

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

25-27 July 2026

Security

- ◆ **Pakistan's Path to Progress and Digital Sovereignty** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** pledged equal development across provinces, announcing the **Rs300 billion Karachi–Chaman Expressway** and prioritising the **Kachhi Canal project** “should be renamed Pakistan Canal”. He highlighted Punjab’s Rs150 billion contribution under the NFC Award and noted **27,000 tube wells converted to solar energy**. Sharif alleged that “**India is behind terrorism in Pakistan**” and urged Afghanistan to act against militants. Alongside **Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir**, he inaugurated the **Sky47 Karakorum-01 Data Centre**, calling it a “remarkable achievement” for Pakistan’s digital sovereignty. (*The Nation*, [25 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Gen Aamer Raza Becomes First Commander of National Strategic Command** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** promoted **Gen Syed Aamer Raza** to four-star rank and appointed him as Pakistan’s first **Commander of the National Strategic Command**, created under the **27th Constitutional Amendment**. The office unifies strategic forces across the Army, Navy and Air Force, while the **National Command Authority**, chaired by the prime minister, retains nuclear policy control. The appointment, superseding several senior generals, signals imminent reshuffles in army leadership. Raza previously served as Chief of General Staff and Lahore Corps Commander. (*Dawn*, [25 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Fifteen Martyred in Tank Suicide Bombing as Security Forces Repel Attack** — At least **15 people were martyred**, including **12 soldiers, two policemen and a government official**, after terrorists struck a joint police and security forces check post in Tank district. According to **Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR)**, the attackers, identified as *Khawarij belonging to Indian-sponsored Fitna Al Khawarij*, rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into the perimeter wall after losing twelve of their own. The operation continues under “**Azm-e-Istehkam**”, Pakistan’s counter-terrorism vision. Both the **President and Prime Minister condemned the attack**. (*The Nation*, [25 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Operation Al-Azm Intensifies in Balochistan** — Security forces have so far **eliminated 13 terrorists** during the ongoing intelligence-based **Operation Al-Azm**, according to Radio Pakistan. Several hideouts of *Fitna-al Hindustan* were destroyed, with confirmed reports of further injuries among militants. The operation follows recent attacks, including the assault on Mangi Dam Police Station and the killing of a sessions judge in Mastung. In Khad Kocha, Mastung, weapons, ammunition and IED-making materials were recovered. The campaign forms part of Pakistan’s broader counter-terrorism drive under “**Azm-e-Istehkam**”. (*The Express Tribune*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Centre and Balochistan Approve Counter-Terror Master Plan** — Federal Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi** and Chief Minister **Sarfraz Bugti** co-chaired a high-level security conference in Quetta, unveiling a **comprehensive master plan to dismantle terrorist networks** and modernise law enforcement. The federal government pledged **logistical, technical and financial support** to

strengthen the police and CTD, equipping them with advanced intelligence systems. Naqvi stressed [“lasting peace could only be achieved by leveraging modern technology”], while Bugti vowed [“the state will establish its writ without compromise”]. Youth development initiatives will complement security operations. (*The Express Tribune*, [26 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **Indian-Funded Propaganda Network Dismantled** — Authorities have arrested a major facilitator linked to an **Indian-sponsored propaganda network**, accused of spreading false news and anti-Pakistan narratives. Operating under the guise of digital marketing, the network purchased fake social media accounts and followers to **target the bond between the Pakistan Army and the public**. Millions of fabricated views were generated to push misleading narratives on Kashmir. Investigators confirmed the facilitator’s links to the **Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)**, with foreign clients directing campaigns against state institutions. (*The Express Tribune*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Rethinking National Security Amid Rising Insurgency** — In his column, **Ambassador M. Alam Brohi** warns that **national security has been imperilled by a surge in the Baloch insurgency**, with signs of cooperation between the **Baloch Liberation Army (BLA)** and **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)**. He notes over 100 BLA attacks and 300 TTP strikes this year, including lethal assaults in Quetta and Ziarat. Brohi recalls **Dr Abdul Malik Baloch’s** past dialogue efforts, stressing “there would be no military solution to the Balochistan issue. It is a political issue and needs to be approached politically”. He argues that recognising Baloch constitutional rights and equality within the federation is essential for stability. (*The Nation*, [25 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Outsourcing Security and the Risks of Militias** — In his column, **Muhammad Amir Rana**, a security analyst, examines **Maulana Fazlur Rehman’s criticism of state-backed private militias**. He notes that Pakistan has historically relied on local lashkars and ‘peace committees’ in KP and Balochistan, modelled after the US-backed ‘Sunni awakening’ in Iraq. Initially useful for intelligence, these militias later became unpopular due to abuses, abandonment by the state, and targeted killings. Public trust in this strategy eroded long ago. Rana warns that rumours of recruiting former Afghan fighters could deepen mistrust, stressing the need for clarity in national security policy. (*Dawn*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **CM Bugti, JUI-F Leader Discuss Balochistan Security** — In Quetta, **Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti** met **JUI-F Balochistan chief Senator Maulana Abdul Wasey** to review the province’s law and order situation. Both leaders emphasised the need for **collective efforts to ensure lasting peace and stability**. Bugti reaffirmed that safeguarding citizens and promoting development remained the government’s foremost priority, urging unity against terrorism. Maulana Wasey stressed that challenges could be addressed through **mutual consultation, political harmony and national unity**. Separately, Bugti visited the family of martyred Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar to offer condolences. (*Dawn*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **KP Issues Fresh Terror List** — The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has released a list of **83 most-wanted terrorists** with head money ranging from Rs500,000 to Rs10 million. Officials urged public vigilance, stressing that **“anyone providing information leading to arrest will receive a substantial cash reward”** and informants’ identities will remain confidential. The list covers militants from Dera Ismail Khan, Kulachi, Darazinda, Daraban, Prova and nearby areas. Authorities emphasised that community cooperation is vital to strengthen intelligence-led policing and counter terrorism effectively. (*The News International*, [27 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **Resistance Intensifies Against Taliban** — The Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) claimed responsibility for a rocket attack on a Taliban convoy in Baghlan's Doshi District, reportedly killing seven and wounding six. The convoy was transporting reinforcements and equipment from Kabul to Badakhshan. AFF further announced clashes in Zebak District, Badakhshan, where **four Taliban commanders were killed**, including Mullah Shadab of the Zebak Unit, alongside Maulvi Gul Ahmadi, Mullah Faridullah and Qari Umari Lazari. The group said no AFF fighters were harmed during these operations. (*The Nation*, [27 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Securitisation and India's Youth Protest** — Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan examines the emergence of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a youth-led movement protesting exam paper leaks and demanding accountability. He argues that the BJP government's crackdown — barricades, tear gas, detentions and internet shutdowns — reflects a pattern of **securitisation**, where dissent is framed as a national security threat. Drawing on the Copenhagen School, he warns that **“extraordinary powers, once created, rarely remain confined to their original purpose”**, likening them to Frankenstein's monster. Persistent securitisation, he cautions, risks democratic backsliding in India. (*The Express Tribune*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **TTP Operations – 24 July 2026:** On 24 July 2026 (9 Safar al-Muzaffar 1448 AH), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed 16 operations across eight provinces. North Waziristan witnessed five attacks, including grenade launcher strikes and the burning of abandoned military posts. South Waziristan saw guerrilla and sniper assaults, killing three personnel and downing a drone. In Peshawar, grenade attacks on FC and Army camps caused casualties. Dera Ismail Khan reported drone-led clashes, with Mujahideen counterattacks forcing retreat. Khurram Province saw a convoy ambush killing three and injuring four. In Bannu, a large convoy was ambushed, leaving eight dead and vehicles damaged. Kohat experienced a police vehicle attack, killing two officers. The most significant assault occurred in Tank Province, where TTP's “Special Unit” stormed a joint military-police camp, killing over forty personnel and causing extensive destruction. TTP acknowledged the martyrdom of four of its fighters, framing the battle as part of its ongoing jihad against Pakistan's military establishment. (*Telegram*, 25 July 2026)

Operations Table

District	Area	Nature of Attack / Outcome
North Waziristan	Mir Ali, Shawal, Miran Shah	GL attacks injuring personnel; posts abandoned and burnt; possible casualties
South Waziristan	Zarmilana, Makin	Guerrilla and sniper attacks; 3 killed; drone shot down; possible FC casualties
Peshawar	Bara, FR Peshawar	GL attacks on camps; 1 killed, 1 injured; possible casualties
Dera Ismail Khan	Parwa	Army drone operation repelled; GL attack on vehicle; possible casualties
Khurram	Dogar	GL attack on convoy; 3 killed, 4 injured
Bannu	Talgi	Ambush on 60-vehicle convoy; 8 killed, several wounded; vehicles damaged
Kohat	Kohat City	Attack on police vehicle; 2 killed, 2 injured; vehicle burnt

District	Area	Nature of Attack / Outcome
Tank	Tank District	Major assault on joint camp; >40 killed, dozens injured; camp heavily damaged; 4 TTP killed

Economy

- ◆ **ICCI Pushes Economic Diplomacy with Türkiye** — The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), led by President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, is set to host the **Pakistan–Türkiye Business Opportunities Conference** and Excellence Award Ceremony in Istanbul on 13 August 2026. Mehmood emphasised ICCI’s commitment to raising bilateral trade from \$1.4 billion to \$5 billion, noting that the Chamber has moved “beyond deliberations” through **business-to-business meetings, joint ventures and matchmaking**. The initiative, backed by both embassies, aims to forge long-term partnerships in trade, investment and technology transfer. (*The Nation*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Inflation and Fiscal Strain Stall Recovery** — Pakistan’s recovery is faltering as CPI inflation rose to double digits and the SPI hit 12.8pc, **eroding monetary freedom for households**. A Prime think-tank report warns that **debt servicing and defence consume 94pc of net federal revenue**, leaving only six per cent for services. Government borrowing crowds out private credit, while tax distortions favour informal earners. The report urges a shift from IMF stabilisation to policies promoting economic freedom, a broader tax base, lower rates and government borrowing for growth. (*Dawn*, [27 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **AI Ambitions for Export Growth** — Pakistan’s IT sector hit **\$4.6 billion** in FY26 exports, a 21% rise, generating a **\$3.9bn trade surplus**, the author says. Under **Uraan Pakistan**, the **\$10bn FY29** target demands faster, higher-value growth. Mohiuddin Aazim, business commentator, argues AI adoption is pivotal: [The real value of being a founding member of Waico depends on what Pakistan does with it]. He urges AI education, sovereign computing, research funding and Waico engagement to scale firms, attract investment and export AI-enhanced solutions, not merely digital labour. (*Dawn*, [27 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Inflation Divergence: Pakistan vs China** — In his analysis, Faran Mahmood explains why Pakistan’s inflation hovers around **11%** while China’s remains near **1%**, despite similar monetary expansion. He argues that in China, new credit is channelled into **productive capacity** — factories, infrastructure, exports — keeping supply aligned with demand. In Pakistan, however, expansion largely funds **government deficits, wages and subsidies**, crowding out private investment and fuelling demand without output growth. Mahmood stresses that **“the destination of credit matters more than its volume”**, urging fiscal consolidation and reforms to redirect lending toward productive sectors. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 July 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Pakistan and Saudi Arabia Reaffirm Close Diplomatic Ties** — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar** spoke with Saudi Foreign Minister **Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud**, with both leaders exchanging views on regional developments and reaffirming

“close and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia”. The conversation underscored the importance of diplomacy amid escalating tensions involving the United States, Iran and Yemen’s Houthi movement. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasised that both countries remain aligned in their approach to regional stability. (*The Express Tribune*, [26 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan Strengthens Regional Cooperation at SCO** — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to stronger ties during meetings with his **Belarusian, Kazakh, Tajik and Uzbek counterparts** at the SCO-CFM in Kyrgyzstan. With **Maxim Ryzhenkov**, he reviewed bilateral relations and pledged to expand cooperation under the **Roadmap for Comprehensive Cooperation 2025–2027**. Kazakhstan’s **Yermek Kosherbayev** praised Pakistan’s diplomacy and invited Dar to visit. With **Sirojiddin Muhriddin**, Dar reaffirmed “longstanding, brotherly, and close ties” between Pakistan and Tajikistan. These engagements underscored Pakistan’s role in advancing peace and connectivity. (*The Express Tribune*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Trans-Caspian Corridor Gains Strategic Importance for Eurasia** — At a seminar organised by the **Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)**, experts stressed the growing geopolitical significance of the **Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR)**. **Dr Farid Shafiyev**, Chairperson of the AIR Centre, Baku, highlighted Azerbaijan’s infrastructure investments and “the need for diversified transport and energy corridors”. **Dr Kubatbek Rakhimov** urged greater investment in digital systems, while **Dr Recep Yorulmaz** emphasised institutional cooperation alongside geography. **Rakhim Oshakbayev** noted the Middle Corridor’s resilience despite challenges. IRS President **Jauhar Saleem** called it an emerging driver of regional integration. (*The News*, [25 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Afghanistan’s Stability Key to Regional Peace** — In this editorial, the assertion by **Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar** at the SCO meeting that “peace and stability are impossible without eliminating terrorism emanating from Afghanistan” is described as a blunt but necessary recognition of geopolitical reality. Afghan instability has long produced **spill-over effects** such as refugee crises and terrorism, undermining regional growth. A peaceful Afghanistan is seen as the **missing link for Central and South Asian connectivity**, enabling trade and prosperity. The piece stresses dismantling terrorist infrastructure to build a **structural regional security architecture**. (*The Nation*, [25 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Gabd Corridor Emerges as Central Asia’s New Gateway** — In his column, Lt Col (Retd) **Sayed Ahmad Nadeem Qadri** highlights how the **Gabd–Rimdan–Gwadar/Karachi Corridor**, operational since April 2026, offers Uzbekistan its first viable alternative to disrupted Afghan routes. Located near Gwadar, Gabd links Pakistan’s seaports to Iran, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, cutting transit time from 35–45 days via Russia to 15–20 days “Uzbekistan’s insurance policy against geopolitical risk”. The corridor promises lower costs, faster exports and new markets, though its success depends on stability in Iran and investment in infrastructure. (*The Nation*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan’s Resurgence Through Diplomacy** — In her column, **Sehar Kamran** argues that 2026 has marked Pakistan’s re-emergence as a **middle power**, leveraging diplomacy rather than hard power. She recalls Pakistan’s historic role as an interlocutor, from arranging **Henry Kissinger’s 1971 visit to Beijing** to facilitating the **Doha Agreement**. This year, Islamabad hosted the **Islamabad Talks**, bringing US and Iranian officials together, while balancing military

commitments to Saudi Arabia with diplomatic outreach to Tehran. Kamran stresses that “diplomacy remains one of Pakistan’s most underused strategic assets”, urging institutionalisation to convert goodwill into durable gains. (*The Nation*, [26 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **Gilani Appointed to Strengthen Beijing Ties** — Pakistan has named senior diplomat Syed Ali Asad Gilani as its new Ambassador to China, succeeding Khalil Hashmi after his three-year tenure. Gilani, currently Additional Secretary (Asia-Pacific), is regarded as one of Pakistan’s most experienced diplomats on Asian affairs, with prior postings in Uzbekistan and West Asia. His appointment comes as Pakistan and China accelerate the second phase of **CPEC**, expanding cooperation in industry, technology and connectivity. Observers say this reflects Islamabad’s emphasis on seasoned envoys in strategic capitals. (*The Nation*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Rhetoric and Regional Stability** — Pakistan has strongly condemned Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh’s remarks on Azad Jammu and Kashmir, warning that India’s “coercive rhetoric” risks undermining peace and “**lowering the threshold for interstate conflict.**” The Foreign Office described Singh’s comments as “highly provocative and irresponsible,” stressing that Jammu and Kashmir remains an UN-recognised dispute. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif asserted that such rhetoric “neither alters the status of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir nor contributes to regional peace” and accused India of destabilising South Asia. (*The News International*, [27 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Liability Next Door** — In this opinion piece, former ambassador Asif Durrani argues that five years after the Taliban’s return to Kabul, Pakistan faces its gravest security challenge yet. He highlights the “**alarming proportions**” of terrorist attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, noting that groups like TTP, Al-Qaeda, IMU, ETIM and BLA continue to operate from Afghan soil. Durrani stresses that “**diplomatic assurances cannot substitute for measurable action**” and urges Pakistan to pursue verifiable counterterrorism cooperation with Kabul, deepen regional security coordination, and expose cross-border terrorism through international institutions. (*The News International*, [27 July 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **PML-N Vows Punjab-Style Progress for AJK** — At a rally in Mirpur, Nawaz Sharif declared “This is Kashmir not Kashmore, this is Mirpur not Mirpurkhas”, stressing political rivalry should remain peaceful. He pledged **motorways, hospitals, gas supply and an international airport** if elected, calling AJK his “first home.” Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister, vowed “Kashmir runs through my blood” and promised **Punjab-style development**, including electric buses, Safe City projects, housing schemes and welfare cards. Both leaders urged voters to entrust the PML-N with AJK’s future. (*The Nation*, [25 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **PTI Mobilises for August 5 Protest** — Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General **Salman Akram Raja** accused the government of **corruption, economic mismanagement and political victimisation**, urging citizens to join the party’s August 5 protest. At a press conference, he alleged that **4–5 million metric tonnes of wheat had gone missing** due to negligence and collusion with hoarders [“These hoarders enjoy full state patronage while the direct burden falls on the poor”]. Raja also criticised fuel price hikes, rejected official explanations, and condemned misuse of Punjab’s Rs806 billion contribution. (*The Express Tribune*, [26 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **FCC Reviews Muslim Convert's Marriage Case** — The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) issued notices to the **Attorney General for Pakistan** and **Advocate General Punjab** on a review petition concerning **Maria Shahbaz**, who embraced Islam and married. Justice **Hassan Azhar Rizvi** asked what error existed in the earlier judgment; counsel argued marriage under 18 was unlawful. Rizvi observed the law punished underage marriage but did not void it, noting Maria never claimed coercion. The court adjourned after seeking legal assistance, continuing scrutiny of constitutional remedies. (*The News*, [25 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **AJK Election and Its Wider Implications** — In his analysis, **Ahmed Bilal Mehboob**, President of **Pildat**, argues that the **2026 AJK general election** is unlike any of the past 11 polls since 1970. Held amid violent protests by the defunct **Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)** and a **PTI boycott**, the election's legitimacy is questioned. Mehboob highlights the novelty of **three-phase polling**, warning that announcing preliminary results after each phase may influence subsequent voting preferences. He stresses that the new assembly must address demands over **12 refugee seats** and the lack of AJK's representation in Pakistan's federal forums, suggesting debate on interim provincial status. (*Dawn*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Elite Capture and Pakistan's Crisis** — Dr Moonis Ahmar explains that **elite capture denotes the grabbing of power and resources by a privileged class**, perpetuating inequality and weakening governance. He recalls that during Ayub Khan's era, 22 families monopolised wealth, while today **500 super-influential people control Pakistan's economy, politics and state institutions**, leaving 250 million citizens deprived of basic rights. Citing the IMF's 2025 Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment, he warns that **"corruption in Pakistan is behind an economic crisis driven by state capture"**. Without reform, poverty, brain drain and fragility will persist. (*The News*, [26 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Reservoirs Strengthen Water Security** — Pakistan's three major reservoirs have surpassed the **8 million acre-feet (MAF) storage mark**, reaching 61.2 percent of total live capacity during the Kharif season. According to Irsa, Tarbela holds 4.354 MAF, Mangla 3.542 MAF, and Chashma 0.132 MAF. **"Inflows remain higher than releases,"** enabling continued storage, with Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and KP receiving allocations under the water distribution plan. Irsa also released water downstream of Kotri to check seawater intrusion, safeguarding Sindh's delta. Sustained glacier melt at Skardu continues to support inflows. (*The News International*, [27 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **JUIF Plans Consultations Amid Propaganda Concerns** — Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUIF) announced consultative conventions in Quetta, Peshawar, Sukkur and Multan this August to address inflation, insecurity, lawlessness and legislation. Spokesperson Aslam Ghauri said the gatherings, led by Fazlur Rehman, will also counter "false propaganda" against him. The party vowed to defend the Constitution and democracy, challenging what it calls a parliamentary blackout and character-assassination. Ghauri declared, **"We will relentlessly pursue those who stole the elections"** and urged workers to prepare for the final push. (*The News International*, [27 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **MQM-P Pushes for New Provinces** — The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has launched a campaign for a constitutional amendment to define procedures for creating new provinces on administrative grounds. At a protest in Shah Faisal Town, Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal declared, **"Empowering Karachi will strengthen Pakistan,"** arguing that

devolving powers and resources would stabilise the federation. He accused the Sindh government of mismanaging Rs22 trillion, leaving Karachi in decline. MQM-P leaders pledged reforms through constitutional means, rejecting violence and sectarianism. (*The News International*, [27 July 2026](#))

- ◆ **AJK Elections Begin Under Tight Security** — The first phase of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's general elections is being held today in Mirpur Division, with polling from 8:00am to 5:00pm across more than 2,300 stations. Authorities have deployed nearly 17,000 security personnel, including police, civil armed forces and the Pakistan Army, to ensure peaceful voting. Chief Secretary Khushal Khan warned that **“no attempt to disrupt the electoral process will be tolerated.”** The contest involves PPP, PML-N, PTI and independents, with results expected later in the evening. (*The Nation*, [27 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **Why Coercion Fails in Pakistan** — In her column, former ambassador **Maleeha Lodhi** argues that Pakistan's hybrid government is relying on repression rather than problem-solving to address mounting unrest. She highlights escalating violence in Balochistan and KP, unrest in AJK, and polarisation at the national level. Lodhi warns that **“authoritarian rule can neither meet Pakistan's challenges nor make the government secure.”** She stresses that legitimacy, trust and authority — not coercion — are essential for stability, and urges governance rooted in consent and competence rather than force. (*Dawn*, [27 July 2026](#))



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