

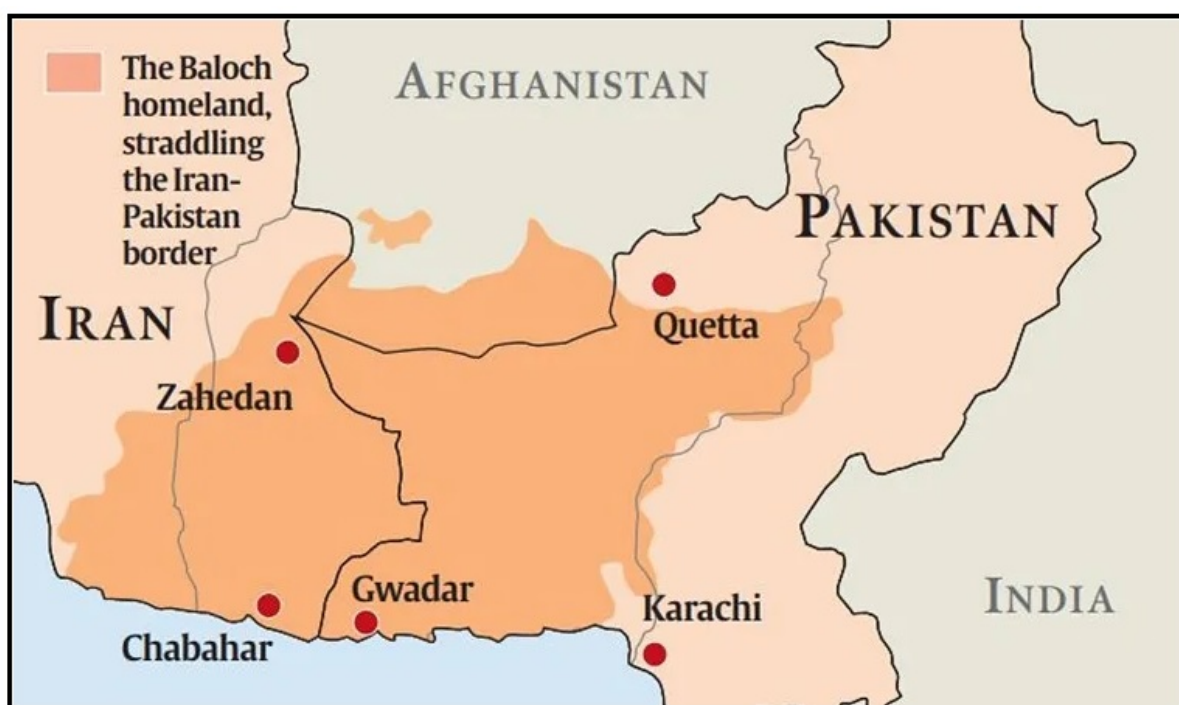
Iran Pakistan Strikes

Why in news?

India backed Iran on its strikes on alleged terror camps in Pakistan's Balochistan Province, calling it an act of "self-defence".

What is the issue?

- **The issue** - Iran has carried out a 3rd strike in reprisal for the January 3 terror attack in **Kerman** that killed over 80 people.
- Baloch people, who live in both Pakistan and Iran, are attacked by both countries leading to rebellion across the border.
- Iran struck 3 countries in one day namely Iraq, Syria and Pakistan.
- **India's stand** - India supported Iran's action in Pakistan as "self-defence" against terrorism.
- It indicates India's support for Iran despite the growing tensions in West Asia between Iran and the U.S.



- **Role of Pakistan** - Pakistan conducted a series of specifically targeted precision military strikes in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchistan province as part of an operation called "***Marg Bar Sarmachar***".
- The tit-for-tat strikes are the highest-profile cross-border intrusions in recent years and have raised alarm over wider instability in the Middle East since the war between [Israel and Hamas](#).

Common Baloch Problem

- **Goldsmith Line**- It is the 909-km **Iran-Pakistan border** stretches from a tripoint with Afghanistan to the northern Arabian Sea.
- **Population**- Ethnic Baloch live in Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan.
- They also nurse deeply rooted grievances against both the Pakistani and Iranian states.
- **Economic status**-The Baloch homeland is rich in natural resources but in Iran, 80% of the Baloch population lives under the poverty line.
- In Pakistan, massive investments in projects such as China's Belt and Road initiative have not improved their lives.
- **Baloch nationalism**- It traces its roots to the early decades of the 20th century, when new international borders came to be drawn in the region.
- Their marginalisation in both countries in subsequent years fuelled several separatist movements for a "**Greater Balochistan**" nation state.



BALUCHISTAN FACTS

Accession

The rulers of the princely state Khanate of Kalat, a major constituent of Balochistan, refused to join Pakistan in 1947. It was annexed to Pakistan in a military operation in 1948 and Yar Khan, the then ruler, signed the treaty of accession while his brothers and followers declined to surrender

Insurgency

After the 1948 military action, rebellion crisis erupted in 1958, in 1962-63 and 1973-77. Pakistan has even used its air force against the Baloch people to counter insurgency. Fresh tensions started with General Pervez Musharraf coming to power in Pakistan in 1999. There were large scale military build-up in the region which rebels fought against

Strategic Importance

- Balochistan is a mineral rich state and holds immense revenue potential for Pakistan
- China has proposed economic corridor to link Pakistani port of Gwadar with Kashgar, a trading hub in western China
- Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline is planned to go through Balochistan

Separatist Groups

- Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)
- The Baloch Republican Party
- Baloch Liberation Front

Source: Media reports

KBK Infographics

Why India's role is significant in Iran-Pakistan strike?

- **Strategic location**- Balochistan is a region that spans across Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, and has a strategic position at the mouth of the **Persian Gulf**, a vital waterway for global oil trade.
- **Connectivity**- Balochistan also has access to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, making it a potential hub for maritime connectivity and trade.
- **Geopolitical dynamics**- Balochistan is home to Baloch minority which is strategically important for the global powers that are competing for influence in Central Asia and

the Middle East.

- **New great game**- It refers to the rivalry and competition among regional and global powers for influence and resources in Central and South Asia, especially in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries.
- **China factor**- China has a strategic interest in **Gwadar**, a port city in Balochistan, as part of its Belt and Road Initiative and its naval ambitions in the Indian Ocean.
- **Security concerns**- Balochistan's proximity to Afghanistan, where the [Taliban regime](#) has recently taken over, adds to the complexity and uncertainty to the regional security dynamics.
- **Change in foreign policy**- India as a rising power with growing economic and security interests in the region, needs to rethink its traditional neutrality and passive approach in the Middle East and Central Asia.
- **India-Iran ties**- They have cooperated in the energy sector despite US sanctions on Iran, India has developed a meaningful dimension with Iran.
- **Chabahar port**- India is involved in the planning and building of the [Chabahar port](#), intended to allow it to bypass the overland route through Pakistan for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- Chabahar directly competes with Pakistan's China funded Gwadar port, keeping a check on growing China's influence in the neighbourhood region.

References

1. [Indian Express- India's stake deepen in Iran Pakistan strikes](#)
2. [Indian Express- Iran, Pakistan and Baloch militancy](#)

