

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

09 June 2026

Security

- ◆ **Pakistan Intensifies Diplomatic Push for Seamen's Release**— Pakistan has increased diplomatic efforts to secure the release of 11 Pakistani seamen held hostage by Somali pirates since the hijacking of MT *Honour 25* off Somalia's south-eastern coast on 21 April. Maritime Affairs Minister **Junaid Anwar Chaudhry** discussed the crisis with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar**, stressing the need to expedite efforts for the fast and safe release of the Pakistani crew. The government remains in contact with Somalia, the ship owner and the relevant authorities. Foreign Office spokesperson **Tahir Andrabi** described the situation as grave, citing security risks posed by the vessel's explosive cargo. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Presses Taliban for Concrete Anti-Terror Measures**— Pakistan told the UN Security Council that its demand from the Afghan Taliban was straightforward: “**verifiable and non-reversible action**” against terrorist groups operating from Afghan territory. Addressing the UNSC, **Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations**, said the Taliban had failed to act against groups such as the TTP, BLA and IS-K, despite repeated appeals. He argued that terrorism emanating from Afghanistan had caused significant casualties in Pakistan and warned that (“**the window for course correction is narrowing but is still open**”). Pakistan reaffirmed support for dialogue but stressed its right to self-defence under international law. (*Dawn*, [9 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan, Lebanon Discuss Defence Ties**— Lebanese Army Commander General Rodolphe Haykal met **Chief of Defence Forces and Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir** at GHQ, Rawalpindi, where both exchanged views on the evolving regional security environment. ISPR said discussions focused on defence cooperation, training, and institutional linkages. Field Marshal Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to expanding collaboration, while Haykal praised the “**professionalism and operational excellence**” of Pakistan's armed forces and their role in peacekeeping. The visit, part of wider regional diplomacy, reflects a shared resolve to deepen military-to-military cooperation. (*Dawn*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Repatriation of Afghans Accelerates** —The repatriation of undocumented Afghan families through the **Hamza Baba Transit Centre in Landi Kotal** has intensified, with officials verifying around **4,000 nationals daily** before crossing via Torkham. Adults undergo clearance, while children under 12 are exempt. Authorities reported over **200,000 Afghans repatriated since March 31**, many born in Pakistan and reluctant to leave due to poverty and uncertainty. Officials also uncovered human trafficking rackets involving women falsely claiming Afghan nationality. Residents warn the process is straining communities, highlighting the deep social impact of decades-long displacement. (*Dawn*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Regional Security Pressures Mount**— Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi's meeting with Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokol'tsev** at the SCO summit in Bishkek yielded agreements on

illegal migration and drug trafficking, but the deeper significance lies in shared anxieties over Afghanistan. Pakistan has identified **around 25 terrorist organisations** operating there, while militant violence at home rose **27% in May**. Despite a sharp fall in Afghan opium cultivation, **synthetic drugs remain a growing threat**. Bishkek places Pakistan's case in a regional frame, but the test is whether agreements translate into **cleaner borders and disrupted networks**. (*Daily Times*, [9 June 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **Senate Sets Fiscal Discipline Benchmark**—The Senate has returned **Rs1.436 billion savings to the exchequer**, exceeding its austerity target by 500 per cent. Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani directed the expenditure rationalisation drive, suspending 17 of 18 procurement projects, capping fuel allocations, grounding vehicles, and shifting committee proceedings online. Despite Rs60m allocated for new vehicles, **“not a single vehicle was procured”**. Gilani emphasised, **“Public office is a sacred fiduciary trust... Every rupee saved is a rupee returned to the people of Pakistan.”** Officials hailed the move as a new benchmark for fiscal prudence. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Energy Imports Drive Trade Deficit**—Pakistan's trade deficit widened by **17.48% to \$34.76 billion in FY26**, with imports at \$62.66 billion and exports falling to \$27.9 billion. **Energy remains the main culprit**, as dependence on imported crude oil and petroleum products consumes foreign exchange and exposes the economy to Middle East tensions. Machinery, chemicals, and industrial inputs also add to the burden, while exports remain overly reliant on textiles. The editorial urges aggressive investment in renewable energy, stressing that **import compression alone cannot provide a lasting solution**. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **No New Taxes in Punjab Budget**— Punjab Finance Minister Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman announced that the upcoming provincial budget on June 16 will impose **no new taxes for the third consecutive year**, despite IMF pressure. At a pre-budget roundtable, he pledged a **“public-centric financial plan”** focused on jobs and industrial growth. Stakeholders from industry, agriculture, academia and civil society presented proposals, with the minister assuring their inclusion. He stressed broadening the tax net and boosting industrialisation rather than levying fresh duties, noting Punjab managed flood rehabilitation without federal aid. (*Dawn*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Iran-Pak Border Trade Halt Sparks LPG Crisis**—Cross-border trade at the **Gabd-Rimdan crossing between Pakistan and Iran has come to a complete halt**, leaving hundreds of LPG-laden trucks stranded and raising fears of severe shortages nationwide. Gwadar Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Jiand Hoot blamed customs “incompetence” for the disruption, warning that **“LPG could disappear from local markets altogether”**. Prices have already surged in Karachi and Punjab, with supplies reportedly unavailable even at Rs400/kg. With other trade routes closed or paralysed, the halt threatens both imports and exports, including perishable goods. (*Dawn*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Strategic Oil Reserves, A National Necessity** — Economic analyst **Shahid Anwar** argues that Pakistan's FY 2026–27 budget must prioritise **credible strategic petroleum reserves**, as the economy runs almost entirely on imported oil. Existing storage is commercial, not crisis-ready, leaving Pakistan exposed to shocks such as disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz. He urges the

creation of a **ring-fenced Strategic Petroleum Reserve Fund**, financed through petroleum levy revenues, with transparent governance and phased implementation. “Strategic oil reserves are no longer optional. They are a necessity.” Without buffers, Pakistan’s economic stability remains vulnerable. (*Business Recorder*, [9 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan–Azerbaijan Trade Ties Strengthened**— The **Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (APJCCI)** and the **Kasur Chamber of Commerce and Industry** signed an MoU in Islamabad to boost trade, investment and institutional cooperation. APJCCI Patron-in-Chief **Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari** said Pakistani firms are increasingly interested in Azerbaijan’s markets, particularly in food products, leather, textiles, agriculture and logistics. Kasur Chamber President **Kashif Naeem Khokhar** emphasised Kasur’s export potential and its ambition to become an industrial hub. Both sides agreed to promote B2B linkages, joint ventures and explore opportunities in tourism, hospitality and value-added exports. (*The News*, [9 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Karachi’s Fiscal Dilemma** — Political economist **Dr Niaz Murtaza** argues that Karachi’s visible misrule highlights deeper inequities in Pakistan’s fiscal system. Despite contributing **25–30% of federal tax receipts** and accounting for **75–80% of Sindh’s taxes**, the city lags behind peers like Delhi and Jakarta in local services. “A city that fills other coffers must retain enough local taxes for itself.” He stresses that constitutional reforms are needed to ensure fair local government elections, unified jurisdictions, and direct tax sources for big cities, enabling Karachi to rival its Asian counterparts. (*Dawn*, [9 June 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **FO Rebukes UK Diaspora on ‘AJK’**— Pakistan’s Foreign Office (FO) rejected “**irresponsible and ill-informed insinuations**” by UK diaspora members over unrest in ‘Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), following clashes in Rawalakot where police reported four personnel killed. The FO warned overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris to avoid interference, stressing Pakistan’s sovereignty. It criticised remarks by British MPs, saying they reflected “**a lack of awareness and disregard for the historical background**”. The FO reiterated support for peaceful assembly but declared, “**vandalism and murder cannot be permitted under any circumstances.**” (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan and US Push for Restraint**—Following the first missile exchange between Iran and Israel since April’s ceasefire, **Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged all sides to “give peace a little more chance”**, warning of the devastating consequences of renewed conflict. His remarks echoed US President Donald Trump, who insisted that negotiations were nearing a breakthrough and urged both parties to halt military action. Unlike past escalations, Iran confined strikes to Israeli targets, avoiding US bases, while Washington refrained from military involvement. Pakistan has engaged in backchannel diplomacy, with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi delivering an “important letter” in Tehran. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Qureshi Warns on GSP+ Risk**—PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi cautioned that Pakistan could lose its **EU GSP+ trade status** if progress stalls on human rights, labour rights and governance reforms. Speaking from Kot Lakhpat Jail via counsel Rana Mudassar Umar, he noted Pakistan exported €8.7 billion to the EU in 2025, with **€7 billion under GSP+**, underscoring its economic importance. He stressed stricter conditions apply after 2027 and recalled lobbying in

European capitals, crediting ex-Punjab governor Chaudhry Sarwar for helping Pakistan secure the facility. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Any Cat to Catch the Mice** —Jawed Naqvi reflects on three parallel developments that could reshape India's political trajectory, Germany's UN Security Council defeat linked to its pro-Israel stance, the rise of the **Cockroach Janta Party** protesting youth unemployment and corruption, and the INDIA opposition bloc's attempts at unity. He argues these events could rattle Modi's establishment more than past challenges. Citing Deng Xiaoping's dictum, "**It doesn't matter whether a cat is white or black, as long as it catches mice**", Naqvi suggests any force curbing India's rightward drift is welcome, while cautioning against blind faith in youth power. (*Dawn*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan, Uzbekistan Eye Film Diplomacy**—Federal Information Minister **Attaullah Tarar** met Uzbek Ambassador **Alisher Tukhtaev** to strengthen cooperation in the media, film and cultural sectors. Both sides agreed to explore **joint short films, documentaries and drama series**, highlighting shared heritage and promoting people-to-people contact. They also discussed joint funding for larger projects, coordination between social media teams, and study visits for journalists. The ambassador praised Pakistan's peace efforts, while Tarar reaffirmed Islamabad's commitment to expanding cultural and media ties with Uzbekistan through sustained collaboration. (*Daily Times*, [09 June 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Renewed Call for Dialogue in 'AJK'**— Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has urged protesters to resume talks with the proscribed Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) after **fatal clashes left at least seven dead**. Police reported six security personnel killed since 6 June, while officials claimed three protesters died from internal firing. Civil society warned of an "information vacuum" fuelling speculation. Former Chief Justice Chaudhry Ibrahim Zia stressed, "**Negotiation is the only solution to any conflict**", while lawyer Haroon Riaz Mughal added, "**Dialogue is essential for peace and long-term stability**". (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **PPP Emerges as Largest Party in G-B** — Early results from Gilgit-Baltistan's general elections show the **Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) securing 10 seats**, making it the single largest party, followed by **PML-N with six seats**, PTI-backed candidates with two, and MWM with one. With no clear majority, independents hold the balance of power. Repolling has been ordered at five polling stations on 15 June. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated PPP leaders Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, praising the "**successful, transparent, peaceful and politically vibrant conduct**" of the polls. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **K-P Government Courts JUI-F Backing**—The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) government has sought the support of JUI-F to address longstanding provincial issues, including **net hydel profits, the NFC award, and wheat supply restrictions from Punjab**. The understanding followed a meeting between Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman in Peshawar. Afridi accused the federal government of unfair resource distribution, while Fazl emphasised that the **NFC award is a constitutional right of provinces, approved through**

parliamentary consensus. Both pledged cooperation on provincial rights and law and order. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Shamshan Ghat Faces Ruin**—The centuries-old **Hindu cremation ground in Khanewal, locally known as Shamshan Ghat**, has fallen into neglect, with experts warning it could disappear without conservation. Once a vital pre-Partition site for funeral rites, the ground lost its purpose after 1947 when most Hindus migrated to India. Local historian Professor Ramesh stressed it remains an **“important historical and religious landmark”**, while resident Mohsin Arain urged, **“If the government takes timely action, this valuable heritage can still be preserved for future generations.”** (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Punjab Requests Military Support for Muharram**—The Punjab government has formally sought the deployment of **61 Army and 76 Rangers companies across 39 districts** to assist civil law enforcement during the first 11 days of Muharram. The Home Department confirmed the request was made to the federal Ministry of Interior on the Punjab Police’s recommendation to ensure comprehensive security for religious gatherings and processions. Officials said personnel would be deployed from 1st to 11th Muharram, with coordination already underway to maintain peace and order across the province. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Beyond Courage: The Right to Safety for Women** — This editorial argues that Pakistani women are exhausted by being expected to show resilience in a society where **violence against women remains pervasive and structural**. Triggered by the acid attack on Dr Mahnoor in a Quetta hospital, it contends that questions about victims’ behaviour, clothing or location are irrelevant because **women face danger at home, work and in public spaces alike**. While legal reforms and stricter penalties have reduced some crimes, the **deeper problem lies in social attitudes that scrutinise women while excusing men**. Meaningful change, it concludes, requires transforming this culture. (*The News*, [9 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Supreme Court Urges Stronger Action Against Acid Violence**— An editorial welcomes the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold a life sentence and Rs1 million fine in an acid attack case, describing acid violence as **one of the most brutal crimes, often inflicting lifelong suffering beyond death itself**. Citing Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar’s observation that acid attacks can be more devastating than homicide, it argues that leniency is unacceptable. The editorial urges the government to implement the court’s recommendations, including a rehabilitation fund, lifelong medical and psychological support, disability accommodations, survivor stipends and stricter regulation of acid sales. **Preventing access to corrosive substances is presented as the most effective safeguard against future attacks.** (*The Nation*, [9 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **German Envoy Visits KEMU**— German Ambassador **Ina Lepel** visited **King Edward Medical University (KEMU)** in Lahore, where Vice Chancellor **Professor Mahmood Ayaz** briefed her on the institution’s history, academic programmes, and advanced facilities including the Genome Sequencing Centre and Biobank. He highlighted a **US\$4 million clinical research grant from Korea** as evidence of global confidence in KEMU’s research. Lepel praised the university’s progress in modern medical education and patient care, noting **“significant opportunities for collaboration”** in research, faculty exchange and joint initiatives between Germany and Pakistan. (*The News*, [9 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan–Korea Education Corridor Expo**— Federal Education Minister **Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui** inaugurated the **Korea-Pakistan Education Corridor (KPEC) Expo** in Islamabad, stressing the potential of Pakistan’s youth to meet global workforce challenges. He described Korea’s development as a model of innovation and self-reliance, urging stronger educational cooperation. The KPEC, launched by CAPES, aims to expand higher education, skills development, and student mobility. Ambassador **Syed Moazzam H. Khan** highlighted Pakistan’s embassy efforts in Seoul, while **Professor Dr Choi Jong-in** of Tongwon University reaffirmed Korea’s commitment to academic collaboration. (*The Nation*, [9 June 2026](#))

PPP TAKES EARLY LEAD IN 5-8 POLLS



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