



PAKISTAN WATCH

No. 64

March 2016

POLITICAL ISSUES

IRAN

1. Sanctions against Iran lifted by Pakistan

Islamabad, Friday, 19 February 2016

In accordance with the UNSC Resolution 2231, Pakistan lifted the sanctions against Iran and an inter-ministerial meeting chaired by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar confirmed normalization of bilateral relations in all sectors including energy, finance, banking, investment and technology.

Source: Dispatch News Desk, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Lahore

<http://www.dnd.com.pk/pakistan-lifts-sanctions-on-iran-revives-economic-relations-finance-ministry/106278>

See also: Dawn, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1240603>

See also: The Express Tribune, Karachi

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1050792/pakistan-lifts-sanctions-on-iran-2/>

See also: Daily Times, Lahore

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/20-Feb-16/pakistan-lifts-sanctions-on-iran>

See also: The Nation, Lahore

<http://nation.com.pk/national/20-Feb-2016/pakistan-lifts-sanctions-on-iran>

See also: The News International, Karachi

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/99613-Pakistan-lifts-all-sanctions-on-Iran>

IRAQ

2. Pakistan concerned over ISIS-led violence in Iraq

Islamabad, Tuesday, 23 February 2016

Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to Prime Minister met Iraq's new ambassador to Pakistan Ali Yassin Karim and discussed rise of Daesh (ISIS) and deteriorating security situation in Iraq. Willingness to invest in reconstruction of war-torn Iraq was also expressed by Minister of Defence Production (MoDP) Tanveer Hussain.

Source: Associated Press of Pakistan, Islamabad

<http://www.app.com.pk/fatemi-conveys-pakistans-concern-over-situation-in-iraq/>

<http://www.app.com.pk/pakistan-shows-readiness-in-rebuilding-iraq/>

See also: Daily Times, Lahore

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/26-Jan-2016/ayaz-sadiq-for-expanding-pak-iraq-cooperation>

SAUDI ARABIA

3. Pakistan urged by United Nations to resolve Saudi-Iran tensions

Islamabad, Friday, 12 February 2016

In a telephonic conversation United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon urged Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to mediate in resolving the tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Source: Associated Press of Pakistan, Islamabad

<http://www.app.com.pk/ban-ki-moon-phones-pm-urges-role-to-resolve-iran-saudi-tension/>

See also: Dawn, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1239072>

See also: The Express Tribune, Karachi

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1045719/ban-ki-moon-urges-pm-nawaz-to-play-role-in-resolving-saudi-iran-standoff/>

TURKEY

4. Turkish Naval commander conferred with Nishan-e-Imtiaz by Pakistan President

Islamabad, Thursday, 18 February 2016

Bulent Bostanoglu, Commander of Turkish Naval Forces was conferred with Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military), one of the highest Military Awards in recognition of his efforts to bolster bilateral naval cooperation. Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain presented the award during a special ceremony held in Islamabad.

Source: Pakistan News Index, Islamabad

<http://pakistannewsindex.com/%EF%BB%BFcommander-turkish-naval-forces-conferred-with-nishan-e-imtiaz/>

See also: Daily Times, Lahore

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/16-Feb-2016/president-confers-nishan-e-imtiaz-on-turkish-naval-commander>

See also: The News International, Karachi

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/98674-Pakistan-Turkish-naval-chiefs-discuss-bilateral-cooperation>

See also: The Nation, Lahore

<http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/17-Feb-2016/president-confers-nishan-i-imtiaz-on-turkish-commander>

See also: Business Recorder, Karachi

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172:pakistan/16883:turkish-naval-chief-arrives/?date=2016-02-16>

5. Terrorist attack in Turkey condemned by Pakistan

Islamabad, Thursday, 18 February 2016

President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif strongly condemned the suicide bombing in Ankara on 17 February, suspected to have been carried out by Kurdish Freedom Falcons, a militant group that left at least 28 people dead and over 60 wounded.

Source: Dawn, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1240144>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

IRAN

6. Second Developing-8 trade meeting hosted by Pakistan to discuss multilateral trade issues

Islamabad, Wednesday, 17 February 2016

Members of D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, including Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Nigeria, Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh, participated in the two-day Trade Ministers Council meeting in Islamabad. Issues pertaining trade, tariffs and foreign investment were discussed at length and it was decided that pending Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between member nations would be passed in July this year.

Source: Business Recorder, Karachi

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-news/front-top/279301-d-8-members-to-implement-decade-pending-pta-from-july-1.html>

7. Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project to be restarted

Islamabad, Friday, 26 February 2016

Minister for Petroleum Shahid Abbasi stated in the National Assembly that pending work on the Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline project is likely to restart in light of lifting of sanctions on Iran. While Iran completed its side in 2011, international sanctions and pressure from US and Saudi Arabia had disrupted Pakistan's progress on the project.

Source: Dispatch News Desk, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Lahore

<http://www.dnd.com.pk/work-on-pak-iran-gas-pipeline-project-to-start-soon-abbasi/106599>

SAUDI ARABIA

8. Saudi oil company; Aramco to invest in Pakistan's power and petrochemical sector

Islamabad, Friday, 19 February 2016

Saudi Arabian oil company Aramco's Vice Chairperson Abdul Aziz Judaimi held delegation-level meeting with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad and discussed prospects for investment in Pakistan's petro-chemical and energy sector.

Source: Pakistan Observer, Islamabad

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/02/20/dar-urges-saudi-investors-to-invest-in-pakistan/>

UAE

9. Beef export to U.A.E. to grow at 24 percent

Islamabad, Saturday, 13 February 2016

Official statistics revealed that Pakistan's foreign exchange earnings from beef export to UAE stood at US\$43.61 in 2015. And registered 24 percent rise during the last fiscal year.

Source: Pakistan Today, Lahore

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/02/13/business/beef-export-to-uae-fetches-us-43-61m-amid-24pc-growth/>

SECURITY ISSUES

SAUDI ARABIA

10. Pakistan joined 'Thunder of the North' military exercise in Saudi Arabia

Islamabad, Monday, 15 February 2016

Armed forces from around 20 countries including Pakistan, five GCC member nations, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, gathered at King Khaled Military City in North Eastern Saudi Arabia to participate in the joint military exercise starting 14 February. This aims to share

intelligence and combat violent ideology, and develop synchronization among forces for joint military missions in future.

Source: Dawn, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1239517>

See also: The Express Tribune, Karachi

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1046861/20-nations-including-pakistan-join-major-military-manoeuvre-in-saudi/>

See also: Pakistan Observer, Islamabad

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/02/29/thunder-of-the-north-exercise-begins-in-saudi/>

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

IRAN

11. International cultural seminar held between Iran and Pakistan

Islamabad, Thursday, 18 February 2016

National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and the Iranian embassy co-organized a two-day seminar on “Cultural and Linguistic Commonalities between Iran and Pakistan” on 17 and 18 February in Islamabad and it highlighted and celebrated cultural, lingual, traditional and religious affinity between the two.

Source: Dawn, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1240507>

See also: The Express Tribune, Karachi

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1049275/close-cultures-pakistan-and-iran-share-more-than-cultural-ties-mehdi/>

See also: Dispatch News Desk, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Lahore

<http://www.dnd.com.pk/pakistan-iran-are-close-brother-nations-iranian-envoy/106187>

See also: The Nation, Lahore

<http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/18-Feb-2016/pakistan-iran-close-brotherly-nations-iranian-diplomat>

See also: Pakistan Observer, Karachi

<http://pakobserver.net/2016/02/19/seminar-on-pak-iran-cultural-lingual-commonalities/>

See also: Daily Times, Lahore

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/19-Feb-2016/pakistan-and-iran-enjoy-close-bilateral-relations-envoy>

SYRIA

12. Noble Laureate Malala Yousafzai to raise funds for Syrian children’s welfare

Islamabad, Tuesday, 2 February 2016

'Supporting Syria and the region' conference held in London on 4 February 2016 saw Malala Yousafzai, the Noble prize winner from Peshawar, stand up for rights of children in Syria. She highlighted the role of education in improving future of Syrian children and pledged to raise US\$ 1.4 billion of donations this year to help educate children inside Syria and in refugee camps.

Source: Dawn, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1236948>

See also: The Express Tribune, Karachi

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1037948/malala-seeks-to-raise-1-4-billion-to-educate-syrian-refugees/>

TURKEY

13. Turkish firm Al-Baryak to launch cab service in Lahore

Islamabad, Wednesday, 17 February 2016

An agreement was signed between Punjab government and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality on 16 February in Lahore to launch a Turkish modern radio cab service, A-Taxi. Mayor of Istanbul Kadir Topbas and Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif inaugurated the service offered by Turkish firm Al-Baryak.

Source: The News International, Karachi

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/98846-CM-Turkish-mayor-open-cab-service>

See also: Dawn, Karachi

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1240110>

14. Pakistan-Turkey container train service to be resumed

Islamabad, Friday, 19 February 2016

The container train service between (Quetta) Pakistan and (Istanbul) Turkey via (Zahidan) Iran, which was operational between 2009 and 2011, is likely to be restarted through tripartite agreement. Official sources at Pakistan Railways stated that in order to fix the dilapidated track falling within Pakistan's territorial jurisdiction, private investors have been invited.

Source: The News International, Karachi

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/99579-Pakistan-to-resume-container-train-service-to-Turkey>

UAE

15. Pakistan rugby squad named for Sevens Asian Development Series

Lahore, Monday, 22 February 2016

Pakistan's 15-member team participated in Asian Development Rugby Seven's series held at Amblers Rugby Club in Al-Ain city in Abu Dhabi and lost both the matches against Lebanon and Thailand. The series featured 12 teams including six Middle Eastern nations of Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Lebanon, Qatar and Syria.

Source: The Express Tribune, Karachi

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1055086/asian-development-sevens-series-pakistan-suffer-back-to-back-defeats/>

See also: Business Recorder, Karachi

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/m/2016/02/23/16-page/562329-news.html>

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