

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

24 June 2026

Security

- ◆ **Asif Warns Against ‘Anti-Pak Agenda’ in AJK** — Defence Minister **Khawaja Asif** has condemned the actions of the banned **Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)** in ‘Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir, urging a firm response to what he described as voices influenced by external and anti-Pakistan agendas. In a post on X, he said his remarks on the AJK crisis were “frank and honest” and accused detractors of distorting them. Asif stressed that no one could separate Kashmir from Pakistan, citing the sacrifices of Kashmiris since **October 1947** and their decades-long resistance to Indian occupation. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Deterrence Dynamics in South Asia** — Former ambassador **Zamir Akram** warns that India’s reported deployment of **12 nuclear warheads** marks a dangerous escalation undermining regional stability. He argues India’s move contradicts its claimed “recessed” posture and is aimed at Pakistan rather than China. Pakistan’s **Full Spectrum Deterrence** has countered India’s Cold Start doctrine, but risks of misperception and entanglement between conventional and nuclear forces remain acute, especially with **only a three-minute reaction time**. Akram urges Pakistan to strengthen its **sea-based second-strike capability** and integrate nuclear and conventional forces to adapt to evolving deterrence dynamics. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Glacial Warnings and Pakistan’s Climate Response** — Pakistan’s glaciers are retreating at an **unprecedented pace**, with the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission identifying **130 potentially dangerous glacial lakes**. Only 24 are currently unfrozen and under close observation, underscoring the importance of surveillance. Yet, as the editorial notes, “data alone does not save lives”, preparedness depends on timely warnings and precautions. Successive governments have promoted community-based adaptation, but responses remain **reactive and fragmented**. Whether Pakistan heeds the mountains’ warnings or relies on post-disaster relief will define its resilience strategy. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan–Iran Leaders Signal New Era of Cooperation** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** and Iranian President **Masoud Pezeshkian**, during talks in Islamabad, pledged to act as “**iron walls against spoilers**” undermining regional peace. Both hailed the Islamabad MoU between the US and Iran as a breakthrough, with Pezeshkian emphasising, “Without Pakistan’s efforts, we would not have been here today.” He clarified Iran’s missile capability is solely defensive and “will never be part of negotiations.” Meetings with **President Asif Ali Zardari** and **Field Marshal Asim Munir** reinforced commitments to deepen bilateral ties, trade and regional stability. (*The Nation*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Ports and Pakistan’s Future Connectivity** — An editorial warns that the Middle Eastern conflict has exposed the fragility of global supply chains, making Pakistan’s port expansion both urgent and

strategic. Karachi Gateway Terminal Ltd's planned **\$100 million investment** in dredging, container handling, storage and automation is described as essential infrastructure, not cosmetic upgrades. Geography alone is not enough; deeper ports, efficient terminals and reliable clearance systems are vital. Linking port development with road, rail and inland logistics will strengthen competitiveness and food security. Pakistan must build resilience, not rely on temporary windfalls. (*The Nation*, [24 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Six 'Most-Wanted' Terrorists Killed in Lower Dir** — Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's **Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD)** and district police killed six terrorists in an operation in Lower Dir's hilly areas. The CTD said the men, described as "**most-wanted terrorists**", were involved in the recent Badwan Bridge check post attack that martyred Constable Mohammad Ismail. Identified as members of the banned **Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan**, they opened fire on police before being killed in the exchange. Authorities recovered weapons and grenades. **IG Zulfiqar Hameed** vowed operations would continue "until terrorism is eradicated." (*Dawn*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Claims of TTP Attacks 23 June 2026:** On 23 June 2026 (7 Muharram 1448 AH), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) **claimed seven military operations across five administrative regions**. According to their statement, these attacks resulted in at least four security personnel killed and four others seriously injured. The operations primarily targeted military posts, checkpoints, and surveillance infrastructure, resulting in the destruction of three security cameras. The highest concentration of activity occurred in South Waziristan, which accounted for three separate incidents. Additionally, the TTP highlighted a reported military drone strike in the Tirah Valley of Khyber Province, alleging it caused the death of a young civilian girl.

Summary of Claimed Operations

District	Region	Target / Action	Reported Casualties / Damage
South Waziristan	Toi	Sniper attack on a post	1 soldier killed, 1 security camera destroyed
	Zarmilana	Attack on personnel carrying water	3 Frontier Corps personnel killed
	Sararogha	Mortar attack on Kotkai fort	3 soldiers seriously injured
North Waziristan	Mir Ali	Attack on Hasukhel Bridge post	1 security camera destroyed; suspected casualties
Bajaur	Wara Mamund	Attack on Sultan Baig post	Unconfirmed human and material losses
Bannu	Bakakhel	Grenade-launcher attack on Ali Khel checkpoint	1 soldier seriously injured
Lakki Marwat	Naurang	Attack on Sarai Bungalow post	1 security camera destroyed

Economy

- ◆ **Local Govts Starved of Provincial Funds** — Despite receiving **Rs9.2 trillion** in federal transfers for FY2026-27, Pakistan’s provinces are passing only **Rs1.8 trillion** to **local governments**, according to the **Economic Policy & Business Development (EPBD)**. Analysts say this reflects provinces blocking fiscal devolution, undermining the spirit of the **18th Amendment**. Punjab and Balochistan are cutting allocations, while Sindh and K-P show modest increases. Experts highlight Karachi’s **Rs1.36 trillion development deficit** and warn weak local governments hinder human development. Calls are growing for **Provincial Finance Commission awards** and empowered district mayors to ensure equitable resource distribution. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Audit Reveals Trillions Spent Without Approval** — Audit reports for FY2024-25 expose alarming budgetary irregularities, with **Rs3,177 billion in supplementary grants unapproved by parliament**. The Auditor General highlighted violations of constitutional provisions, weak financial controls, embezzlement cases and fictitious payments. Federal entities sought Rs3,809 billion without proper need assessment, while Rs87 billion lapsed unused. “Justice and law should remain the same for everyone”, the reports stress accountability, noting missing debt reports, asset registers and GP Fund records. Investigators have been urged to probe serious embezzlement, raising concerns over fiscal discipline and transparency. (*The News*, [24 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pipeline Approval Completes Karachi–Peshawar Corridor** — Pakistan has cleared the final hurdle for the **Machike–Thallian–Tarru Jabba White Oil Pipeline**, a 435-kilometre link that will complete the country’s fuel corridor from Karachi to Peshawar. Facilitated by the **Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC)**, the project is led by the Frontier Works Organisation with support from Pakistan State Oil, PARCO and Interstate Gas Systems. Designed to carry **seven million tons annually, expandable to ten**, it aims to cut freight costs, reduce tanker-related losses and strengthen national energy logistics. (*The News*, [24 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Population Growth and Policy Challenges** — Pakistan’s annual growth rate of **2.55 per cent** adds nearly **7 million people each year**, straining infrastructure and resources. Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** has termed this an “**alarming trend**”, while Finance Minister **Muhammad Aurangzeb** warned it is an “**existential threat**” fuelling stunting and depriving millions of education. Yet, the budget 2026-27 allocates no funds for population control. The **NFC award’s 82 per cent weight to population** incentivises higher numbers, unlike India and Bangladesh, where voluntary family planning and literacy curbed fertility. Pakistan must revise its fiscal frameworks and prioritise education. (*Business Recorder*, [24 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **India–EU Trade Pact Threatens Pakistan’s Exports** — Business leader **Mian Zahid Hussain**, President of PBIF and AKIA, has warned that the new **India–EU trade arrangement** undermines Pakistan’s **GSP+ advantage**, putting nearly **USD 9 billion of exports** at risk. He stressed that uncompetitive energy tariffs of **13–15 cents per kWh** and excessive compliance costs are crippling Pakistan’s textile sector. Zahid urged immediate government action to rationalise tariffs, simplify

export facilitation and strengthen SMEs. No export industry can compete internationally when forced to buy energy at regionally uncompetitive rates. (*Business Recorder*, [24 June 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Iran Rules Out Compromise on Missile Capability** — On his first foreign visit since the recent war, **Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian** arrived in Islamabad to a red-carpet welcome, praising Pakistan's mediation role in talks with Washington. At a joint press conference with **Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif**, both leaders categorically rejected reports that Iran's **ballistic missile programme** was part of negotiations, with Pezeshkian calling it a non-negotiable element of national defence. The visit saw meetings with **President Asif Ali Zardari** and **Field Marshal Asim Munir**, underscoring Pakistan's role in regional de-escalation. The **Islamabad MoU** was hailed as a step toward lasting peace and cooperation. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan, Uzbekistan Eye Stronger Bilateral Ties** — Pakistan and **Uzbekistan** reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation in **regional connectivity, trade, education and cultural exchange** during a meeting between Uzbek Ambassador **Alisher Tukhtaev** and Planning Minister **Ahsan Iqbal** in Islamabad. Both sides explored joint research, student and faculty exchanges, and capacity-building initiatives, while also discussing agriculture, transport and communications. Iqbal emphasised language learning and noted Uzbekistan could be a destination for Pakistani scholars studying Russian. The talks reflect efforts to translate shared vision into tangible outcomes for stronger bilateral relations. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan, Russia JWG Discusses Terrorism Threat** — The **12th meeting** of the **Pakistan-Russia Joint Working Group (JWG) to Counter International Terrorism** was held in **Islamabad**, focusing on threats emanating from **Afghanistan** and their impact on regional security. The dialogue was co-chaired by **Ambassador Muhammad Khalid Khan Jamali**, Additional Secretary at Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and **Deputy Foreign Minister Dmitry Lyubinsky** of Russia. According to the Foreign Office, discussions centred on strengthening cooperation against terrorism and enhancing regional stability. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan's Mediation Yields Rare Diplomatic Capital** — Pakistan's role in brokering peace between the **United States and Iran** has earned it significant diplomatic acclaim, with analysts suggesting potential economic benefits. Finance ministry adviser **Khurram Shehzad** said Pakistan's reputation as a stabilising force could attract investment, while **Alex Vatanka** of the Middle East Institute noted the chance for deeper integration into the broader Middle East. Former finance minister **Miftah Ismail** highlighted prospects for expanded trade with Iran, though he warned that structural economic weaknesses remain. Western diplomats, including **Britain's Hamish Falconer**, praised Islamabad's peacekeeping role and signalled interest in strengthening trade ties. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **UN Resolution on Peacekeeper Accountability** — The UN Security Council has unanimously adopted **Resolution 2823**, co-authored by **Pakistan and Denmark**, to strengthen accountability for crimes against peacekeepers. Supported by all 15 Council members and over 100 UN states, it condemns attacks that may constitute war crimes. Pakistan's UN envoy **Asim Iftikhar Ahmad**

stressed that “condolences are necessary, but they are not enough”, urging practical measures such as annual reporting on investigations. Denmark’s envoy **Christina Markus Lassen** said the resolution sends a strong message to the **50,000 peacekeepers** serving worldwide. (*Express Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Indus Waters Dispute and Legal Pathways** — Hydrology expert **Hassan Abbas** argues that the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** has survived not because of its strength but despite **manufactured fear and political rhetoric**. He notes India’s repeated announcements of unviable projects, such as the Chenab–Beas tunnel, fuel insecurity in Pakistan while creating political mileage in India. India’s rhetoric, “Not a single drop of water will flow to Pakistan”, reflects a violation of international law and human rights. Abbas urges Pakistan to pursue a **legal encirclement strategy** via the Court of Arbitration, ICC, ICJ and UNHRC to counter aggression. (*Dawn*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Taliban Delegation Meets EU on Migration** — A five-member **Taliban delegation** arrived in Brussels for talks with the **European Commission** on returning failed asylum-seekers to Afghanistan, despite the EU not formally recognising their administration. The meeting, requested by 20 EU states, has drawn sharp criticism. Nobel laureate **Malala Yousafzai** said she was “shaken and deeply disturbed,” warning, “Europe must not legitimise a regime responsible for one of the worst human rights crises in the world.” Belgium issued one-day visas after security checks. The delegation was led by spokesman **Abdul Qahar Balkhi**. (*Business Recorder*, [24 June 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **ECP Turns Up Heat on K-P, Islamabad Over LG Polls** — The **Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)** has set **1 July** as the deadline for **Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa** and **Islamabad** authorities to submit long-pending maps, notifications and data needed to conduct **local government elections**. At a high-level meeting chaired by **CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja**, officials expressed dissatisfaction with delays, particularly K-P’s failure to provide maps for 15 districts. Notices were issued under **Article 220**, obliging executive cooperation. Islamabad’s case was also fixed for 1 July, while Punjab was directed to complete preparations for delimitation. The ECP noted repeated postponements have undermined timely polls. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **AJK Govt Rules Out Blanket Amnesty for JAAC** — The ‘Azad’ **Jammu and Kashmir government** has rejected any blanket amnesty for leaders of the proscribed **Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)**, holding them responsible for recent violence and deaths. At a press conference, **Chief Secretary Khushal Khan** and **IGP Liaqat Ali Malik** said JAAC expanded its demands from two to 38 points, while activists allegedly attacked police and hospitals. Authorities cited heavy financial burdens from subsidies and accused JAAC of using women and children as “human shields.” The government vowed legal action, while **Maulana Fazlur Rehman** was invited to mediate. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Achakzai at a Crossroads: The Bridge That Wasn’t Built** — Five months after being appointed **opposition leader**, **Mahmood Khan Achakzai** was expected to steer the PTI towards dialogue, but

his fiery speech in the **National Assembly** reignited confrontation. He labelled the government “illegal” and accused it of curbing opposition rights, prompting **PM Shehbaz Sharif** to defend legitimacy and the Speaker to caution against criticism of institutions. PTI leaders voiced frustration, with **Ali Muhammad Khan** urging Achakzai to deliver results and **Shahid Khattak** warning of possible removal. Analysts argue that Achakzai lacks the promised authority, leaving both him and the opposition in a political deadlock. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Zardari Lauds Women’s Role in Diplomacy** — On the **International Day of Women in Diplomacy (June 24)**, President **Asif Ali Zardari** paid tribute to women who advanced dialogue and cooperation globally. He highlighted Pakistan’s tradition of female diplomats and leaders, citing **Begum Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan** and **Begum Shaista Ikramullah** as early representatives abroad, and **Benazir Bhutto** as the first woman prime minister in the Muslim world who expanded Pakistan’s international engagement. Zardari said their contributions strengthened peace efforts and amplified Pakistan’s voice in global forums. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Aleema Says Public Backs Imran’s Release** — Outside **Adiala Jail**, **Aleema Khan**, sister of PTI founder **Imran Khan**, declared that the nation was united on the issues of his release and medical treatment. She demanded family presence during any medical procedures and full implementation of court orders on prison meetings. Aleema alleged that restrictions on visits were imposed by “other quarters” rather than jail authorities, calling it an injustice. She warned the party would decide its future course with workers if assurances were not met, while **PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja** linked federal funding requests to the issue of Imran’s meetings. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **MPAs Lament Neglect of Mother Tongue** — Opposition members in the **Punjab Assembly** criticised discrimination against the **Punjabi language**, arguing that neglect of the mother tongue has contributed to moral decline and extremism. They noted lawmakers freely deliver speeches in **Urdu and English**, but resistance arises when Punjabi is spoken. Speaker **Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan** asserted parliamentary supremacy after a minister invited him to visit a government programme, reminding ministers of their accountability to the assembly. The debate, part of the ongoing **budget session**, saw heated exchanges over governance, procedure and provincial spending. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan’s Struggle Against HIV** — Pakistan faces one of the **fastest-growing HIV epidemics in the Eastern Mediterranean Region**, worsened by the Trump administration’s funding cuts and the country’s failure to build a self-financed treatment model. An editorial warns that children in rural areas are particularly vulnerable, while inadequate testing, counselling and surveillance systems magnify risks. Urgent domestic financing and collective action are needed to prevent a graver public health emergency. (*Express Tribune*, [24 June 2026](#))
- ◆ **Life Sentences Against BYC Activists Condemned** — JUI-F Secretary General **Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri** has denounced the life imprisonment of **Dr Mahrang Baloch** and fellow Baloch Yakjehti Committee activists, calling the verdict a “**murder of justice**”. He stressed that “justice and law should remain the same for everyone”, warning that such measures risk pushing Baloch people towards resistance. Haideri argued the sentences violate the Constitution and national

interests, urging dialogue over repression. He cautioned that opening multiple fronts of conflict, from Balochistan to Kashmir, could deepen alienation. (*The Nation*, [24 June 2026](#))

- ◆ **Dialogue Urged Amid AJK Tensions** — JUI-F chief **Maulana Fazlur Rehman** has offered to mediate in the ongoing crisis in ‘Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir, urging both the government and the **Joint Public Action Committee** to adopt a conciliatory approach. In a video message, he said, “the Pakistani nation is concerned about peace, law and order, and the security of Kashmir”. Rehman noted that committee leaders had formally requested his intervention and stressed that mediation requires time and restraint, especially during Muharram. He appealed for dialogue to resolve disputes and restore stability. (*The Nation*, [24 June 2026](#))

UK BRACES FOR SEVENTH PM IN A DECADE



STARMER SAYS HE WOULD SUPPORT WHOEVER REPLACED HIM



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