

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

20-22 June 2026

Security

- ◆ **Bannu's Misery** — This editorial condemns a **twin terror attack in Bannu district, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa**, where seven people were killed after militants struck a passenger vehicle with an IED and then targeted the wounded en route to the hospital. The piece highlights Bannu's vulnerability at the nexus of KP, North Waziristan and the Afghan border, noting at least six attacks in recent months. With **3,811 terror incidents recorded in KP last year**, the editorial urges a coherent **kinetic-cum-political policy**, stronger intelligence, border sealing and impartial profiling to break the cycle of violence. (*The Express Tribune*, [22 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Iran War and the Future of Modern Conflict** — In this article, **Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan** argues that the US–Iran war highlights how **economic realities increasingly shape modern warfare outcomes**. He notes Washington chose diplomacy over prolonged conflict due to global economic pressures, especially vulnerabilities around the **Strait of Hormuz**. Ehsan outlines five decisive forms of power in future wars: military, economic, technological, informational and industrial. He concludes that endurance, economic resilience and political cohesion may prove more decisive than battlefield destruction, with modern wars extending into the global economy. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **India's Hydro-Coercion** — This editorial warns that India's unilateral suspension of the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** is pushing Pakistan towards an acute water crisis. Deputy PM **Ishaq Dar's letter to the UNSC** highlights New Delhi's construction of projects such as the **260MW Dulhasti Stage-II** in 'Occupied' Kashmir, alongside at least 17 planned schemes, as violations of international law. The piece urges the **UNSC and World Bank** to hold India accountable, stressing that weaponising water threatens Pakistan's food, economic and national security, and undermines regional stability. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Is Might Right?** — Former police officer **Tariq Khosa** reflects on the US–Iran war and Pakistan's mediation role, arguing that dialogue, not force, secures peace. He notes Washington's strategic defeat, Iran's strengthened position and Israel's frustration, stressing that “we cannot just bomb our way to solutions.” Domestically, Khosa warns against rule by fear, elite capture and collapsed policing, urging reforms for impartial investigations and free elections. He concludes that Pakistan's governance remains shaped by establishment power, questioning whether might can ever truly be right. (*Dawn*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Strategic Shifts** — Former foreign secretary **Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry** traces the evolution of global power since America's unipolar moment, noting how endless wars eroded US standing while China advanced through economic outreach and the **Belt and Road Initiative**. He highlights the recent **US–China agreement on “constructive strategic stability”**, Europe's rearmament, and closer China–Russia ties post the Iran war. India, aligned with US-led groupings, appears unsettled by these shifts, while Pakistan has strengthened its diplomatic profile, endorsing China's **Global**

Security Initiative and improving regional ties. Chaudhry urges dialogue over hegemony. (*Dawn*, [21 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Banned JAAC Leader Booked for Sedition** — The ‘AJK’ government has registered a sedition case against **Khawaja Mehran Arshad**, a ringleader of the proscribed **Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)**, after a speech inciting Kashmiri personnel **in Pakistan’s Armed Forces to mutiny**. Officials said the remarks crossed a constitutional red line, shifting from civic demands to rebellion. The JAAC was banned weeks earlier under the Anti-Terrorism Act following violent confrontations. Investigators are probing possible foreign links, with authorities vowing zero tolerance for attempts to orchestrate institutional anarchy. (*The Nation*, [20 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Rejects Afghan Taliban’s Claim of Strikes** — Islamabad has dismissed Kabul’s assertions of drone strikes on ISKP camps in **Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan**, calling them “false as usual.” The information ministry said terrorist sanctuaries are located inside Afghanistan, accusing the Taliban regime of issuing propaganda to mask its patronage of militant groups. Officials confirmed one rudimentary drone intruded near Shinko, Khyber, but was neutralised by Pakistan’s air defence. Meanwhile, **gunship helicopters targeted militant hideouts in South Waziristan**, sparking panic among locals amid intensified operations. (*The Nation*, [20 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Peace by Piece** — Former ambassador **Maleeha Lodhi** analyses the interim **US–Iran MoU**, which extends a ceasefire for 60 days, reopens the **Strait of Hormuz**, and lifts the US blockade, while deferring nuclear negotiations. She argues the deal reflects Washington’s failure to achieve objectives by force, with Iran leveraging nationalism and strategic control to resist. The truce exposes the limits of military power, as seen in conflicts from Ukraine to South Asia. Lodhi warns that lasting peace hinges on nuclear talks and Israel’s spoiler role in Lebanon. (*Dawn*, [22 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **NA Clears Rs3tr Defence Budget Without Opposition** — The **National Assembly** has unanimously approved **Rs3 trillion** for the armed forces as part of the **Rs18.77 trillion federal budget 2026-27**, with no cut motions moved. A total of 125 demands for grants across ministries were passed, while the budget vote is scheduled for **June 23**. An understanding was reached to restore live transmission of opposition speeches under a code of conduct. Defence Minister **Khawaja Asif** urged respect for parliamentary sanctity, while Finance Minister **Muhammad Aurangzeb** expressed confidence in meeting revenue targets. (*The News*, [22 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Visual Proof Emerges of Militants in Kabul** — A photograph showing senior leaders of the banned **Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group** at Kabul’s luxury **InterContinental Hotel** has provided what Islamabad calls undeniable evidence of anti-Pakistan militants enjoying sanctuary under the Afghan Taliban regime. The image depicts commanders including **Abu Sufyan Karavan, Sadr Hayat, Commander Jalali, Commander Rehbar Waziristani and Commander Ghazi** casually gathered by the hotel pool. Pakistan says this validates its longstanding claims that militant groups, including those linked to the **TTP**, operate freely from Afghan soil. The development coincides with UN reports noting over **20 terrorist organisations** active in Afghanistan. (*The Nation*, [22 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **A Crisis Decades in the Making** — Pakistan’s looming **water crisis** has long been predicted yet consistently ignored. Per capita availability has plunged from **5,000 cubic metres at Independence to below 1,000 today**, pushing the country into water stress as its population becomes the world’s

fifth largest. UN reports highlight that **55% lack safe drinking water** and over half of rural citizens lack sanitation. Poor storage, wasteful irrigation, unregulated groundwater use and climate extremes compound the challenge. Solutions exist — investment, regulation, conservation — but political will remains absent. (*Business Recorder*, [21 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Khyber Operation on 6 June 2026** (reported in Telegram on 14 June): Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed a total of seven operations across four provinces under the "Khyber Operation." The attacks primarily targeted military posts, checkpoints, and security infrastructure. Confirmed casualties included two personnel killed—one in South Waziristan's Toi District and another in a delayed report from Wana District—along with several casualties reported at a gate post in Bannu. Other operations in Dera Ismail Khan and Peshawar provinces involved clashes and guerrilla actions resulting in suspected enemy casualties and the destruction of two security cameras. (Telegram Bot link: https://t.me/umarmediaeng3_bot)

Operations

District	Area	Target / Operation Type	Reported Outcome
Dera Ismail Khan	Drazinda	Clash during an army raid	Possible enemy casualties
	Daraban	Guerrilla attack in Gari Mastan	1 security camera destroyed; possible casualties
	Kulachi	Guerrilla attack on Takwara military camp	1 security camera destroyed; possible casualties
South Waziristan	Toi	Guerrilla operation	1 personnel killed
	Wana	Sniper attack on Tanai FC post (May 3)	1 personnel killed (delayed report)
Bannu	Bakakhel	Frontal attack on a military gate post	Multiple personnel killed and wounded
Peshawar	Mathra	Guerrilla attack on Sakhi Bridge checkpoint	Strong possibility of casualties

Economy

- ◆ **Aurangzeb Defends GDP Figures** — Finance Minister **Muhammad Aurangzeb** has rejected claims of discrepancies in Pakistan's GDP data, stressing that national accounts follow **UN System of National Accounts (SNA 2008)** standards. Winding up the budget debate in the National Assembly, he said GDP growth of **3.7%** reflects real activity at constant prices, with the economy

valued at **\$452bn**. Aurangzeb highlighted record remittances, IT export growth, and a current account surplus, while outlining reforms in taxation, agriculture, and housing. He urged **national consensus** to sustain recovery and ensure long-term stability. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Rs85b PIA Deal at Final Stage** — Pakistan International Airlines’ privatisation process has reached its conclusion, with all **domestic and international approvals completed**. A **share purchase and subscription agreement** has been signed with the successful bidder, and a payment of around **Rs 85 billion** is expected at the first closing. Following this, shares and administrative control will formally transfer to the buyer. Officials say efforts are being accelerated to complete the handover by the **end of June**, with all required no-objection certificates and permissions already secured. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Charter of Economy: A Redundant Concept** — Columnist **Anjum Ibrahim** critiques the government’s call for a “charter of economy,” arguing it is outdated and irrelevant in today’s context. With **93% of the federal budget consumed by current expenditure**, dominated by debt servicing, pensions, and elite-driven allocations, she contends that structural flaws persist regardless of party in power. Ibrahim highlights how tax exemptions reflect political patronage, while IMF programmes slowly phase them out. She stresses that Pakistan must adapt to **multipolar global shifts**, dollar hegemony challenges, and domestic debt constraints, focusing instead on consensus in foreign policy and pro-poor growth. (*Business Recorder*, [22 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan’s Quiet Jobs Crisis** — Analyst **Ali Khizar** warns that Pakistan’s stabilisation policies have masked a deeper **labour market failure**. Official unemployment has risen to **7.1%**, but the real issue is mismatched skills and weak job creation. Universities churn out graduates lacking usable competencies, while industries from manufacturing to telecom have stopped absorbing young workers. AI threatens entry-level roles, mid-career professionals are drawn to lightly taxed remote work, and senior managers face surplus amid corporate flattening. Khizar urges reforms in education, taxation, investment, and talent deployment to prevent wasted human capital. (*Business Recorder*, [22 June 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **USA, India and Pakistan** — In this op-ed, former finance minister and ex-World Bank VP **Shahid Javed Burki** examines how President Trump’s governing style has reshaped US policy in South Asia. Pakistan’s mediation role in the Iran peace process, led by **Field Marshal Asim Munir’s shuttle diplomacy**, has improved Washington–Islamabad ties, unsettling New Delhi. US–India relations face strain from tariffs, immigration tensions and Trump’s overtures to Beijing. Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** sought to reassure India of a “strategic alliance,” but Trump’s praise of Pakistan and transactional approach to China have complicated the regional balance. (*The Express Tribune*, [22 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Shehbaz Praises Iran, Trump** — At the Quad meeting in Switzerland, **Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif** lauded Iran’s leadership for its constructive role in de-escalating tensions and hailed US President **Donald Trump** as “a man of peace” for averting nuclear conflict between Pakistan and India. He expressed hope that renewed Pakistan–US friendship would usher in close cooperation on economics and counterterrorism. Shehbaz and **Field Marshal Asim Munir** met US

Vice President JD Vance and Iranian Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf as part of talks on implementing the **Islamabad MoU**, a landmark US–Iran ceasefire accord. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **China–Pakistan Desert Horticulture Lab Opens in Multan** — Pakistan has launched its first **Joint Laboratory for Desert Agriculture** in collaboration with China. **China–Pakistan Desert Horticulture Lab Opens in Multan** — Pakistan has launched its first **Joint Laboratory for Desert Agriculture** in Multan under the **CPEC framework**, integrating Chinese desert farming technologies to boost productivity on arid lands. The project, developed with **Tarim University (Xinjiang)**, introduces **solar-powered greenhouses, precision agriculture, drone crop monitoring and drip irrigation**. The solar greenhouse system alone could raise land productivity by **up to 35%**, while reducing energy use. The initiative aligns with Pakistan’s **Green Pakistan programme**, aiming to restore land, grow drought-resistant crops and strengthen food security, with potential replication across Central Asia and the Middle East. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Bangladesh’s Premier Looks to China, Malaysia** — Newly sworn-in Prime Minister **Tarique Rahman** begins his first overseas tour, seeking investment and jobs while signalling Dhaka’s foreign policy priorities. The six-day trip includes meetings with **Malaysia’s Anwar Ibrahim** and China’s **Li Qiang** and **Xi Jinping**, with **15–17 bilateral agreements** expected in Beijing, including talks on the stalled **Teesta River project**. Rahman will also attend the **Summer Davos Forum** in Dalian. The visit follows approval of a **\$340m Chinese-backed project in Chittagong**, projected to create 100,000 jobs. (*The Express Tribune*, [20 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **FM Dar Arrives in Cairo** — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** has reached Cairo to attend the **4th R-4 Foreign Ministers’ meeting** with counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Egypt. The Foreign Office confirmed he will also hold bilateral meetings and call on President **Abdel Fattah El-Sisi**. On the sidelines, Dar received a call from Uzbekistan’s FM **Bakhtiyor Saidov**, who commended Pakistan’s mediation role in advancing peace efforts. Both leaders agreed to maintain close contact to sustain progress towards regional stability. (*The Express Tribune*, [20 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Peaceful Afghanistan Essential for Refugee Return** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** has reaffirmed Pakistan’s humanitarian commitment on **World Refugee Day**, stressing that a peaceful, stable and economically resilient Afghanistan is vital for the dignified repatriation of Afghan nationals. He noted that since September 2023, Pakistan has overseen a phased programme under which **over 2.4 million Afghans have returned home by June 2026**. Shehbaz highlighted Pakistan’s decades-long role as one of the world’s largest refugee hosts, while urging the international community to share responsibility and ensure displaced persons can return with dignity. (*The Express Tribune*, [20 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Targets 400,000 Workers for FIFA 2034** — Pakistan plans to train and deploy **300,000–400,000 workers** for projects linked to the **FIFA World Cup 2034** in Saudi Arabia, aligning workforce development with anticipated demand in infrastructure, aviation, tourism and services. During FY2025-26, over **215,000 workers received soft-skills training**, while Saudi Arabia remained the top destination, hosting 530,256 Pakistanis in 2025. The initiative is part of broader labour mobility reforms, including digital emigration systems and new partnerships with Europe, aimed at boosting remittances and expanding skilled overseas employment. (*Dawn*, [21 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Winning the Indus Lawfare** — International lawyer **Hassan Aslam Shad** argues that the resilience of the **Indus Waters Treaty** reflects the enduring force of international law, but warns that the dispute with India has entered a new phase of **lawfare**. He stresses that legal merit alone is insufficient; success depends on shaping global perceptions through coordinated outreach. Shad calls for a permanent **National Lawfare Commission** to align lawyers, academics and communication experts, ensuring Pakistan's robust legal case resonates internationally. Credibility, not slogans, must anchor Pakistan's long-term strategy. (*Dawn*, [20 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Tragedy in the East** — Retired Air Marshal **Asim Suleiman** reflects on the fatal crash of an **IAF Antonov An-32** at Jorhat Air Base, Assam, which killed all five crew. CCTV footage showed no declared abnormality before landing, yet firefighting efforts proved ineffective due to poor positioning, wasted extinguishing agents and inadequate training. Suleiman argues the incident exposes systemic shortcomings in India's safety culture, where investment in advanced platforms contrasts with neglect of personnel welfare and rescue preparedness. He warns such lapses will continue to cost lives. (*The Nation*, [20 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **337 Indian Sikh Pilgrims Arrive in Pakistan** — A group of **337 Sikh pilgrims** crossed the **Wagah Border** to attend the annual death anniversary of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh**. They were welcomed by officials from the **Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB)** and the **Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC)**, with arrangements made for accommodation, meals, security and medical support. Representatives from Indian Sikh bodies praised Pakistan's hospitality and commitment to interfaith harmony. The main ceremony will be held on **June 29 at Gurdwara Dera Sahib, Lahore**. (*The Nation*, [22 June 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Bilawal Names PPP's G-B CM Candidate** — PPP Chairman **Bilawal Bhutto Zardari** has nominated provincial president **Advocate Amjad Hussain** as Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan. The decision, conveyed via a telephonic conversation, comes as PPP and PML-N agreed to form a coalition government in the region. Under the arrangement, PPP will hold the CM post while PML-N will take the governor, opposition leader and deputy speaker slots. PPP emerged as the largest party in the 24-member assembly, followed by PML-N with six seats. Bilawal pledged focus on governance and citizens' rights. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **IT Ministry Clarifies ROW Bill** — The Ministry of Information Technology has assured that the proposed **Right of Way (ROW) Bill 2026** will not permit forcible land acquisition or unauthorised entry into private property. It emphasised that **property owners retain full rights** to object, negotiate terms and demand compensation before any work is undertaken. The ministry stated that no telecom company can enter private property without consent and legal compliance. Officials also revealed that **Chinese satellite internet firms, including Galaxy Space and Shanghai Space, have shown interest in Pakistan's market**. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **ATC Acquits Qureshi, Sentences Others** — An **Anti-Terrorism Court in Lahore** has acquitted PTI Vice Chairman **Shah Mahmood Qureshi** in the May 9 Mughalpura police vehicles arson case, citing insufficient grounds for conviction. However, senior PTI leaders **Dr Yasmin Rashid, Mian Mahmoodur Rasheed, Ejaz Chaudhary and Omar Cheema** were each sentenced to **10 years' imprisonment**. The trial, conducted under tight security at Kot Lakhpat Jail, involved 22 accused

and 37 prosecution witnesses. The May 9 violence followed Imran Khan's arrest, sparking unrest and multiple cases nationwide over attacks on state property. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **SC Orders Protection of Female Students** — The Supreme Court has directed all police chiefs to devise mechanisms ensuring the **safety of girls in schools, colleges and universities**, particularly against harassment and stalking. In an 18-page judgment authored by **Justice Salahuddin Panhwar**, the court stressed that complaints under **Section 509 PPC** must be treated seriously and acted upon promptly. It ordered **visible patrolling around educational institutions, bus stops and routes used by female students**, emphasising preventive policing. The ruling also urged a stronger medico-legal infrastructure to support sexual offence prosecutions. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Okays Withdrawal of Austerity Measures** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** has approved the rollback of government-level austerity steps introduced for energy conservation, though restrictions on business operating hours remain. A Cabinet Division notification confirmed that the **Friday weekly holiday for government employees is abolished**, full petrol allowances restored, and up to **60% of the government vehicle fleet** reactivated. However, shops must close by **9 pm**, wedding halls by **10 pm**, and restaurants by **11 pm**, with home delivery exempt. The Senate Secretariat has also withdrawn fuel-saving measures, restoring a full five-day work schedule. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Sanaullah Scotches Rumours of Change at the Top** — Adviser on Political Affairs **Rana Sanaullah** has dismissed speculation of a change in premiership after the federal budget, calling it baseless and destabilising. Speaking at Parliament House, the senior PML-N leader said “certain elements” were spreading false narratives about Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif's** future despite no such move being under consideration. He stressed the premier was leading effectively and enhancing Pakistan's global standing. Sanaullah reiterated the government's commitment to dialogue with the opposition, contrasting it with the pressures PML-N faced while in opposition. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **K-P Faces Historic 28% Budget Collapse** — Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's budget for FY2025-26 shrank from **Rs2,119bn to Rs1,526.1bn**, a **28% reduction**, the steepest in recent memory. Federal transfers fell sharply: only **Rs1,218bn** was released against Rs1,506.9bn pledged, with major shortfalls in tax assignments, terrorism compensation, electricity profits, and the windfall levy. Provincial revenues also underperformed, while funds for merged districts were severely cut. This continues a pattern of declining federal support, with shortfalls of 11.8%, 22.5% and 15.5% in the preceding three fiscal years. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Violence Against Women** — In this op-ed, educationist **Saira Samo** highlights the entrenched crisis of gender-based violence in Pakistan, noting that **over 7,500 women were killed between 2021 and 2024**, including **1,553 in honour killings** and **3,385 in domestic violence**. She cites the acid attack on Dr Mahnoor in Quetta as emblematic of patriarchal cruelty. Samo stresses that women face multiple forms of abuse, physical, sexual, psychological and digital, with **40% of Pakistani women victims of cyberbullying**. She calls for urgent reform to dismantle misogynistic customs and uphold women's dignity. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **A Nation Underfed** — Pakistan’s nutrition crisis underscores the gulf between ending hunger and ensuring health. Despite producing sufficient food, millions cannot afford a balanced diet, with **four in ten children stunted** and widespread anaemia among women. Rising inflation, contaminated water, poor maternal nutrition and climate shocks deepen malnutrition, costing the economy **\$17bn annually**. Experts stress the first **1,000 days of life** as critical, yet weak policies and fragmented spending persist. Nutrition remains politically invisible, eroding human capital and future productivity. (*The Express Tribune Magazine*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Breakthrough as Govt, PTI Back Dialogue** — Senior government and PTI leaders held rare face-to-face talks at Parliament House, agreeing to pursue dialogue on both fiscal and political issues. The government pledged to seek an **IMF extension of tax exemptions** for merged tribal districts, while PTI signalled openness to a broader democratic charter. Adviser **Rana Sanaullah** urged acceptance of PM Shehbaz Sharif’s offer of negotiations, stressing dialogue as democracy’s foundation. PTI’s **Asad Qaiser** welcomed engagement, calling for judicial independence, equal rights and an end to political vendettas. (*The Express Tribune*, [20 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **E-Passport** — Pakistan’s decision to replace machine-readable passports with biometric **e-passports** marks a long-overdue reform, promising stronger security and faster immigration clearance. Yet, as the editorial notes, technology alone cannot strengthen international mobility. The passport still ranks **100th globally**, among the weakest, reflecting governance and diplomatic shortcomings rather than document integrity. True improvement requires trust in Pakistan’s institutions, effective border management and stronger engagement abroad. Even so, digitisation will reduce corruption and improve convenience, restoring public confidence in a system long plagued by delays. (*The Express Tribune*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Concerns Raised as HIV Cases Rise** — Experts at a Karachi seminar warned that Pakistan faces one of the **fastest-growing HIV epidemics** in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, with new infections rising from **16,000 in 2010 to 48,000 in 2024**. Outbreaks in Sindh and Punjab highlight weak infection control and unsafe medical practices. Speakers urged greater **domestic financing**, expanded testing, and integration of antiretroviral treatment into primary care. They stressed tackling stigma, regulating informal healthcare, and promoting safe injection practices to curb transmission and protect vulnerable communities. (*Dawn*, [21 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Shaheed Benazir Bhutto: Champion of Kashmiri Rights** — On her **73rd birth anniversary**, columnist **Bashir Riaz** recalls Benazir Bhutto’s consistent advocacy for the **Kashmiri people’s right to self-determination**, making it central to PPP policy. During visits to India in **2001 and 2003**, she urged dialogue, UN resolutions and “soft borders” to reunite divided families, leaving a strong impression despite tense atmospheres. Riaz notes her charisma and statesmanship won respect across divides. He adds that **Bilawal Bhutto Zardari** continues her mission, stressing dialogue, legislation and constitutional means to resolve unrest in ‘Azad’ Kashmir. (*The Nation*, [22 June 2026](#))



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