

Pakistan moves heavy artillery towards Afghan border

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Islamabad: Pakistan has moved heavy artillery towards the Pak-Afghan border in Chaman and Torkham districts, days after an ISIS suicide bomber killed at least 70 people at a Sufi shrine in Sindh province.

Representational pic

The move came just two days after the military targeted the camps of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) Jamaatul Ahrar (JA) faction on the Torkham border opposite Mohmand and Khyber tribal regions.

Pakistan alleges that the group, which claims to be behind the recent wave of terrorist attacks, has found a "safe haven" in Afghanistan.

Reacting to the development, Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa said that enhanced security arrangements in the border region were aimed at combating terrorism.

He said that security measures along the border with Afghanistan were part of efforts to defeat terrorism which is a common threat to both countries.

Army spokesperson Major General Asif Ghafoor said in a statement that General Bajwa chaired a high level security meeting at army's headquarter in Rawalpindi.

Ghafoor quoted the Army Chief as saying that "enhanced security arrangements" along border are to "fight (the) common enemy i.e. terrorists of all hue and colour".

"Pakistan and Afghanistan have fought against terrorism and shall continue this effort together," Bajwa said.

He also called for more effective border coordination and cooperation with Afghan security forces to prevent cross border movement of terrorists, including all types of illegal movement.

Bajwa welcomed recent proposals from Afghan authorities to take forward the mutual coordination for result oriented efforts against terrorism.

Pakistan has increased security at the Afghan border to stop all illegal movements after a wave of deadly attacks last week.

More than 130 suspected terrorists have been killed and over 350 people, mostly Afghans, arrested in Pakistan as part of a nationwide crackdown by security forces following a string of suicide bombings in the country.

Senior police officers were among 13 people killed when a Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up during a protest rally outside Pakistan's Punjab assembly in Lahore last Monday.

On Wednesday, at least seven people were killed and several others, including judges, injured in two separate suicide attacks in Pakistan's restive northwest region.

One of the deadliest suicide bombing in Pakistan in recent times struck Thursday night at the Lal Shahbaz Qalandar

shrine in Sehwan area of southern Sindh province where at least 88 people were killed and over 200 injured in an attack claimed by the ISIS.

- With PTI Inputs