

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

23 June 2026

Security

- ◆ **India in Talks to Sell Supersonic BrahMos Missile to UAE** — Reuters reports that **India and the UAE** are holding early-stage discussions over the sale of flagship defence systems, including the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** and the **Akashteer air defence system**. The talks follow the Gulf nation's increased arms procurement after the recent Middle East war. BrahMos, jointly developed with Russia, would require Moscow's approval for export. Analysts say closer defence ties with India give the UAE strategic autonomy without straining US relations. India's defence exports have surged to **\$4bn in 2026**, with BrahMos already sold to the **Philippines** and deals signed with **Vietnam and Indonesia**. (*The Business Recorder*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **FIA Identifies Key "Dunki" Routes Used for Illegal Migration** — The **Federal Investigation Agency (FIA)** has mapped five major routes exploited by organised networks for irregular migration from Pakistan to Europe. These include the **Pakistan–Egypt–Libya**, **Pakistan–Poland**, **Pakistan–Spain**, and **Pakistan–Cambodia** corridors, with transit points in Gulf states, Central Asia, and Africa. FIA data shows **40,000 passengers offloaded in 2025**, with EU reports noting a **64% drop in illegal migration** early this year. Thousands of Pakistanis remain stranded or exploited abroad, though recent operations repatriated over **200 nationals from Libya**. (*The Nation*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Over 15,000 Personnel Deployed for Muharram Security in Islamabad** — Islamabad IGP **Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi** announced that more than **15,000 police officers and personnel** have been deployed to secure **177 processions** and **929 Majalis** during Muharram. Reviewing arrangements at **Imambargah Asna Ashri**, he directed strict implementation of the security plan. Measures include **10 vigilance teams**, special checkpoints, patrolling units, and ongoing search operations. Surveillance is being conducted via **Safe City cameras, drones, and smart patrol vehicles**, with all departments coordinating. Citizens were urged to report emergencies through the **helpline Pucar-15**. (*The Nation*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Designating BLA** — Columnist **Faisal Ahmad** argues that the **Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)** has evolved beyond a local insurgency into a terrorist organisation warranting stronger international action. He notes its shift from targeting security forces to attacking **civilians, infrastructure, Chinese workers, and economic corridors**, particularly **CPEC**, amounting to economic warfare. While Pakistan, the US, and the UK have proscribed the group, the UN designation under the **1267 Sanctions Committee** remains blocked. Ahmad outlines options: renewed 1267 efforts, a **Chapter VII resolution**, or stronger use of **Resolution 1373**. He concludes that coordinated international action is imperative. (*The Nation*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Necessary Verdict** — This editorial describes the **life imprisonment of Mahrang Baloch** as a milestone in Pakistan's fight against the **Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)** and its militant

networks. The **anti-terrorism court in Quetta** convicted Mahrang and Sibghatullah Shahji over the death of a Frontier Corps personnel during violent protests in Gwadar in 2024. The piece argues that movements like the **BYC** have blurred lines between activism and militancy, warning against allowing agitation to mask violence. It concludes that the verdict enables Pakistan to dismantle militant networks while addressing Balochistan's genuine grievances. (*The Nation*, [23 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Two Tonnes of Drugs Seized at Sea** — Authorities announced the seizure of around **2,000 kilograms of narcotics** — including **1,500kg of hashish** and **500kg of crystal meth ('ice')** — near **Gwadar's coastline**. The operation, valued at **\$215 million internationally**, was conducted jointly by the **Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Coast Guards**, and the **Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC)**. The consignment, bound for overseas destinations via the **Arabian Sea**, has been handed over for legal proceedings. Officials said the success highlights effective inter-agency coordination and the Navy's resolve to deny illicit use of sea routes. (*Dawn*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Police Station Targeted with Quadcopter in KP's Lakki Marwat** — Militants struck the **Shaheed Asmatullah Khan Khattak police station** in **Darra Pezu** with a quadcopter on Sunday night. The blast was heard across Pezu city but caused no casualties, with police firing at the drone before it disappeared. A search was launched in the nearby mountains. Separately, in the **Karak district**, an IED attack injured a police officer during a patrol led by **DPO Imran Khan**. Several suspects were later arrested in a combing operation. (*Dawn*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Summary of TTP-Claimed Operations: 21 June 2026:** On 21 June 2026 (5 Muharram 1448 AH), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for 14 operations across seven provinces, primarily targeting military and security infrastructure. The most significant escalation occurred in North Waziristan's Dosali District, where an ambush on a 12-vehicle convoy allegedly left ten personnel dead, ten wounded, and multiple vehicles destroyed. Other major incidents involved missile and guerrilla attacks on military forts and checkpoints in Bannu and South Waziristan, resulting in suspected casualties and damage to solar equipment. Additionally, operations expanded beyond the tribal regions, targeting security infrastructure in Gilgit-Baltistan and resulting in the critical wounding of a police official in Karachi. (*Telegram*, 22 June 2026)

Breakdown of Operations by Region

District	Area	Number of Operations	Key Targets & Reported Outcomes
Bannu	Baka Khel	4	Missile, sniper, and weapon strikes on forts/checkpoints; multiple casualties; solar system and camera destroyed.
North Waziristan	Dosali, Mir Ali, Razmak	3	Convoy ambush (12 vehicles targeted, 10 killed); targeted assassination of a former associate; sniper attack.
South Waziristan	Toi, Ladha	3	Heavy machine gun, guerrilla, and missile attacks on FC forts and a military camp; suspected casualties.

District	Area	Number of Operations	Key Targets & Reported Outcomes
Gilgit-Baltistan	Tangir	1	Two army checkpoints destroyed with explosives; solar equipment seized.
Bajaur	Wara Mamond	1	Guerrilla operation against a military post; solar system damaged.
Khyber	Jamrud	1	Ambush on a two-vehicle military convoy; five personnel killed or wounded.
Karachi	Orangi Town	1	Targeted attack injuring a Police Sub-Inspector.
Total	—	14	—

Economy

- ◆ **Govt Decides to End Fuel Subsidy After Price Cut** — The federal government has discontinued its **fuel subsidy scheme** following a sharp decline in international petroleum prices, with Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif's approval**. At a meeting chaired by Deputy PM **Ishaq Dar**, officials noted that the benefit of lower global prices had already been passed on to consumers. Subsidies had earlier supported motorcyclists, farmers, and transport operators when petrol peaked at **Rs458 per litre** in April amid Gulf tensions. Dar directed that the exercise be documented to guide future policy. (*The Express Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan's Exports to China Surge 48.7pc in First Five Months of 2026** — Data from China's **General Administration of Customs (GACC)** shows Pakistan's exports to China reached **\$1.55 billion** between January–May 2026, up **48.7% year-on-year**. Copper products led the surge, contributing **43.7%** of export value at **\$675 million**, a **71.7%** rise. March was the strongest month, with exports jumping **84.3%** to **\$361.6 million**, boosted by copper and rice shipments. Zhejiang remained the top destination, while Beijing and Guangxi saw sharp increases. Officials credit the **China–Pakistan Free Trade Agreement**, with Phase III talks expected to expand access in cereals, halal meat, textiles, and minerals. (*The Nation*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Experts Call for Integrating Climate Risks Into Fiscal Planning** — At a parliamentary consultation organised by **SDPI** and the **Embassy of Denmark**, experts and lawmakers urged Pakistan to embed **climate risks into economic and budgetary planning**. Danish Ambassador **Maja Mortensen** stressed that resilience and development are complementary, while **Dr Abid Suleri** highlighted IMF-backed reforms supporting disaster preparedness and renewable energy. PPP's **Mirza Ikhtiar Baig** noted Pakistan's vulnerability despite minimal emissions, citing unmet flood aid pledges. Speakers warned of shrinking climate finance, inadequate provincial coordination, and stressed proactive fiscal buffers, impact reporting, and stronger climate diplomacy. (*The Nation*, [23 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Cotton Decline** — This editorial warns that Pakistan is steadily surrendering its “white gold” as **cotton cultivation in Punjab** fell to **2.614 million acres**, an **18% shortfall** and over half a million acres less than last year. Erratic weather, rising costs, and the lure of sugarcane have driven farmers away, while policy failures and tax uncertainty have further discouraged investment. Cotton’s strategic role linking agriculture to industry and exports is at risk, with implications for **textiles, edible oil imports, and competitiveness** if corrective measures are not taken. (*The Express Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Exodus Economy** — This editorial highlight that over **300,000 Pakistanis** sought work in the Gulf in the first five months of 2026, with **Saudi Arabia absorbing 143,000** despite regional hostilities. Remittances hit a record **\$4.2 billion in May**, with FY26 inflows expected to exceed **\$40 billion**. Yet, the piece argues this reliance on labour export reflects economic failure at home, leaving families separated and workers vulnerable abroad. True success, it stresses, lies in creating secure livelihoods domestically so migration becomes a choice, not a necessity. (*Express Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **The Missing Tier in Governance** — In his column, **Dr Miftah Ismail** argues that Pakistan’s political parties, largely provincial and family-based, have resisted empowering **local governments**, dismantling the third tier of governance that delivers everyday civic services. He highlights stark inequities in resource allocation, such as Punjab’s **Rs13,240 per citizen in Lahore** versus **Rs460 in Lodhran**, and Sindh’s opaque spending priorities. Ismail calls for constitutional protection and funding for local governments, with directly elected nazims and mayors to break family dominance, improve service delivery, and reduce ethnic politics, thereby opening space for new leadership. (*The News*, [23 June 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Pakistan to Issue Only Electronic Passports** — The government has announced a phased transition to **e-passports**, ending the issuance of machine-readable passports in line with **ICAO guidelines**. From **1 July 2026**, cash payments for passport fees will be abolished, replaced by a **QR code-based digital system**. A new **passport mobile app** will allow citizens at home and abroad to apply online and receive passports via **TCS and DHL delivery**, reducing office congestion. Officials say the reforms will modernise services and improve convenience. (*The Express Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **China Praises Pakistan’s De-escalation Efforts**— Chinese Ambassador **Jiang Zaidong** commended Deputy PM and Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** for Pakistan’s role in promoting regional peace, reaffirming Beijing’s support for Islamabad’s mediation efforts. Dar briefed the envoy on high-level talks in **Bürgenstock, Switzerland**, regarding the implementation of the **Islamabad MoU**, and recalled his participation in the **R-4 Regional Foreign Ministers’ Meeting** in Cairo. The exchange underscored China’s backing of Pakistan’s diplomatic initiatives aimed at durable stability. (*The Express Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Iranian President Arrives in Pakistan Today** — Iranian President **Dr Masoud Pezeshkian** begins a state visit to Pakistan, accompanied by a high-level delegation including cabinet ministers. He will meet **President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif**, and parliamentary leaders. The visit, his second as president, will review the full spectrum of bilateral ties, covering **trade**,

energy, border security, connectivity, and people-to-people exchanges. Discussions will also address the Islamabad MoU and regional diplomacy. Pezeshkian is expected to convey the Supreme Leader's gratitude for Pakistan's mediation role in US–Iran talks. (*The Nation*, [23 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **PTI Campaigns Fail to Dent Asim Munir's Rising Global Profile** — Despite overseas campaigns by **PTI activists** to discredit Pakistan's military leadership, **Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir** has seen his international stature rise sharply. He has received repeated and unusually warm praise from **US President Donald Trump** and **Vice President JD Vance**, who credited him not only as a “great general” but also as a **diplomat and statesman** instrumental in conflict de-escalation and peace efforts. Vance even remarked he had spoken to Munir more than anyone else in recent months. The endorsements highlight Washington's appreciation of Pakistan's role in regional stability, leaving Munir one of the most visible and discussed Pakistani military leaders globally. (*The News*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Question of Legitimacy** — In an opinion piece, **Sadia Sulaiman** examines whether the **Afghan Taliban's Islamic Emirate** constitutes authentic governance or an illegitimate seizure of power. She argues that **Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada's rule** lacks legitimacy, having been imposed by force without elections or a Loya Jirga. Decision-making is concentrated in Kandahar, dissent criminalised, and minorities such as **Hazaras** systematically excluded. The cabinet is overwhelmingly Pashtun, with no Hazara or female representation, while over 100 decrees restrict women's rights. Sulaiman concludes that Taliban rule relies on coercion and repression, contradicting both Islamic governance principles and democratic norms. (*The News*, [23 June 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **PPP Won't Back Telecom Bill With 'Draconian Clauses'** — Senator **Sherry Rehman** has declared that the **Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)** will block telecom-related legislation in the Senate unless it undergoes full scrutiny and amendment in committee. She criticised the **Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organisation) (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, passed by the National Assembly on **June 11**, for retaining “draconian clauses,” notably **Section 27A** on rights of way and **Section 27B** imposing fines up to **Rs50 million**. Sherry said PPP members were misled into believing these provisions had been removed, vowing the party will not pass the bill without deletions. (*The Express Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **PPP's Amjad Hussain Elected as G-B Chief Minister** — In its first session, the **Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly** unanimously elected **Amjad Hussain, Advocate** of the PPP, as chief minister, backed by 28 members across PPP, PML-N and IPP. The House also chose **Imran Nadeem (PPP)** as speaker and **Malik Kifayatur Rehman (PML-N)** as deputy speaker, both unopposed. The 33-member assembly now has PPP holding 13 seats, PML-N 9, IPP 6, with smaller parties and independents filling the rest. Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** congratulated Hussain on his election. (*The Express Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Punjab, Islamabad Hold 67.22pc of Federal Secretariat Posts, Balochistan Gets Just 2.82pc** — A Senate sub-committee was informed that **Punjab and Islamabad dominate federal secretariat jobs**, holding **67.22%** of posts, while **Balochistan accounts for only 2.82%**. Convened by Senator **Zamir Hussain Ghumro**, the panel directed the Establishment Division to submit a report on

provincial representation, vacant posts, and mechanisms to ensure constitutional compliance. It also noted inadequate representation of oil- and gas-producing provinces on boards of state-owned E&P companies, despite **Sindh and Balochistan's resource contributions**, and urged reforms to ensure equitable participation. (*The Nation*, [23 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Emergency Left and Right** — Columnist **Jawed Naqvi** revisits **Indira Gandhi's Emergency (1975–77)** in light of **Narendra Modi's 12 years in power**, drawing parallels between declared and undeclared curbs on civil liberties. He recalls the geopolitical turbulence of the 1970s, from **Mujibur Rahman's assassination** to America's humiliation in **Saigon**, and notes how Gandhi's socialist policies split the Congress, earning support from some communists while alienating right-wing leaders. Naqvi argues that Modi's era is seen by many as more stifling, with left forces uprooted entirely, leaving India's ideological left–right divide unresolved. (*Dawn*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Justice Munib Akhtar Assumes Charge as Acting Chief Justice of Pakistan** — Senior puisne judge **Justice Munib Akhtar** took oath on **22 June 2026**, as acting chief justice during the absence of **Chief Justice Yahya Afridi**, who will represent Pakistan at the **International Legal Forum in Saint Petersburg, Russia**, from 24–26 June. The oath was administered by **Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui** at the Supreme Court's Karachi Registry. Justice Akhtar will serve until Afridi's return, in line with constitutional practice. Afridi, the **30th chief justice**, has a tenure running until **October 2027**. (*Dawn*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **MPA Seeks Return Plan for Tirah IDPs** — In **Khyber**, MPA **Abdul Ghani Afridi** warned he would lead displaced families back to **Tirah Valley** if authorities fail to announce a return plan within two weeks. Speaking at the **Bara Press Club**, he said thousands were evicted during a military operation but left without support, now living in rented houses in Bara and Peshawar. Afridi alleged that mafias were grabbing lands and timber smugglers were exploiting forests in Tirah. He vowed to move a resolution in the provincial assembly and boycott proceedings if IDPs' return is not ensured. (*Dawn*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Kashmir Parliamentary Committee Chairman Requests Meeting with Achakzai** — NA Kashmir Committee head **Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon** has sought a meeting with opposition leader **Mahmood Khan Achakzai** to discuss the volatile situation in '**Azad**' **Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)**. The move comes amid tensions between the regional administration and the **Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)**, which has demanded the abolition of **12 refugee seats** in the AJK Legislative Assembly. Noon emphasised Achakzai's foreign policy insights for shaping a coordinated national strategy. Achakzai will consult opposition parties, including **TTAP**, before responding. (*Dawn*, [23 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **New GB Government** — This editorial notes that with newly elected lawmakers sworn into the **Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly**, the **PPP** is set to form the regional government with support from **PML-N** and **IPP** members. Voters defied the usual trend of backing Islamabad's ruling party, placing confidence in the PPP instead. The piece stresses that the new administration must deliver on governance and reforms amid protests over taxation, subsidies, and power outages. It also highlights **Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's call** for GB and AJK representation in Pakistan's legislature, urging careful consideration to balance popular demands with the Kashmir dispute. (*Dawn*, [23 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Imran, Bushra Counsel Misled IHC Over Power of Attorney: Adiala Jailer** — The Superintendent of Adiala Jail told the Islamabad High Court that power of attorney documents for **Imran Khan** and **Bushra Bibi** were ready on **16 June** as ordered, but defence lawyer **Barrister Salman Safdar** deliberately failed to collect them before the June 18 hearing. The jail administration said Safdar was informed via text message, a screenshot of which was submitted to the court, and accused him of attempting to mislead proceedings over the alleged non-signing of documents. (*The News*, [23 June 2026](#))



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