

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

16 June 2026

Security

- ◆ **PAF Training Aircraft Crash Claims Two Lives**— A Pakistan Air Force trainer aircraft crashed near Katlang road, Mardan, on 15 June, **martyring Flight Lieutenant Muhammad Qasim Abdullah (Pakistan Air Force) and Lieutenant Taha Abbasi (Pakistan Navy)**. Two civilians, including policeman Umardaraz and Masood, sustained injuries but are out of danger. The crash caused a massive fire on the road. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed “**profound grief and sorrow**”, stating the nation would always remember the “**supreme sacrifice of its brave sons**” and stand united with the armed forces. (*The Nation*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Deadly Attack and Security Crackdown in Lakki Marwat** — Terrorists killed four villagers — Jumma Khan, his son Adnan, Waseem and Naimat, in the Jabbarkhel area of Lakki Marwat on Monday. **Police said the victims were shot dead within the Saddar police station limits, while villagers claimed the assailants also took away their weapons**. An investigation has been launched. Separately, police in Karak arrested 10 suspects, including a proclaimed offender, during a search operation. **Authorities also reviewed Muharram security arrangements in Lakki Marwat, inspecting imambargahs, checkpoints, procession routes and emergency response measures**. (*Dawn*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **TNFJ Issues Muharram Code of Conduct**— Tehreek Nifaz-i-Fiqh-i-Jafariya (TNFJ) Pakistan announced a 14-point code of azadari to ensure peace, inter-sect harmony and uphold national dignity during Muharram. At a press conference, **Chief Allama Agha Syed Hussain Muqaddasi** declared that “**no restriction, ban or obstacle in the path of mourning would be tolerated**”, rejecting the Punjab Home Department’s rules as unconstitutional. He praised Pakistan’s role in facilitating US-Iran peace, **urging America to aid Pakistan on Kashmir** and economic challenges. The code demands strict adherence to the **1985 Moosavi-Junejo Agreement** and enhanced security arrangements. (*Dawn*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **UK Endorses Pakistan’s Right to Self-Defence**— British Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan Hamish Falconer affirmed that “**Pakistan has the right under international law to defend itself against attacks originating from Afghanistan**”, while emphasising dialogue and regional stability. During meetings with Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, he discussed security concerns, the Iran ceasefire, and global trade routes. Falconer highlighted the need for “**shared understanding between both countries to ensure that their territories are not used to harm each other**”, stressing diplomatic engagement as the most effective path forward. (*Dawn*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Deal of the Century**— The editorial hails the US-Iran agreement as an “**epoch-making moment**”, crediting Islamabad for hosting talks and pushing diplomacy forward. The deal, to be signed in Switzerland, will end the war, lift the US blockade of Iran, reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and suspend military operations, including in Lebanon. Pakistan’s role, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, is praised as pivotal. Yet caution is urged: Israel could undermine progress, and President Trump must prove leadership to secure lasting peace. (*The Express Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Eurasian Stability and Pakistan's Role**— Masood Khan reflects on Eurasia's strategic centrality, noting its vast population, economic weight and geopolitical importance. He argues that stability requires trust, energy security, technological cooperation and conflict prevention. **Russia, pivotal in Central Asia and partnered with China, is seen as indispensable. Khan stresses Pakistan's readiness to contribute, citing mediation in the US-Israel-Iran war and growing ties with Moscow.** He urges Russia to expand economic engagement with Pakistan, recalibrate its tilt towards India, and press the Afghan Taliban to curb terrorism. He envisions deeper Eurasian integration through initiatives like CPEC and the Greater Eurasian Partnership. (*The News*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Killer Algorithms Demand Legal Restraint** —Dr Zahir Kazmi warns that autonomous weapons pose grave ethical and legal challenges, as delegating life-and-death decisions to machines risks eroding the laws of war. He stresses the need for **“meaningful human control”** as a substantive legal standard, prohibiting fully autonomous systems while regulating **AI-enabled military tools through reviews, transparency and accountability.** He cautions against technological denial that excludes developing states, urging equitable access and co-authored rules. For South Asia, he proposes a code of conduct to prevent crises from escalating through machine-driven misperceptions. (*The News*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **India's Dual Game in Defence**— Abdullah Mustafvi argues that India's so-called “strategic autonomy” has been exposed as opportunism, with New Delhi simultaneously benefiting from Russian oil and arms while deepening defence cooperation with Ukraine. He notes that **“India reassures Moscow publicly, extracts capability from Kyiv quietly and reduces Russian leverage”** (Abdullah Mustafvi, columnist). Ukraine's battlefield-tested technologies, from aero-engines to drones, are seen as invaluable for India's Soviet-origin inventory. The West welcomes this diversification, but Moscow views it as betrayal, raising doubts about the “special and privileged strategic partnership.” (*Daily Times*, [16 June 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **Balochistan's Surplus Budget Prioritises Education**— The Balochistan government has finalised a **Rs1.2 trillion tax-free and surplus budget for 2026–27**, to be presented on 17 June by Provincial Finance Minister Shoaib Nosherrwani. Education receives a record allocation of over **Rs150 billion**, the largest in the province's history, aimed at improving schools, colleges, and universities. **Salaries, allowances, and pensions will be increased to ease inflationary pressures.** Development in health, water supply, roads, and infrastructure also features prominently. Experts believe this education-focused package will strengthen human resources and long-term growth. (*The Express Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **US-Iran Peace: Pakistan's Economic Breather**— Fatima S Attarwala argues that the US-Iran peace accord offers Pakistan temporary relief from macroeconomic decline, with lower oil prices easing inflationary pressures. Economist Kaiser Bengali warns that if the deal collapses, **“even if we are willing to pay Rs1,000 for a litre of petrol, the pumps will be empty”**. Ehsan Malik

cautions that fiscal space depends on provincial surpluses, while Hassan Bakshi sees diaspora investment potential if policies stabilise. Attarwala concludes peace could revive stalled energy cooperation with Iran, strengthening Pakistan's long-term prospects. (*Dawn*, [16 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **China-Pakistan Capital Market Cooperation Deepens**— Chinese investors, led by the China Financial Futures Exchange and major stock exchanges, reaffirmed their long-term commitment to Pakistan's capital markets after the SECP resolved key regulatory issues. Approvals allow increased shareholding in the CDC and NCCPL, while restructuring at the PSX enables sharper focus on growth. You Hang of CFFEX expressed confidence in Pakistan's prospects, announcing plans for cross-border ETFs, advanced trading technologies, and investor education. SECP Chairman Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu welcomed the expansion, stressing reforms to boost efficiency and innovation. (*The Express Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan's Child Labour Crisis**— The editorial underscores a grim reality: **8.6 million children aged five to 17 are engaged in child labour nationwide**, meaning nearly one in ten Pakistani children is deprived of a safe childhood. Despite repeated commitments, enforcement remains weak, with child labour entrenched in agriculture, brick kilns, domestic work and waste-picking. The ILO country director noted that enforcement alone cannot solve the crisis, stressing the need for education, dignified employment and stronger safety nets. With **25 million children out of school**, the state must adopt a unified national framework to break this cycle. (*Business Recorder*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **End the Budget Drama**— Nadeem ul Haque critiques Pakistan's annual budget spectacle, arguing it has become a policy substitute rather than a fiscal statement. He stresses that **"few discuss the uncertainty deficit"**, as businesses and investors are left guessing each June. The piece highlights how repeated IMF programmes and unreformed state structures perpetuate instability. Haque calls for reforms in SOEs, pensions, subsidies and energy, but insists the real issue is the **"civil service monopoly"** that blocks change. He concludes that a boring, predictable budget would signal genuine progress. (*Business Recorder*, [16 June 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Pakistan's Diplomatic Triumph** —Pakistan will host the formal signing of a landmark peace agreement between Iran and the United States in Geneva on 19 June, hailed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as a **"new dawn of peace"**. The accord ensures the **"immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including Lebanon"** (Shehbaz Sharif, Prime Minister). Field Marshal Asim Munir was praised for sustaining negotiations, while Deputy PM Ishaq Dar called it a **"significant diplomatic breakthrough"**. Observers see it as a stabilising milestone for global markets and Middle Eastern geopolitics. (*The Express Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Indian Sikh Pilgrims Attend Guru Arjan Dev Ji Anniversary**— Indian Sikh Yatrees have arrived in Lahore to participate in the **annual Jor Mela** commemorating the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. After visiting Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur and Gurdwara Rohri Sahib, they expressed satisfaction with the arrangements, thanking Pakistan's government and the Evacuee Trust Property Board. **The main ceremony at Gurdwara Dera Sahib was held on 16 June, attended by Chairman Qamar-ul-Zaman and PSGPC President Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora.**

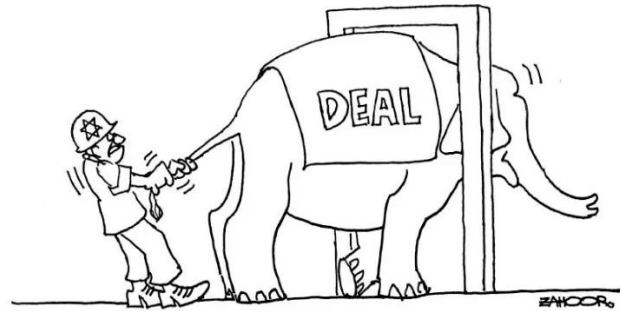
Comprehensive facilities, including accommodation, langar, medical care, and security, were provided. Pilgrims return to India on 19 June. (*The Nation*, [16 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan Reaffirms SCO Commitment on 25th Anniversary** —Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar reiterated Pakistan’s firm adherence to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Charter, highlighting its journey from observer to full member in 2017. On the SCO’s 25th anniversary, he congratulated the “SCO family,” noting its role in **“promoting regional peace, security, stability, economic cooperation, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges”**. Dar emphasised Pakistan’s upcoming chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of States in September and hosting the 2027 Summit, underscoring its leadership in Eurasian connectivity and anti-terror efforts. (*The Nation*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Indus Waters Treaty: Law over Discretion**—Syed Mehar Ali Shah, Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters, rebuts P.K. Saxena’s claim of “weaponisation,” stressing the Treaty was born of Partition-era vulnerability and the 1948 canal crisis. He argues its safeguards are essential: **“The Treaty was not an Indian subsidy to Pakistan. It was a settlement of competing rights and existential vulnerabilities”**. Pakistan’s objections to Indian projects are framed as lawful implementation, not obstruction, since **“abeyance has no legal meaning in the Treaty”**. Shah insists obligations must endure beyond politics. (*Dawn*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **US-Iran Accord: Pakistan’s Diplomatic Role**— The editorial notes that after months of war, a genuine chance at peace has emerged with the announcement of an **“immediate and permanent termination of military operations”**. The deal, to be signed in Geneva under Pakistan’s aegis, is hailed as a major diplomatic success, with the UN and regional states recognising Islamabad’s efforts. Yet, mistrust remains, particularly in Tel Aviv and Tehran. The piece stresses that enduring peace requires sanctions relief and sincerity, with Washington keeping Israel in check. (*Dawn*, [16 June 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Sindh Police Engages Hindu Panchayat on Minority Concerns**— Sindh Inspector General of Police Javed Alam Odho met a delegation of the **Sindh Hindu Panchayat**, led by Mukhi Dr Suresh Kumar Talreja, at the Central Police Office Karachi on 15 June. The delegation highlighted issues faced by the Hindu community, particularly in Kashmore. The IGP assured that **“protection of life and property of minority communities remained among the top priorities of Sindh Police”** (Javed Alam Odho, Sindh IGP). The Panchayat appreciated police measures, while discussions also covered cooperation, religious harmony, and law and order. (*The Nation*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Call for Political Reconciliation and Democratic Consensus** — JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s proposal for a renewed Charter of Democracy, urging political dialogue to ease tensions. **He called for the release of PTI founder Imran Khan, arguing that “if political tensions can be reduced through his release, then that option should be considered”**. Fazlur Rehman lamented the erosion of democratic norms, highlighted economic hardship, lawlessness and concerns over parliamentary censorship. JUI-F’s Noor Alam Khan criticised the budget and defended national unity against terrorism, while other lawmakers raised poverty, underdevelopment and youth radicalisation concerns. **The National Assembly is expected to pass the budget before 24 June.** (*The News*, [16 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **JI Urges Relief Through Fuel Cuts and Pipeline Completion**— Jamaat-i-Islami chief Hafiz Naemur Rehman demanded immediate reductions in petrol prices and swift completion of the Pak-Iran gas pipeline, arguing Pakistan must pass on international economic relief to its people. He said with ex-refinery prices near Rs200 per litre, **“a substantial reduction in domestic petroleum prices was entirely feasible”** (Hafiz Naemur Rehman, JI chief). Rehman hailed the US-Iran truce as a **“landmark victory for Iran”**, urging Pakistan to learn from regional resilience while strengthening unity at home to maximise diplomatic gains. (*Dawn*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Launches Landmark Freedom Report**— Pakistan unveiled its first-ever **State of Freedom Report 2026**, a comprehensive national assessment of political, civil, economic, digital, legal and social freedoms. **Developed by Mishal Pakistan, the Country Partner Institute of the World Economic Forum**, the report sets an evidence-based benchmark for governance, citizen empowerment and institutional performance. Co-author Amir Jahangir hailed it as a “historic milestone,” while Puruesh Chaudhary emphasised citizen trust and inclusion. The launch at ISSI, attended by Minister of State Barrister Aqeel Malik, gathered officials, diplomats, academics and civil society. (*The Express Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Govt Urges JAAC to End Violence**— Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry called on the proscribed Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) to abandon violence and adopt constitutional means, stressing **“there should be no violence. There should be no loss of life”**. He confirmed no direct talks were ongoing, though ‘AJK’ PM Faisal Rathore was welcome to mediate. Chaudhry noted 35 of 38 demands had been met, including reducing the ‘AJK’ cabinet and compensating victims’ families. He urged demonstrators to give peace a chance, rejecting confrontation over disputed seats. (*The Express Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Manmade Drought and Governance Failures** —Naseer Memon highlights severe water shortages at Guddu and Kotri barrages, where flows fell 30–60pc below allocations under the 1991 accord. Despite higher-than-average storage in Tarbela and Mangla, Sindh and Balochistan face **“a drought-like situation, stemming from the bizarre water governance of Irsa and Wapda”** (Naseer Memon, water governance expert). He criticises ill-timed dam storage and diversions through link canals, which have left crops wilting and tail-end canals dry. Memon urges timely intervention, stronger federal institutions, and quarterly Council of Common Interests meetings to restore trust. (*Dawn*, [16 June 2026](#))



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