

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

15 July 2026

Security

- ◆ **AJK Crackdown Signals** — The ‘Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government announced that a **full-fledged operation against the banned Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee (JAAC)** had become unavoidable after armed groups attacked civilians and security forces in Rawalakot, killing Rangers Naik Imtiyaz Ali. Poonch Divisional Commissioner **Waheed Khan** confirmed, **“Police and security officials responded in self-defence.”** The AJK home secretary accused JAAC of pursuing an **anti-Pakistan agenda** using intimidation and human shields, stressing that decisive action was needed to restore peace and reopen highways. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Back to War** — In his column, journalist **Zahid Hussain** warns that the tentative ceasefire between the US and Iran has collapsed, with renewed American strikes and Iranian retaliation threatening the interim deal. **“The latest events will make it far harder for Iran and the US to reach a negotiated peace deal,”** he writes, noting Trump’s resumption of the blockade and Iran’s closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Hussain argues that Trump’s **“whimsical and imperialistic designs”** have pushed the region into its worst crisis in recent history. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Operation Shaban Intensifies** — Security forces confirmed that **six more terrorists were killed in Balochistan**, raising the tally to **123 militants eliminated since July 5** in Operation Shaban and other intelligence-based operations. The campaign, launched after the deadly attack on Mangi Dam police station in Ziarat, is being conducted jointly by the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps and Balochistan Police. A large cache of weapons, including M4 rifles, rocket launchers and submachine guns, was recovered. Officials reiterated that the operation will continue until the last militant is eliminated. (*The News International*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Managing Fault Lines** — Pakistan’s political divide is once again deepening, with confrontation appearing easier than compromise. Within PTI, debates over **Aleema Khan’s call for a long march** reflect internal tensions, while the ruling coalition insists disputes must be resolved through constitutional and legal channels. The editorial stresses that political stability cannot rely solely on administrative measures — genuine dialogue is essential. For PTI, public mobilisation remains central, but a roadmap beyond protest is needed. The piece concludes that **“the present moment requires political maturity from all sides”**, urging both government and opposition to restore dialogue and accommodate disagreement. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Balochistan’s Struggle Against Terror Proxies** — Recent attacks in **Kech, Khuzdar and Gwadar** highlight the banned **BLA and TTP’s** campaign to destabilise the province. As **Hassan Ahmad** notes, these groups exploit genuine grievances over deprivation, using the language of rights to shield violence. Security agencies have traced links to **Indian intelligence support from Afghan soil**, with shared safe havens and propaganda networks. The real victims are Baloch communities, as insecurity deters investment in **Gwadar, Reko Diq and fisheries**, worsening poverty. Ahmad

insists, “Condemning terrorism is not anti-Baloch; it is pro-Baloch.” (*Pakistan Observer*, [15 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Attacks – 14 July 2026:** On 14 July 2026 (28 Muharram 1448 AH), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)—a violent extremist organisation responsible for severe harm and loss of life—claimed twelve attacks across six provinces. The operations targeted police, army, and Frontier Corps checkpoints, mainly through mines, gunfire, and sniper assaults. Peshawar saw the highest activity, including mine blasts and targeted shootings. North Waziristan and Khyber experienced multiple strikes on military posts, while single incidents occurred in South Waziristan, Bajaur, and Lakki Marwat. These attacks reflect continuing instability and militant pressure on Pakistan’s security forces in its north-western border regions. (Tekegram, 15 July 2026)

District	Area	Attack Type	Reported Impact
Peshawar	FR Peshawar (2)	Mine blasts	Checkpoint destroyed; 1 killed, 4 injured
Peshawar	Bara	Armed assault	Possible casualties
Peshawar	Peshawar City	Targeted shooting	1 MI officer injured
North Waziristan	Spin Wam (2)	Grenade launcher attacks	3 killed total
North Waziristan	Mir Ali	Heavy machine-gun fire	Possible casualties
Khyber	Tirah Maidan (2)	Guerrilla and sniper attacks	Casualties possible; camera destroyed
South Waziristan	Tiarza	Sniper attack	Camera destroyed
Bajaur	Wara Mamond	Armed attack	Casualties and losses possible
Lakki Marwat	Ghazni Khel	Targeted killing	1 constabulary member killed

Economy

- ◆ **Islamic Financing Gains Ground** — Conventional banks in Pakistan have shifted sharply towards Islamic lending, extending **Rs795.5bn in private sector financing through Islamic branches in FY26**, nearly five times more than the previous year. In contrast, conventional lending fell to Rs139bn. Banking experts note that Islamic banking is more profitable as it offers lower returns to depositors. Full-fledged Islamic banks, however, reduced their financing to Rs214.5bn. Despite strong profits, most banks still rely heavily on government securities. “**Islamic financing and assets have been growing at a much faster pace,**” the report observed. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Mari Energies Faces ICC Arbitration** — Petrosin CNG has filed a claim of **\$19.1m (Rs5.357bn)** against Mari Energies Ltd before the International Chamber of Commerce in London, alleging unlawful termination of a gas supply agreement. Mari Energies, one of Pakistan’s top three oil and gas producers, defended its decision, citing Petrosin’s lack of a valid licence. The dispute stems from the **Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement (GSPA)** for supply from the Halini Field, which Petrosin insists was binding and governed by Pakistani law. The Islamabad High Court earlier upheld Mari’s termination. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Orders Full Digitisation of Remittances** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** directed that **100% of overseas remittances** be processed digitally as part of Pakistan’s push toward a **cashless economy**. Chairing a meeting, he praised progress: **92% of remittances** last year were digital,

inflows hit **\$41.6 billion**, and mobile banking users rose from **95m to 137m**. He lauded the shift of **BISP payments** to digital wallets and a **300% rise in QR code merchants**. Officials said **11.9bn digital transactions** were recorded in 2025–26. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **ICCI Urges Economic Partnership with Saudi Arabia** — Acting President of the **Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI)**, **Tahir Ayub**, called for translating Pakistan–Saudi fraternal ties into a vibrant economic partnership under **Saudi Vision 2030**. Addressing a business session, he emphasised **commercial diplomacy, private-sector collaboration and investment** as keys to shared prosperity. Highlighting Vision 2030’s opportunities in **infrastructure, tourism, IT, renewable energy and mining**, he said Pakistan offers strategic advantages. **Bilal Mohammad Zubair**, Chairman of **Al Raaee Group**, pledged facilitation for Pakistani investors, while **Zohra Hotiana**, Country Head, stressed building institutional bridges. (*The Nation*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan’s Debt Dilemma** — In his analysis, **Haroon Rashid Siddiqi** argues that public borrowing is “neither an evil nor a virtue... it is an instrument.” He stresses that debt becomes dangerous when **reckless borrowing is unsupported by productivity, exports, institutional discipline and fiscal prudence**. While countries like Japan and China sustain high debt through savings and industrial strength, Pakistan’s debt-to-GDP ratio of **83%** reflects weak growth, poor exports and fiscal deficits. Siddiqi warns that “when debt substitutes reform... it becomes a silent instrument of national decline.” (*Business Recorder*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan’s ‘Little China’ Ambition** — During Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif’s** visit to Beijing marking 75 years of diplomatic ties, Pakistan unveiled its vision of becoming “Little China” in South Asia. Scholars **Zhang Chaozhe** and **Wu Fan** explain that this is not a mechanical replication but a blueprint to emulate China’s **developmental logic, governance experience and industrialisation pathways**. Anchored in **CPEC 2.0**, Pakistan seeks transformation through **industrial empowerment, technology transfer, digital economy and green energy**. Yet, they caution that persistent **security volatility, governance shortcomings and external interference** pose severe hurdles to realising this vision. (*Pakistan Observer*, [15 July 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Sindh Invites Indonesian Investment** — Sindh Chief Minister **Syed Murad Ali Shah** urged Indonesian businessmen to explore opportunities in Sindh’s expanding economy, citing projects such as **Keti Bandar Port**, a Sindh International Facilitation Centre, and **AI-enabled data centres powered by affordable energy**. He described Sindh as Pakistan’s economic engine, offering prospects in renewable energy, agribusiness, IT and manufacturing. Referring to a possible CEPA, he said it could boost bilateral trade. He also condemned Dr Akash Kumar’s murder and acknowledged the flour crisis, stressing fair returns for growers. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **CDF Strengthens Ties with Türkiye** — Field Marshal **Syed Asim Munir**, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, met Turkish President **Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** and Defence Minister **Yaşar Güler** during his official visit to Türkiye. The engagements highlighted a shared vision to deepen strategic and defence cooperation. At the Turkish General Staff Headquarters, he was welcomed with a guard of honour and awarded the **Turkish Armed Forces Distinguished Service Medal** by General **Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu**. He also paid tribute at **Anıtkabir**, laying a wreath at Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s mausoleum. (*The News International*, [15 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan Stands by Saudi Arabia** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** strongly condemned the latest Houthi missile and drone strikes on Saudi Arabia, warning that the widening conflict could engulf the Middle East in a broader regional war. He reaffirmed Pakistan's "**unwavering support**" for the Kingdom's security, stressing solidarity at this critical time. The PM emphasised that Pakistan would continue backing diplomatic efforts to promote peace and stability, even as tensions rise following the Houthis' retaliation for the bombing of Sanaa airport. Analysts caution that the escalation risks multiple interconnected conflicts. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **India Submissive After US Indictment** — India pledged cooperation against transnational organised crime after the US charged imprisoned gangster **Lawrence Bishnoi** with orchestrating the 2023 assassination of Sikh leader **Hardeep Singh Nijjar** in Canada. Nijjar, a Canadian citizen and Khalistan activist, was shot outside a Surrey temple, sparking tensions after then-Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** alleged Indian involvement. US and Canadian authorities, under **Operation Hard Ball**, indicted 37 people linked to Bishnoi's network. Bishnoi allegedly directed the killing from prison using smuggled phones. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dar Urges SAARC Revitalisation** — Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** has called for the revitalisation of the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)**, urging member states to uphold its founding charter to promote **regional connectivity, sustainable development and collective well-being**. He highlighted South Asia's immense demographic and economic potential, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to the SAARC process. Dar also praised the secretary general's efforts to strengthen cooperation among member nations, stressing the need for renewed momentum in regional collaboration. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan–Spain Agricultural Cooperation** — Federal Minister **Rana Tanveer Hussain** met Spanish Ambassador **Carlos Aragon Gil de la Serna** to discuss expanding ties in agriculture, food security, trade and multilateral engagement. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to boosting cooperation, with Spain congratulating Pakistan on becoming a full member of the **International Olive Council (IOC)**. The ambassador praised the role of nearly **150,000 Pakistanis in Spain** in strengthening economic ties, while Rana Tanveer emphasised collaboration in **modern agri-technologies** to enhance productivity and climate resilience. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Why Diplomacy Must Prevail** — The fragile **US–Iran ceasefire** is unravelling, with renewed hostilities threatening global supply lines and pushing oil prices up over 3%. Tehran's bid to assert control over the **Strait of Hormuz** and Washington's proposed **20% tariffs on vessels** have heightened tensions. Retaliatory strikes by Iran on US bases and Gulf oil facilities, coupled with Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia and Israeli salvos on Lebanon, signal a dangerous escalation. The editorial warns that brinkmanship has undone the gains of **Pakistan-led mediation**, noting that the fallout is already visible in Pakistan's economy as the **KSE-100 Index dropped 3.5%**. It concludes that avoiding maximalist positions and giving diplomacy another chance is the only way forward. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dar, Hossain Discuss Stronger Pakistan–Bangladesh Ties** — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** met Bangladesh's Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare **Dr A.Z.M. Zahid Hossain** in Islamabad, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to enhancing bilateral relations. Dar appreciated Bangladesh's participation in the **OIC Ministerial Conference on Women**, stressing cooperation on **women's empowerment** within the OIC framework. Recalling his Dhaka visit, Dar underscored readiness to expand collaboration in **trade, education, social**

welfare and people-to-people contacts. Both leaders pledged to strengthen ties across diverse fields of mutual interest. (*The Nation*, [15 July 2026](#))

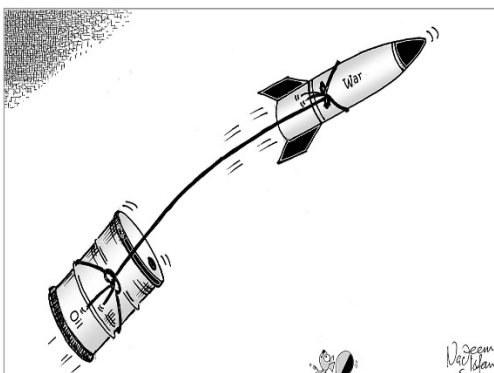
- ◆ **UN Food Convoy Crosses Torkham Border** — For the first time in nine months, a **UN humanitarian convoy of 20 containers** carrying food supplies entered Afghanistan via the **Torkham border**, after clearance from Afghan customs and border officials. The shipment, organised by the **World Food Programme (WFP)**, included biscuits and vegetable oil to support vulnerable communities. Transit had been suspended since **October 2025** due to strained Pak-Afghan relations. Officials confirmed the convoy was allowed after completing customs procedures, marking a significant step in ongoing humanitarian relief. (*The Nation*, [15 July 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **PTI Leaders Denied Access to Imran Khan** — Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) lawyers and Imran Khan's sisters were once again barred from meeting him at Adiala jail, though members of Bushra Bibi's family were allowed entry. Advocate Awais Younas Chaudhry confirmed that senior PTI leaders, including **Barrister Gohar Ali Khan** and **Salman Akram Raja**, were turned away despite being on the submitted list. Aleema Khan urged party workers to focus on the protest movement instead of gathering at the jail. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **PFMA Urges Wheat Imports** — The Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) has called on the federal government to approve wheat imports immediately, warning of a possible flour shortage by December. PFMA Chairman **Asim Raza** welcomed Punjab's release of official stocks, saying **"the release of government wheat will improve market supplies and help eliminate the artificial shortage created by hoarding."** However, he cautioned that provincial stocks alone would not suffice, stressing that timely imports and strict action against hoarding are essential to stabilise prices and protect consumers. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Judicial Corruption Called 'Systemic'** — The **International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)** has warned that corruption in Pakistan's judiciary has reached a **systemic scale and may amount to grand corruption**, undermining independence and fair trial rights. Its report *Under the Bench* says executive influence has eroded judicial autonomy, with appointments and case management subject to political pressure. It highlights the negative impact of the **26th and 27th Constitutional Amendments**, noting the judiciary has become a tool for repression. The report urges repeal of these amendments and stronger accountability mechanisms. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Two Suspects Arrested in Dr Akash Case** — Jamshoro police detained **Ram Chand** of Daharki and **Sagar Kumar** of Sukkur, identified through CCTV footage as alleged shooters in the murder of 28-year-old Dr Akash Kumar near Teen Talwar, Karachi. They were handed over to Karachi police for further investigation. The arrests followed protests by Dr Akash's family and community demanding swift justice. Karachi Mayor **Murtaza Wahab** assured protesters that suspects would be caught within 24 hours. Dr Akash's funeral was held Tuesday, with cremation performed according to Hindu traditions. (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Tribal Chiefs Oppose Kalat Division Merger** — Tribal leaders of **Sarawan**, led by Chief **Nawab Mohammad Aslam Raisani**, have strongly rejected the provincial government's proposed plan to abolish **Kalat division** by merging **Mastung district into Quetta division** and **Kachhi district into**

Sibi division. At a meeting in Quetta, Raisani and other tribal elders termed the move “malicious, provocative and anti-public,” vowing to challenge it in court. They argued that Mastung has historically and culturally remained an integral part of Kalat, and warned that altering its status would deepen public resentment. The chiefs accused the government of disregarding **Balochistan’s heritage, traditions, language and geography**, calling the plan a “dangerous conspiracy” to undermine the region’s identity. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **Bilawal in AJK for Poll Strategy** — PPP Chairman **Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari** made an unscheduled visit to **Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)** on Tuesday, after meeting Deputy PM **Ishaq Dar** in Islamabad. In Muzaffarabad, he chaired a meeting with party candidates from **Muzaffarabad and Poonch divisions** to discuss strategy for the **July 27 elections**. He was accompanied by former PM **Raja Pervaiz Ashraf** and warmly received by Speaker **Chaudhry Latif Akbar**, cabinet members, and workers. PPP’s **Chaudhry Riaz** and AJK PM **Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore** also welcomed him. Party leader **Shaukat Javed Mir** said Bilawal would meet divisional and district leaders today, and the PPP manifesto for AJK may be unveiled during the campaign. The party’s earlier rally schedule is likely to be revised in light of his visit. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **525 Afghan families were repatriated from three refugee camps in Bannu** — Bizankhel, Ghoriwala and Mamandkhel — under KP government directives. They were sent via the **Torkham border** with transport and facilities provided. Authorities are now focusing on Afghans in private residences. Similar drives in **Bajaur** and **South Waziristan** saw dozens deported and 22 detained. Many had lived in Pakistan for decades, but officials cited a lack of valid documents. The **UNHCR** voiced concern over “forced” repatriations. (*Dawn*, [15 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Islamabad Declaration on Women’s Empowerment** — The Ninth Ministerial Conference on Women of the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** adopted the **Islamabad Declaration**, reaffirming commitment to the **social, economic and political empowerment of women and girls**. It urged the removal of barriers to education and employment, the promotion of **inclusive financial systems** and the narrowing of the **digital gender gap**. The **Islamabad Initiative for Women’s Digital Inclusion** was launched to boost literacy, entrepreneurship and STEM participation. Expressing solidarity with women in **Palestine** and **HIOJK**, OIC leaders stressed empowerment as “a fundamental pillar of sustainable development.” (*The Express Tribune*, [15 July 2026](#))



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