

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

08 May 2026

Security

- ◆ **Marka-e-Haq Anniversary Underscores Pakistan's Evolving Air Power**— On the first anniversary of **Marka-e-Haq**, Pakistan's Armed Forces, led by the **Pakistan Air Force**, commemorated what they called a “**defining chapter**” that strengthened national confidence and validated rapid modernisation. The PAF highlighted its shift to **multi-domain operations**, disruptive technologies and future-ready capability. Officials reiterated that Pakistan is **peace-loving**, yet fully prepared to counter aggression with “**even greater strength, precision and resolve**”. The nation paid tribute to PAF personnel whose professionalism safeguarded national airspace. (*The Nation*, [7 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Shifting Military Equations in South Asia**— One year after the May 2025 India–Pakistan conflict, military doctrines have shifted towards **compressed, technology-driven warfare**. Both sides now believe **limited conventional escalation is possible without breaching the nuclear threshold**. Drones, satellites, precision strikes and electronic warfare dominate planning. Pakistan emphasises survivability, distributed forces and retaliatory capability, while India pursues **multi-domain operations** and deeper aerial strikes. New Delhi increasingly views Pakistan within a “**one border, two adversaries**” framework, factoring China into its calculus. As former Air Chief Marshal Abbas Khattak observed, “the battlefield has changed.” (*Dawn*, [8 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pak-Sri Lanka Counter-Terrorism Drill Ends**—The two-week-long joint military exercise *Shake Hands-II* between Pakistan and Sri Lanka concluded at Tarbela. Combat teams from the **Special Services Group (Pakistan Army)** and **Sri Lankan Special Forces** participated, showcasing **highest standards of professional excellence**. The exercise refined counter-terrorism drills, procedures and techniques, while strengthening historic military ties. General Officer Commanding SSG attended as chief guest, with **Major General Ajith Abeyawardana (WWV RWP RSP)** also present. The focus remained on joint training and enhancing operational cooperation. (*The News*, [8 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Civilian Casualties in Waziristan and Hangu Violence**— At least **four children of one family were killed** in South Waziristan after drone missiles struck Ghwa Khwa, destroying a vehicle and damaging nearby homes. Residents lamented that **civilian areas often bear the brunt of such attacks**, with families left in mourning and injured shifted to Wana hospital. In Hangu's Dorri Banda market, a **mortar shell killed four and injured 12**, sparking panic. Police confirmed ongoing militant operations, with clashes also reported in Zargari. Locals urged authorities to prioritise civilian protection and lasting peace. (*The Nation*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Bilawal Warns of Escalation in Pak-India Tensions** — PPP Chairman **Bilawal Bhutto Zardari** alleged that India continues to fund militant organisations behind terrorism in Pakistan, cautioning that **current tensions could trigger another conflict at any time**. Speaking to *FRANCE 24*, he noted that both countries are nuclear powers and recalled Pakistan's upper hand during the five-day war. He urged dialogue for sustainable peace; stressing terrorism is a shared challenge. On the **Strait of Hormuz**, Bilawal warned that renewed US–Iran tensions would have **global repercussions**, insisting there is no military solution. (*The News*, [8 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Unforgettable victory** — in this opinion piece Dr **Ramesh Kumar Vankwani** (MNA, **Patron-in-Chief Pakistan Hindu Council**) recalls the **7 May 2025 air clash**, when Indian warplanes were repelled by the **Pakistan Air Force**, downing several jets including Rafales. International media termed it a **failure of India's air dominance**, while CNN and *The Telegraph* highlighted Pakistan's decisive victory. He notes that **US President Donald Trump** praised Pakistan's performance, elevating its diplomatic standing, with Islamabad later hosting direct **US–Iran talks**. Vankwani frames Marka-e-Haq as a **historic triumph of unity, defence and diplomacy**, rooted in **Bhutto Shaheed's nuclear vision and Benazir Bhutto's missile programme**. (*The News*, [8 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan-China Joint Patrol at Khunjerab Pass** — Security forces from the **Khunjerab Security Force (KSF)** and the **Chinese military** conducted joint patrol exercises at the Khunjerab Pass in Hunza. The activity aimed to **strengthen border security, enhance cooperation, and reinforce friendly ties** between the two countries. Both sides demonstrated discipline, coordination, and professional skills. According to the Gilgit-Baltistan Police spokesperson, such joint patrols play a vital role in improving security along the Pakistan-China border. (*The Express Tribune*, [8 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Fauzia Baloch Alleges Pressure Over Brother's Disappearance** — At a press conference in Karachi, **Baloch Solidarity Committee leader Fauzia Baloch**, alongside her mother, accused state institutions of harassment and political pressure following the **forcible disappearance of her brother Daad Shah Baloch** on 21 April. She claimed CTD and intelligence officials raided their home, tortured him, and took him away without a warrant. The family's attempts to file a proper complaint were obstructed, with police suggesting an FIR against “unknown persons.” Fauzia alleged that her brother's release was being made conditional on her resignation from the Baloch Solidarity Committee. She recounted further harassment, including police blockades, detention, and mistreatment of her mother. She insisted the struggle against enforced disappearances is a **collective voice of thousands of Baloch families**, appealing to human rights activists and journalists to raise awareness. She demanded Dad Shah's immediate recovery and due legal process if charges exist. (*Baloch Solidarity Committee Press Conference*, Sangar, [7 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **TTP claims 8 attacks on 7 May**: TTP claimed eight attacks across seven districts on 7 May 2026, targeting Pakistani security forces and police. In South Waziristan, two sniper attacks reportedly caused casualties and damaged surveillance equipment. A three-day siege in Orakzai ended after negotiations, with TTP claiming five security personnel killed and multiple cameras destroyed. In Karak, a frontal assault on FC personnel allegedly killed three. Sniper fire in Khyber and Khurram each killed one soldier, while a targeted killing occurred in Tank. In Dera Ismail Khan, TTP reported close-quarters fighting and the death of one of its members.

TTP Operations

District	Area	Type of Attack	Claimed Impact
South Waziristan	Azam Warsak	Sniper attack	Possible casualties among security personnel
South Waziristan	Sarwakai	Sniper attack	Security camera destroyed
Orakzai	Tall	Siege + multiple attacks	5 personnel killed, several injured; drone & cameras destroyed
Karak	Banda Daud Shah	Frontal attack	3 FC personnel killed, several injured
Khyber	Tirah Maidan	Sniper attack	1 soldier killed
Tank	Khas Tank	Targeted killing	1 police officer killed
Dera Ismail Khan	Prova	Close-quarters clash	Casualties reported; 1 TTP member killed
Khurram	Dogar	Sniper attack	1 soldier killed

Economy

- ◆ **Pakistan's Economic Outlook Amid IMF Decision** — Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance that Pakistan's **macroeconomic indicators remain broadly on track despite regional war and external pressures**, expressing hope that the IMF Executive Board would approve the **\$1.2 billion** tranche today. He highlighted rising exports, remittances, IT inflows and bond issuances, while acknowledging inflation challenges. SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed **projected reserves at \$17 billion by June 2026**, noting inflationary pressures from energy costs. Aurangzeb stressed **structural reforms and prudent fiscal policies** to sustain stability. (*The News*, [8 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Reserves Edge Up, Gold Surges Amid Global Rally** — The State Bank of Pakistan reported a **\$23 million rise in foreign reserves**, reaching **\$15.85 billion by April 30**, with total liquid reserves at \$21.29 billion. The rupee gained marginally to 278.71 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, **gold prices jumped Rs7,800 per tola to Rs496,762**, extending a three-day rally driven by optimism over a possible **US–Iran peace agreement** and easing geopolitical concerns. Analysts, including **Adnan Agar (Interactive Commodities Director)**, warned that sustaining above \$4,700 internationally is crucial for the bullish trend. Silver also rose to Rs8,445 per tola. (*The Express Tribune*, [8 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Record Company Registrations in April** — The **Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP)** reported a record **4,082 new companies incorporated in April**, bringing total registrations to **294,101**, close to the 300,000 mark. Daily incorporation records were also set, with **300 firms on April 27** and **340 on April 30**. Punjab led with 2,093 registrations, followed by ICT (719), Sindh (600), KP (325), GB (276), and Balochistan (69). Most were **private limited (2,415)** and **single-member companies (1,542)**. The **IT and e-commerce sector** dominated with 832 new firms, while **China emerged as the top foreign investor** with 95 shareholders. (*Dawn*, [8 May 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **India Eases Access for Pakistani Athletes at Multilateral Events** — India’s sports ministry has confirmed that **Pakistani athletes may compete in multilateral events hosted in India**, with simplified visas for sportspersons and **multi-entry visas for international federation officials**. India highlighted its growing profile as a host, citing the **2030 Commonwealth Games** and bids for the **2036 Olympics** and **2038 Asian Games**. However, **bilateral sporting exchanges remain barred**, with India reiterating that **“Indian teams will not be participating in competitions in Pakistan. Nor will we permit Pakistani teams to play in India.”** (*The News*, [7 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **FO Reaffirms Diplomacy in Regional Ties**— On the first anniversary of *Marka-e-Haq*, Pakistan reiterated its commitment to peace and dialogue with India. Quoting **Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar**, FO spokesperson **Tahir Andrabi** said the anniversary was “not only about remembering the past; it is about shaping the future,” adding that Pakistan’s stance is rooted in **international law and UN resolutions**. He stressed, “We do not talk of war... we talk of dialogue and diplomacy,” while warning of full retaliation against aggression. On the **US–Iran peace process**, Andrabi expressed optimism for an agreement **“sooner rather than later.”** (*The Tribune*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan–Qatar Leaders Reaffirm Peace Efforts**— Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** held a cordial phone conversation with **Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani**, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar. The two leaders exchanged views on the **regional situation**, reaffirming their commitment to support ongoing initiatives for **lasting peace in the Middle East**. They agreed to maintain **close communication and coordination** on all matters of mutual interest, according to the PM House statement. (*The Tribune*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Hindutva’s Rise in Kolkata** — Maskwaith Ahsan argues that Hindutva’s rise in West Bengal reflects long-standing colonial attitudes toward eastern Bengal. He contends that **India’s policy toward Bangladesh shows “a continuity of attitude”**, shaped by a *“Bankim mindset”* rooted in the Bengal Renaissance. Ahsan claims that caste hierarchies, cultural elitism and selective secularism in Kolkata have enabled Hindutva’s expansion, while some Bangladeshi elites inadvertently legitimised it. He warns that **responding to hostility with hostility only strengthens polarisation** and urges restraint, noting that *“the provoker remains”*. (*The News*, [08 May 2026](#)).

- ◆ **India’s Vanishing Secular Space** — This editorial titled ‘Darkening India’, warns that the BJP’s sweeping win in West Bengal has erased one of the last major political buffers against the full consolidation of Hindutva power. It argues that **“when victory is followed by fear among vulnerable communities, democracy itself is wounded”**, noting post-election violence and rising insecurity among Muslims. West Bengal’s fall is described as a psychological breakthrough for Hindu nationalism, accelerating India’s shift from constitutional secularism toward religious hierarchy. The piece concludes that Pakistan must remain vigilant as an emboldened, ideologically driven India heightens regional instability. (*The Nation*, [08 May 2026](#)).

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Multi-dimensional approach needed over water crisis**— in this opinion piece **Sayed Mohammad Ali** argues that Pakistan’s water crisis demands a **multi-dimensional approach** beyond dams and short-term fixes. He stresses that floods, droughts, poor conservation and pollution have worsened scarcity, while degraded floodplains, wetlands and forests reduce natural regulation. Initiatives like **Recharge Pakistan** and the **Living Indus Initiative** highlight ecosystem restoration, but implementation remains slow. Urban rainwater harvesting, stricter building codes, and efficient farming practices such as drip irrigation and crop diversification are essential. **Water scarcity is no longer temporary; policy must adapt accordingly.** (*The Tribune*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **PML-N Reviews Candidates for ‘AJK’ Polls**— Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and former prime minister **Nawaz Sharif** has summoned over 205 ticket aspirants from 33 constituencies in ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)’ and 12 refugee seats to Lahore today. The aspirants will appear before the **24-member parliamentary board**, chaired by Mr Sharif, which includes Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy PM Ishaq Dar, Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, and senior ministers. The board, formed on April 16, will scrutinise and finalise candidates for the July elections. (*Dawn*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **PM Shehbaz Sharif’s Development Push in G-B and ‘AJK’** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** inaugurated multiple projects in Gilgit-Baltistan, reaffirming commitment to equitable development across Pakistan, including AJK. He directed completion of a **100MW solar project by mid-2027**, alongside **distribution of 58MW free solar panels to 15,000 beneficiaries** selected on merit. He laid foundations for **four Daanish Schools** with modern facilities and free education for girls, and launched **Safe City projects** in Gilgit and Skardu. Laptops and youth loans were distributed, while he praised GB’s resilience and highlighted Pakistan’s role in brokering the **US–Iran ceasefire.** (*The Nation*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **PTI Leaders Blocked from Meeting Imran Khan**— Adiala jail authorities again denied PTI leaders permission to meet party founder **Imran Khan**, prompting criticism from the opposition. Adviser to the PM **Rana Sanaullah Khan** told the Senate that Khan and his spouse **Bushra Bibi** were in judicial custody, with facilities provided under court orders and jail rules. He stressed medical care was ensured, citing reports by lawyer **Salman Safdar** and jail officials. PTI leaders condemned restrictions, alleging deliberate obstacles, while **Sheikh Waqas Akram** decried Bushra Bibi’s secret hospital transfer as a violation of basic rights. (*The Tribune*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **PPP, JUI-F Discuss Alliance in GB Elections** — The **Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) Gilgit-Baltistan** and **Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Gilgit-Baltistan** held a consultative meeting in Gilgit to explore cooperation and a possible electoral alliance for the **2026 GB elections.** Provincial leaders discussed transparency, democratic values and joint efforts to address public issues in a **cordial atmosphere**, reaffirming commitment to political harmony. Both sides agreed that final decisions would follow consultations between their central leaderships in Islamabad, with mutual support in constituencies under consideration to strengthen pro-people democratic forces. (*The News*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Water stewardship for resilience**— in this opinion piece **Zainab Naeem and Ebadat Ur Rehman Babar** argue that Pakistan is not running out of water, but of the **capacity to manage, govern and equitably distribute it**. With per capita availability now near scarcity levels, the **flood–drought paradox** and widespread contamination highlight governance failures. Agriculture consumes 90% of water yet remains inefficient, while climate change threatens glacier-fed flows. They call for a **national water stewardship roadmap** integrating private sector, communities and government, stressing that stewardship is a **strategic necessity, not an optional add-on**. (*The News*, [8 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan Achieves Breakthrough in Reducing Child Stunting**— Pakistan has recorded a **significant decline in child stunting**, according to the Endline Impact Evaluation of the **BNP programme** conducted by **Aga Khan University (AKU)**. Findings show stunting rates among beneficiary children were **22% lower at six months** and **18% lower at one year**, alongside reductions in low birth weight (6%), premature births (11%), and vulnerable newborns (7%). Federal Minister **Syed Imran Ahmed Shah** hailed the results as a major achievement, while **Senator Rubina Khalid (BISP Chairperson)** emphasised the programme’s reach to over 4.5 million women and children nationwide. (*The News*, [8 May 2026](#))



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