

## Middle East tensions trigger mass flight diversions to Karachi Airport

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 01 March, 2026



**Dhaka: Escalating tensions in the Middle East on Saturday, February 28, disrupted regional air travel and prompted widespread flight suspensions, cancellations, and precautionary diversions across Pakistani airports.**

While Pakistan's airspace remains fully available and secure, several international airlines adjusted operations due to evolving security concerns and restrictions in neighboring airspace.

Karachi's Jinnah International Airport witnessed extraordinary activity as it handled dozens of diverted foreign flights. The surge created scenes reminiscent of the 1990 Gulf crisis, when numerous aircraft were rerouted to the city following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

According to aviation sources, many flights were diverted as a

precaution, with several aircraft temporarily parked and others landing for technical refueling stops. The sudden influx placed pressure on ground operations and apron capacity.

In response, the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) issued a formal Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), highlighting limited aircraft parking space at Karachi and instructing airlines and cockpit crew to ensure prior coordination before operating into the airport.

A PAA spokesperson said a total of 27 flights were handled, including diversions, return operations, technical landings, and rerouted services.

Karachi alone managed 13 diversions, including refueling stops. Four additional diversions were recorded in the Lahore Flight Information Region, while two return diversions were handled at Islamabad Airport.

Three flights later resumed toward their original or alternate destinations. Meanwhile, five rerouted aircraft transited through Karachi's airspace without landing and were provided alternative routing.

Airport authorities said the situation is being closely monitored, warning airlines of potential delays due to parking constraints and elevated traffic levels.

**V**