dossiers with concrete evidence of the presence and activities of these terrorists, she added.

"However, because of a lack of action on our serious concerns, these so-called Sarmachars continued to spill the blood of innocent Pakistanis with

impunity. This morning's action was taken in light of credible intelligence of impending large-scale terrorist activities by these so-called Sarmachars," the spokesperson remarked.

She said the action was a manifestation of Pakistan's unflinching resolve to protect and defend its national security against all threats.

Spokesperson Baloch said that the successful execution of the said "highly complex operation" was also a testimony to the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces. Pakistan will continue to take all necessary steps to preserve the safety and security of its people which is sacrosanct, inviolable and sacred.

She reiterated that Pakistan fully respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The sole objective of today's act was in pursuit of Pakistan's own security and national interest which is paramount and cannot be compromised, she added.

She said that as a re-

sponsible member of the international community, Pakistan upheld the principles and purposes of the UN Charter including territorial integrity and sovereignty of member states.

The spokesperson said that guided by the said principles, and in exercise of the legitimate rights within international law, Pakistan would never allow its sovereignty and territorial integrity to be challenged, under any pretext or circumstances.

"Iran is a brotherly country and the people of Pakistan have great respect and affection for the Iranian people. We have always emphasized dialogue and cooperation in confronting common challenges including the menace of terrorism and will continue to endeavour to find joint solutions," the spokesperson added.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani had cut short their foreign visits in light of the devel-



opments, hours after Pakistan carried out a strike targeting the terrorists' hideouts in Iran. The spokesperson, in her weekly briefing, told the media that Pakistan's action was against the terrorist outfits, not Iran as it desired peaceful relations with the neighbouring country and always sought to address the challenges through dialogue.

"Pakistan fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The sole objective of today's act was in pursuit of Pakistan's own security and national interest which is paramount and cannot be compromised," she reiterated her remarks already issued a short after Pakistan carried out a series of "highly coordinated" and "specifically targeted" precision military strikes in Sistan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran. She said the prime minister who was currently in Davos to attend the World Economic Forum and the foreign minister attending the NAM Summit and Third South Summit in Uganda, have cut their visits short "in view of the ongoing developments."



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over a high level meeting held to review the measures for the general elections and for maintaining law & order in the province including the border areas at Chief Minister secretariat

### Govt. & security institutions fully alert to establish peace: Effective administrative strategy prepared to tackle any untoward law & order situation in Balochistan: CM

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the government and security institutions are fully alert for establishing peace in all districts of the province including border areas, and an effective administrative strategy has been prepared to tackle any situation of law and order in the province.

The Chief Minister was presiding over a high level meeting held to review the measures for the general elections and for maintaining law & order in the prov-

ince including the border areas, here at the Chief Minister secretariat on Thursday.

Those who were present in the meeting were included Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem, Additional Inspector General of police, Jawad Dogar and other concerned high officials. The Additional Chief Secretary Home briefed the meeting about the overall situation of law and order in the province including border areas besides the steps taken for general elections by the provincial gov-

ernment.

Addressing the meeting, caretaker Chief Minister said that the arrangements are being finalized to conduct free, fair and transparent general elections in peaceful manner.

He expressed satisfaction over the preparations made so far in this regard.

He said that the people would have chance to use their right of franchise in conducive environment due to the effective strategy adopted by the.

He said that the quick response force would also be available to assist police and levies in elections.

Terrorists to be swiftly & decisively crushed: Entire nation stands united with Pak Army, maintains CT Minister Information

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that the people of Balochistan express their gratitude to the Pakistan Military for their unwavering protection.

In a tweet on his social media account X on Thursday, Jan Achakzai said that the entire nation stands with

you (Military) today, yesterday, today and tomorrow. He said that "best assured, the terrorists belonging to the banned organizations including Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) / Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) would be swiftly and decisively crushed, whether they attempt to infiltrate our borders or operate from within."

### JIT decides to take stern action against responsible for launching anti judiciary campaign

**ISLAMABAD (Online):** First meeting of JIT was held in FIA headquarters Islamabad on the matter of prevention of anti judiciary material.

The meeting was presided over by Additional Director General (ADG) FIA.

It has been decided in the meeting to take stern action against those involved in maligning judiciary on social media.

As per sources officers of sensitive institutions presented report on plan of action in the meeting.

**No airspace ban decided for Iran, says CAA**  
KARACHI (INP): The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority has said that no decision yet taken for banning airspace for Iran, a spokesperson of CAA said on Thursday.

A spokesperson said that the CAA didn't receive any instruction with regard to ban on commercial flights between Iran and Pakistan.

The CAA however said that a strict monitoring of the flights from western direction including Iran has been initiated.

### Nawaz Sharif vows to make Pakistan stand on its feet

**HAFIZABAD (INP):** Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif vowed to make Pakistan stand on its



own feet again.

Addressing his maiden public gathering of election 2024 campaign, Nawaz Sharif said that he was ousted from power by the five Supreme Court judges just because he refused to take a salary from his son.

Nawaz claimed if he had

### NSC meeting likely on Pakistan-Iran tension

**ISLAMABAD (Online):** National Security Council (NSC) meeting is likely to be convened on tense situation between Pakistan and Iran.

The date for meeting will be determined on return of care taker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarull Haq Kakar to home.

Sources said the meeting will null prevailing post-attack situation as Pakistan retaliated against unprovoked violation of its airspace by Iran and targeted militant hideouts in the neighbouring country.

The meeting will be attended by chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force. The meeting will also review law and order situation in the country, besides affairs relating to holding of general elections in February. The participants will be also briefed about operation against Baloch militants in Iran.

Important decisions will be taken in the meeting in the perspective of national security related matters and tense situation between Pakistan and Iran.

### Pakistan desires to deepen bilateral engagement with Saudi Arabia: PM

**DAVOS (APP):** Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah Thursday called on Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on the sidelines of the 54th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The prime minister underlined the strategic importance of close brotherly relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, rooted in common cultural



heritage and shared interests.

The two sides also reviewed regional developments. Prime Minister Kakar noted that close brotherly relations between the two countries were a factor in regional stability.

He said Pakistan desires to deepen bilateral engagement including through trade, investment and people-to-people exchanges. The prime minister appreciated the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and underlined the highest esteem the people of Pakistan held for the leadership and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### Central Secretary Information claims: BNP to emerge major political party in elections if free & fair elections conducted

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The central Secretary Information of Balochistan National Party (BNP), Agha Hasan Baloch has claimed that the BNP would emerge as major political party in upcoming general elections in the province, if the same (elections) were conducted free, fair and in transparent manner.

He said that the election campaign is being run by the party all over the province, and it is gaining acceptability following the campaign. Agha Hasan Baloch was addressing press conference here at Quetta Press club on Thursday.

Other party leaders were also present on the occasion.

Agha Hasan Baloch said that if the elections were conducted in transparent manner, then BNP would emerge as the major political party in the province.

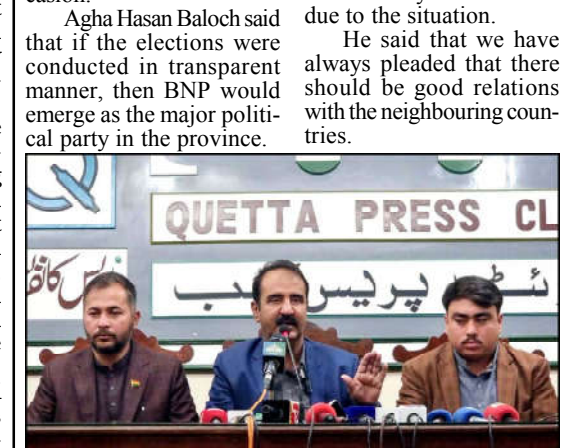
He said that BNP has always spoken about the rights of all nationalities including Baloch, Pashtoons, Hazara and others.

He urged the Election Commission of Pakistan to take steps for free and fair elections in the country including Balochistan. He said that if the issues are really to be resolved then the seriousness would have to be demonstrated.

He said that the caretaker government has crossed its limits, it would have to work in the same.

Referring the tension between Iran and Pakistan, the BNP leader said that Balochs are settled at both sides of the Pak-Iran border and they would suffer due to the situation.

He said that we have always pleaded that there should be good relations with the neighbouring countries.



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party (BNP) Central Leader, Agha Hassan Baloch addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

### Pakistan calls for just, peaceful solution of Kashmir, Palestine issues

**KAMPALA (INP):** Pakistan has called for just, peaceful, and expeditious resolution of the longstanding Kashmir and Palestine disputes.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the demand was made by Pakistan Foreign Minister, Jalil Abbas

Jilani, at the Ministerial meeting of the 19th NAM Summit in Kampala, Uganda.

He said Pakistan will continue to support the movement's efforts towards peace, equality, cooperation, and well-being for all.



QUETTA: Country Director World Food Program Ms. Coco Ushiyama meeting with Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan

### PEMRA asks TV channels to cover Pak-Iran tension with 'utmost care'

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulation Authority (PEMRA) on Thursday directed all the satellite TV channel licensees to exercise "utmost care" while reporting over "tension between Pakistan and Iran."

"All the licensees are directed to avoid telecasting/breaking any unsubstantiated news on recent development surfaced between Pakistan and Iran," PEMRA said in a letter addressed to all the licensees operating in "news & current affairs and regional languages".

The Authority urged them to verify the related information from the relevant institutions before broadcasting or airing.

"Licensees are expected to present factual information / reports through their

transmission and support state narrative at this crucial time as and when released from the relevant institution," it added.

PEMRA said all the news and programming heads and their respective teams should be sensitized to verify each and every information received on their desks or Whatsapp groups, and "aired only after necessary fact checking, as any false reporting may cause unrest and insecurity among the public".

It warned that if any violation was observed, reported or identified through any complaint, "the Authority shall be constrained to proceed under Section 26, 29-A and 30 of PEMRA Ordinance 2002 as amended by PEMRA (Amendment) Act-2023".



## Ties between Pakistan, KSA deep rooted due to common religion and culture: Baligh

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) Nawaf Bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and discussed matters of mutual interest, promotion of bilateral relations, and mutual cooperation during a meeting at the Governor's House here on Thursday.

He said that the ties between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are deep rooted due to common religion and culture. He said that the Saudi government is taking very good steps regarding tourism. He said that the simplification of the visa policy by the Saudi government for foreign tourists is a good initiative. The Governor Punjab said that the Saudi government's new investment initiatives in Pakistan are encouraging. He said that it is good to see that more Saudi business delegations are visiting Pakistan. He said that there are favourable opportunities in Pakistan for Saudi investors.

On this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman and the Saudi Ambassador also discussed the situation in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He said that Saudi companies are also investing in semiconductors, which are the basis of all technologies. He said that Pakistani universities are providing quality education in medical and various other disciplines. He said that Pakistani doctors are known for professional competence all over the world. He said that Saudi students should come to study in Pakistani universities.



LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister Allama Tahir Ashrafi talking to the media at Jamia Islamia Manzoor Cantt.

## Effective reforms essential for promotion of business, investment: Dr Amer

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce & Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Dr Amer Abdullah has said that bringing effective reforms in the governance system with time is essential for the promotion of business activities and investment.

Speaking as a chief guest at a consultation workshop in a local hotel regarding possible reforms in the rules and regulations for the business and investment sector here on Thursday, the Caretaker Minister said that he wants to improve the rules and regulations while keeping the public interest and rights in mind.

The workshop was jointly organized by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BoIT) and the Federal Board of Investment (BoI) (Prime Minister's Office). Besides, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary Industries Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Oil



LAHORE: Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman at Governor House.

## KP CM meets PAJCCI delegation; discusses closure of Pak-Afghan border

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Thursday held a meeting with a delegation comprising members of the Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) and discussed problems being faced by businessmen due to the closure of Pak-Afghan border.

The delegation members included Coordinator PAJCCI, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Faud Ishaq, Director PAJCCI, Imtiaz Ahmad Ali, Vice Chairman All Pakistan Customs Agents Association, Farooq Ahmad and Ex. Presidents SCCI, Zahid Shinwari and Faiz Muhammad Faizi.

They said a large number of trucks were carrying perishable items like fresh fruit, vegetables, poultry and other items which may get rotten due to border crossing restrictions, inflicting significant financial losses on the business community of both countries.

## ANF recovers 389 kg drugs in 11 operations; arrests 10 accused

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 389 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that five hashish-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Abu Dhabi at Bacha Khan Airport. 250 grams intoxicated tablets were recovered from two passengers going to Muscat from Multan Airport.

210 grams Ice drug was recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Jinnah Airport Karachi. 88 grams heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Malaysia at Allama Iqbal Airport.

## US political officer meets PPP leader

**LAHORE (APP):** The Political Officer of the American High Commission, Robert Kane, met with the Additional Secretary General of Pakistan People's Party Zulfikar Ali Bader at his residence, in which he discussed the current political and economic situation of the country and bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States.

Apart from this, the environment of general elections in Pakistan and the impact of elections on the country's development and prosperity were also discussed.

They discussed the current political and economic situation of the country and bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States.

## Caretaker KP Minister chairs meeting of reforms committees

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Local Government and rural development Amir Nadeem Durrani said that the caretaker government's mandate is limited but our effort is to give a better roadmap to the next elected government. He said I desire to work for the betterment of the people adding that reforms in local government are the need of the hour.

At the meeting, Nadeem Durrani was brief about the establishment of the reforms committees and was told that Urban Area Development Authorities, TMAs, WSSCs.



LAHORE: H.E. Leslie Scanlon; Canadian High Commissioner meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

## Youth Alliance protest against black marketing, artificial scarcity of urea

**Tanveer Ahmed Soomro MIRPUR MATHELO:** In Mirpur Mathelo, on the call of youth alliance against black marketing and artificial scarcity of urea fertilizer, farmers and political social leaders staged a protest outside the office of Deputy Commissioner Ghotki in Mirpur Mathelo. And shouting slogans against the dealers of urea fertilizer.

According to the details, due to the nexus of the dealers of urea fertilizer in Mirpur Mathelo, the series of black marketing of artificial shortage of urea fertilizer has not ended. The leaders started a protest outside the office of Deputy Commissioner Ghotki in Mirpur Mathelo and locked the main gate of Deputy Commissioner Ghotki's office, Ayaz Khahawar, Waqar Bozdar and others while talking to the media. said that they have been protesting against the black marketing of urea fertilizer for the past two months, but no action has been taken against the dealers who sold urea fertilizer worth Rs. 35 hundred for Rs. 6,000. Fertilizer has exceeded six thousand rupees which is cruelty and abuse to the farmers.

# International News

## Houthi strike another US vessel

**SANA'A (Online):** Yemen's Houthi rebels have taken responsibility for an attack on the US-owned cargo vessel Genco Picardy, a spokesman for the militant group announced on Wednesday.

The United Kingdom Trade Organization (UKMTO) had received a report of an attack on a merchant ship around 60 nautical miles southeast of the Yemeni port of Aden. "Master reports vessel has been hit on the port side by an Uncrewed Aerial System," the UKMTO said in their incident report late on Wednesday, referring to a likely drone attack. The report said the resulting fire was extinguished and that the vessel and crew were safe and proceeding to their next port of call.

Houthi spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for the attack in a televised address, naming the vessel as the US-owned Genco Picardy. "The naval forces of the Yemeni Armed Forces carried out a targeting operation against the American ship... in the Gulf of Aden... leaving direct hits," Saree said. He reiterated that Yemeni armed forces "will not hesitate to target all sources of threat in the Arab and Red Seas within the legitimate right to defend dear Yemen and to continue supporting the oppressed Palestinian people."



Israeli forces search a Red Crescent ambulance during a raid in Tulkarm, occupied West Bank.

## Japan counts down to precision 'moon sniper' landing mission

**TOKYO (Internews):** Japan aims to become the fifth country to put a spacecraft on the moon when it attempts a precision landing on Friday, in what would be a boost for a space programme that has suffered a wave of setbacks and been eclipsed by rival China.

Dubbed the "moon sniper", the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) probe is attempting to land within 100 metres (328 feet) of its target, a technology

## Singapore transport minister resigns over corruption charges

**SINGAPORE (AFP/APP):** Singapore's transport minister has resigned his post after being charged with 27 offences in a corruption probe that has also ensnared a billionaire hotel tycoon. S. Iswaran was arrested in July of 2023 and released on bail in connection with a rare top-level graft investigation in the city-state.



S. Iswaran, Singapore's former transport minister, arrives at the State Courts in Singapore.

## Tel Aviv steps up Gaza strikes after medicine-aid deal

**Monitoring Desk GAZA CITY:** Tel Aviv stepped up air strikes on Wednesday over the Gaza Strip's south, where medicines were expected to be delivered for Israeli prisoners in exchange for humanitarian aid under a newly brokered deal.

Violence has also surged in the Israeli-occupied West Bank since Oct 7 to a level not seen since the second Palestinian uprising between 2000 and 2005.

Israeli army raids and attacks by settlers have killed around 350 people in the territory, according to a tally based on sources from both sides. Air strikes and artillery fire targeted Khan Yunis throughout Tuesday night, according to eyewitnesses in the southern Gaza Strip's biggest city.

## Plight of Palestinians echoes in US Senate

**Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON:** The plight of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank echoed in the US Senate on Tuesday evening as senators debated a resolution questioning US aid to Israel.

The lawmakers overwhelmingly rejected the move by Senator Bernie Sanders, a former presidential candidate, to tie US aid to Israel's treatment of Palestinians but he did succeed in generating a passionate debate on the issue.

The newspaper pointed out that those backing the proposal were "sending a pointed message to President Joe Biden that the war in Gaza is becoming a major problem for his party."

## Biden aims for North Carolina as 2024 election comes into focus

**WASHINGTON (Internews):** U.S. President Joe Biden will fix his gaze on one of the prizes of the 2024 election three days after Donald Trump's Iowa Republican primary triumph, taking his economic pitch to closely contested North Carolina on Thursday.

It comes as Biden's re-election campaign, launched nearly nine months ago, revs up into general-election mode with hires across a series of the states where voting preferences can swing to either party. Since 1980, North Carolina has only backed one Democrat in a presidential election: Barack Obama in 2008. But Biden's loss there in 2020 was narrower than Obama's in 2012 and Hillary Clinton's in 2016.



Smoke rising after an explosion at a fireworks factory near Sala Khao township in Thailand's Suphan Buri province.

## Red Sea ship diversions boost bunker demand, prices in Africa, Mediterranean

**SINGAPORE/CAPE TOWN / LONDON (Internews):** The re-routing of a growing number of ships around Africa to avoid potential attacks in the Red Sea is altering refueling patterns and boosting demand for bunker fuel at far-flung ports, from the Mauritius to South Africa to the Canary Islands.

Ships are also expected to top up more at Singapore and Rotterdam, the two busiest bunkering ports and where fuel is competitively priced, as they try to hedge against uncertainty over route changes, traders and analysts said. Attacks by Yemen's Houthi militia on merchant

