

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

4 August 2026

Security

- ◆ **Security Forces Intensify Operations in North Waziristan** — Under the **Azm-e-Istehkam** vision, security forces have conducted a series of **intelligence-based operations (IBOs)** in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa over the past two months, destroying multiple terrorist hideouts. According to security sources, **“several terrorists were killed during an operation in the Khatti Killi area of North Waziristan”**, with large caches of weapons and ammunition recovered. Militants linked to the banned **Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)** — referred to by the state as *Fitna al-Khawarij* — were also injured. Officials stressed that operations aim to protect civilians and will continue until **lasting peace is established and terrorism eliminated**. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Tarbela Spillways Open to Manage Rising Waters** — Authorities opened the **spillways of Tarbela Dam** on Monday to safely regulate surging water levels, increasing the **Indus River flow from 220,000 to 245,000 cusecs**. The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** warned that the higher discharge could pose risks to downstream communities, urging residents to avoid rivers, streams and low-lying areas. Officials emphasised preparedness and timely response, stressing that vigilance is essential to protect lives and property as water levels rise. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **K-P CM Pledges Stronger Anti-Terror Measures** — Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister **Sohail Afridi** vowed to intensify operations against terrorist elements following a **suicide attack in Swat that killed at least 15 people, including six policemen**. During his visit, he met families of the martyrs, offered condolences, and checked on the injured at **Saidu Teaching Hospital**. Chairing a high-level meeting, Afridi stressed that **“safeguarding the lives and property of citizens remains the government’s foremost responsibility”** and warned against negligence. He highlighted investments of **Rs35 billion already provided to police and CTD**, with an additional **Rs20 billion earmarked** in the current budget, reaffirming commitment to restoring lasting peace. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Cleric Targeted in Wana Blast** — A bomb explosion inside a supermarket in **Rustam Bazaar, Wana (South Waziristan Lower)** on Monday claimed the life of prominent cleric **Mufti Jan Amir Masti Khel**, a former aide to Aman Lashkar commander Nazir. Police said the blast was caused by a **pressure cooker bomb** planted on the ground floor, leaving the scholar critically injured before he succumbed at **DHQ Hospital Wana**. DSP **Asghar Ali Shah** confirmed that Mufti Jan Amir was the apparent target, with forensic teams recovering key evidence. An initial report has been registered at Wana City police station. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Bugti Rules Out Talks with Militants, Stresses Governance Reforms** — Balochistan Chief Minister **Mir Sarfraz Bugti** said the province’s situation is neither fully peaceful nor as bleak as

portrayed, criticising **“one-sided narratives and negative media coverage”** for undermining progress. In a TV interview, he highlighted reforms including **merit-based recruitment of 17,000 teachers**, revival of schools, healthcare improvements and youth initiatives. Bugti noted new administrative divisions to strengthen governance, while alleging foreign networks, particularly Indian intelligence, support militants across the Afghan border. He rejected peace talks with armed groups, insisting dialogue must be political and democratic. Bugti urged national unity, calling on Baloch and Pashtun youth to resist hostile propaganda and reaffirming commitment to **lasting peace, transparent governance and sustainable development**. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **AJK Unrest Sparks Government Condemnation** — Azad Jammu and Kashmir Information Secretary **Muhammad Rashid Hanif** confirmed that **seven law enforcement personnel were martyred** in recent clashes with the now-proscribed **Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)**. He alleged the group sheltered armed elements, noting **“this confirms that the blacklisted JAAC is attempting to undermine peace and the writ of the state.”** Hanif rejected claims of unprovoked firing, calling JAAC’s allegations “propaganda.” He also dismissed a **BBC report** as **“biased and contrary to the facts”**, while the Ministry of Information accused **Al Jazeera** of **“selective reporting”** on the AJK elections. (*Dawn*, [3 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Facing Threats on All Fronts** — In his column, **Dr Niaz Murtaza** argues that Pakistan confronts multiple dangers: **India to the east, TTP in the north, Afghanistan to the west and BLA in the south**. He stresses that while military action may win battles, only a **holistic approach that fixes root causes and respects rights and laws can lead to sustainable peace**. He highlights Balochistan’s neglect, the TTP’s extremism, and the risks of India–Pakistan escalation, urging diplomacy and creative solutions. **“We must go beyond narrow policies,”** he concludes. (*Dawn*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Swat Bombing and Counterterrorism Gaps** — A suicide bomber struck an anti-terror protest in Swat, killing at least **17 people including policemen and civilians**. Reports suggest the banned **TTP claimed responsibility**. The editorial stresses that this atrocity highlights the urgent need for a **fresh counterterrorism strategy**, as law enforcement agencies in KP remain vulnerable to **“double-tap” or “two-stage” attacks**. With over **600 fatalities in July** and more than **900 deaths in the first half of 2026**, the editorial warns that terrorists operate without fear while the state fails to secure spaces. **“This continuous bloodbath must end so that people can live in peace.”** (*Dawn*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Ex-Afghan General Launches Armed Resistance Against Taliban** — Former Afghan National Army lieutenant general **Sami Sadat** has announced the start of coordinated armed operations under the **Afghanistan United Front (AUF)**, declaring that negotiations with the Taliban have failed. Reappearing in uniform beneath the tricolour flag of the former republic, he said the campaign will initially target **Taliban fighters, bases and leaders**, before expanding nationwide. Sadat accused the regime of repression and harbouring **Al-Qaeda, Islamic State and TTP**, stressing **“armed resistance is the only remaining path to restore a free and constitutional Afghanistan.”** He urged ex-security personnel, political leaders and citizens to unite under the AUF, pledging adherence to humanitarian law and the 2004 Constitution. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Holding the Line Against Terror** — A suicide bombing outside Kabal Police Station in Swat claimed 19 lives, with police personnel stopping the attacker from entering the station during a nearby protest. Their sacrifice “undoubtedly saved many more lives,” yet the attack underscores that militants retain both intent and capability. Data shows **2,659 police personnel have embraced martyrdom since 1970, with 2,413 after 2001**, most of them constables. The Editorial Board stresses that recognition alone is insufficient: frontline officers need better intelligence, training and protection, while cross-border sanctuaries and financing networks must be disrupted. (*The News*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **TTP Operations Summary: 3 August 2026**: On 3 August 2026, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for two operations across the Swat and Peshawar provinces. In Swat Province's Kabal District, a major assault near the Police Lines killed 14 police personnel and injured 25, followed by a violent police crackdown on protesters. Meanwhile, in Peshawar Province's Badaber District, a nighttime laser-gun attack targeted the Balizo checkpoint, resulting in unconfirmed casualties. The TTP concluded its statements by issuing a direct warning to law enforcement personnel regarding future security engagements. (*Telegram*, 4 August 2026)

Table of Operations

District	Area	Target / Location	Attack Type	Casualties & Details
Swat	Kabal	Police Lines, central square	Armed Assault	14 police killed, ~25 injured; subsequent police crackdown injured several civilians.
Peshawar	Badaber	Balizo checkpoint	Laser-Gun Attack	Unconfirmed casualties resulting from a nighttime engagement.

Economy

- ◆ **PSX Surges on Oil Price Dip** — Investor optimism returned to the **Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX)** on Monday as the **KSE-100 index jumped 2,105 points (1.20%) to close at 178,200**, driven by strong buying in **banks, cement, fertiliser, oil and gas, and power stocks**. Sentiment improved after **global crude prices fell over \$4 a barrel**, following US President Donald Trump’s decision to pursue diplomacy with Iran instead of military escalation, easing concerns over the **Strait of Hormuz**. July inflation also dropped to **9.2% from 11.1%**, further boosting confidence. Foreign investors turned net buyers after 23 months, with **Fauji Fertiliser, Meezan Bank, Lucky Cement, Pakistan Petroleum and Engro Holdings** leading gains. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Mari Energies Opens Gas Market to Private Sector** — Mari Energies has allocated up to **17.5 mmscfd of gas** from its **Spinwam discovery in Waziristan** to **Universal Gas Distribution Company (UGDC)**, marking a milestone under Pakistan’s new third-party gas allocation policy. The company, which holds a 55% stake in the block alongside OGDCL (35%) and Orient Petroleum (10%), received bids from 50 parties. The policy, backed by the **Special Investment**

Facilitation Council (SIFC), allows up to **35% of gas sales to private firms**, aimed at boosting cash flows, reducing circular debt (currently over Rs1.5 trillion), and encouraging exploration. Industry players welcomed the move, noting it will resolve curtailment issues and incentivise investment in new blocks. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Inflation Slows but Food Prices Bite** — Pakistan's annual inflation eased to **9.2% in July**, the lowest in four months, according to the **Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS)**. The decline was driven by cooling non-food prices, yet **food inflation surged to its highest in over two years**. Transport costs rose **15% year-on-year**, reflecting higher diesel and petrol prices. Key staples saw sharp hikes: **tomatoes (+175%), wheat (+78%), wheat flour (+68%), onions (+75%)**, while potatoes fell **35%** and sugar dropped **21%** due to sufficient stocks. The government has authorised imports of up to **one million tonnes of wheat** after provinces failed procurement targets, marking the first imports in three years. Despite easing headline inflation, Pakistan's rate remains among the highest in South Asia, equal only to Bangladesh. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **NAFSA to Modernise Agri-Trade** — Pakistan is set to replace its outdated **Department of Plant Protection** with the **National Agri-Trade and Food Safety Authority (NAFSA)**, a digital single-window system designed to streamline agricultural imports and exports. The authority will feature an **AI-powered chatbot**, helpline, and social media platforms to assist stakeholders. Federal Minister **Ahad Cheema** hailed NAFSA as a landmark reform, promising faster clearances, reduced red tape, and improved food safety oversight. Recruitment is being carried out on merit with market-competitive salaries, while inspectors will use **digital workflows and third-party audits** to ensure transparency. Training is underway at the **Customs Academy Karachi**, with NAFSA expected to enhance international confidence in Pakistan's regulatory system and support sustainable growth. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Shehbaz Pushes for Swift Privatisation Drive** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** directed authorities to complete all stages of the **state-owned enterprises' privatisation programme** within set timelines, stressing close coordination among ministries. Chairing a meeting with senior ministers including **Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Asif, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Cheema, and Awais Leghari**, he emphasised safeguarding the **agricultural mandate of Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL)** post-privatisation, ensuring continued support for small and medium farmers. Officials briefed that **27 enterprises are included in the programme**, with financial closings for **PIA and First Women Bank** already completed, and PIA's management transfer finalised on 29 June. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Govt Rebukes Foreign Media Over AJK Coverage** — The **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MoIB)** accused **Al Jazeera** of “*selective reporting*” on the **Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections**, alleging the broadcaster misrepresented the process by focusing on handpicked polling stations and scripted statements. The ministry labelled this as “**yellow journalism**” serving external agendas to delegitimise the polls. It reminded foreign journalists that assignments outside Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi require prior approval under **External Publicity Guidelines**. Separately, **AJK Information Secretary Muhammad Rashid Hanif** dismissed a **BBC report** on unrest and

casualties as “*biased and contrary to the facts*”, rejecting claims of dozens killed and patients treated for gunshot wounds. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan Exempt from US Visa Bond Rule** — The United States has made its **visa bond programme permanent**, requiring visitors from 50 countries to deposit up to **\$20,000** before obtaining B-1 or B-2 visas. However, **Pakistan is not on the list**, while Bangladesh and Nepal are included, and India is also excluded. The **State Department** said the pilot launched in 2025 reduced overstay significantly, prompting the rule’s expansion. The bond, refundable upon compliance, applies case-by-case at consular discretion. Diplomatic sources confirmed Pakistan’s exemption, reflecting confidence in its compliance record. (*Dawn*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Steps Up Mediation Amid US–Iran Tensions** — Pakistan has invited Iran’s parliament speaker **Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf** and foreign minister **Seyyed Abbas Araghchi** for urgent consultations, as Tehran described Islamabad as its **primary mediator with the US**. The move follows President **Donald Trump’s cancellation of imminent strikes against Iran**, after allies urged restraint. Iranian spokesman **Esmail Baqaei** insisted, “*The mediator in the discussions related to Iran and the US is Pakistan, and Qatar also helps where necessary.*” Meanwhile, Trump accused Iran’s leadership of being “**unbelievably duplicitous**”, warning of “**decapitation**” unless a deal or surrender occurs. (*Dawn*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **10th Pak–Iran Joint Trade Committee Convenes in Islamabad** — The Ministry of Commerce is hosting the 10th Pakistan–Iran Joint Trade Committee (JTC) meeting today, co-chaired by Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Iranian Minister Mohammad Atabak. A 22-member Iranian official delegation and a 16-member business delegation led by ICCIMA are attending, representing sectors such as food, agribusiness, logistics, energy and manufacturing. The JTC will review bilateral trade initiatives, advance the Pakistan–Iran FTA, strengthen customs and banking cooperation, and expand investment and connectivity, reflecting both nations’ commitment to deepening economic partnership. (*The Nation*, [4 August 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

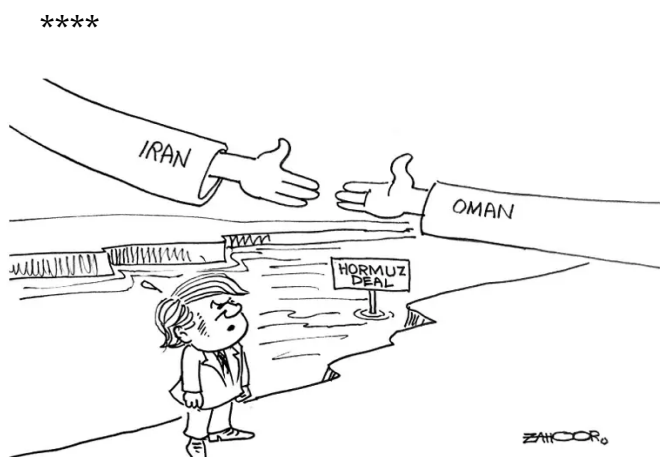
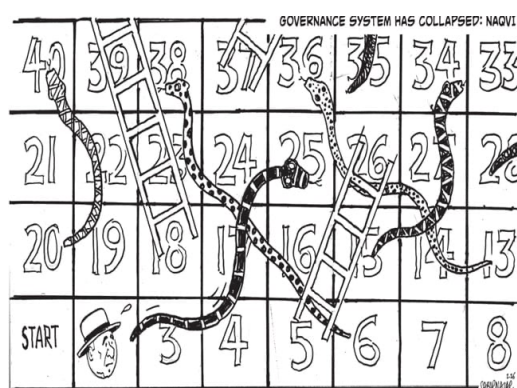
- ◆ **Bilawal Warns PML-N of ‘Countdown’** — PPP Chairman **Bilawal Bhutto Zardari** launched a sharp attack on coalition partner **PML-N**, alleging rigging in the **Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections**. In a video message on X, he described them as “**bullet elections, killer elections, bloody elections**”, claiming the PPP still secured nine seats despite manipulation. He vowed to deliver “stolen seats” in Mirpur and Muzaffarabad to PPP voters and warned the PML-N that “**tick tock tick tock, your countdown has begun.**” Meanwhile, provisional results show PML-N leading with 23 seats, consolidating its position to form the next AJK government. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Youth Anthem Inspires National Transformation** — Planning Minister **Ahsan Iqbal** launched the national song *Tu Shaheen Hai* under the **URAAN Pakistan vision**, urging young people to embrace **Allama Iqbal’s philosophy of Khudi (selfhood)**. He emphasised that “**a nation’s true development is measured not by its infrastructure but by the quality of its human resources**”, calling on youth to become agents of change through knowledge, innovation, character and hope.

The anthem was unveiled at a ceremony commemorating the birth anniversaries of **Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah** and **Allama Iqbal**. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Renewed Push for Hazara Province** — Federal Minister for Religious Affairs **Sardar Muhammad Yousaf**, also chairman of the **Hazara Province Movement**, reiterated the demand for a separate province, calling it the “**longstanding constitutional and democratic aspiration of the people of Hazara division**.” At a press conference, he urged the government to begin the parliamentary process, noting that the **K-P Assembly has passed resolutions three times** in favour of Hazara province. Senator **Talha Mahmood** stressed that new provinces are vital for stability, while **Murtaza Javed Abbasi** highlighted a pending bill in the National Assembly. MNA **Babar Nawaz Khan** argued Hazara’s strong resource base makes it economically viable. The call follows Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi**’s recent remarks that Pakistan’s governance system is collapsing and new provinces are needed. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Tarar Dismisses PPP’s Rigging Allegations in AJK Polls** — Information Minister **Attaullah Tarar** rejected claims of electoral rigging in the **Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections**, urging the PPP to show political maturity and accept the results. He criticised Sindh Information Minister **Sharjeel Memon** for “baseless accusations,” stressing that allegations must be backed by “**irrefutable evidence**.” Tarar said the people of AJK voted for development-focused policies, while **Rana Sanaullah**, Adviser to the Prime Minister, confirmed that **PML-N had secured a simple majority** in the 45-member assembly, winning 13 of 20 seats contested so far. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan’s Reform Era and Hazara Demand** — Federal Minister for Planning **Ahsan Iqbal** rejected collapse narratives, declaring “**This is not the age of systemic failure; it is the age of national reform**.” He highlighted the **URAAN Pakistan framework** to build a \$1 trillion economy and urged youth to lead transformation: “**Our youth are not cockroaches; they are Iqbal’s Shaheens**.” Meanwhile, Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi** called the governance system “collapsed,” sparking debate. Adviser **Rana Sanaullah** dismissed his remarks as unclear, while **Sardar Muhammad Yousaf** and Hazara leaders strongly renewed calls for a Hazara province. (*The News*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Orders Ministry Performance Scrutiny After Naqvi’s Remarks** — In response to Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi**’s claim that Pakistan’s governance system had “collapsed”, Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** has directed a **comprehensive review of all federal ministries and divisions**. The Prime Minister’s Office instructed ministries to submit detailed reports covering achievements, reforms, and service delivery since February 2024, with **documentary evidence required for every claim**. The evaluation spans 41 ministries, including economic, security, and social sectors, and will assess **CPEC projects, ADP implementation, and fund utilisation**. Findings may lead to a cabinet reshuffle and governance reforms. (*The News*, [4 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Chinese Cultural Exchange Hub Opens in Islamabad** — A new **reading and cultural exchange hub** dedicated to Chinese-language learning has been inaugurated in the capital, marking a milestone in **Pakistan–China educational cooperation**. The **Shouyang Book House, National Reading Station** was launched during the **32nd Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF)**, alongside

an agreement for an “Overseas Editorial Department for China-Themed Books” with the UAE. The Islamabad station, a collaboration between **Shaanxi Normal University General Publishing House** and **CPECI**, aims to serve Pakistani citizens, overseas Chinese, educators, students, and Mandarin learners as an inclusive cultural space. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Decentralisation as Pakistan’s Path Forward** — A constitutional law expert argues that Pakistan must embrace **new provinces and empowered local governments** to strengthen governance. Successful federations adapt administrative structures to demographic and economic realities, but Pakistan has moved in the opposite direction, with **centralised provinces and weak local governments**. The writer stresses that provinces should be created on **objective criteria — population, geography, economic viability, infrastructure and security — not ethnic or political grounds**. A proposed **National Commission on Administrative Reforms and Decentralisation** could review structures after each census, depoliticising reforms. Crucially, **local governments must be fiscally and administratively empowered**, with constitutionally protected transfers to deliver education, healthcare, sanitation and community development. Without such reforms, Pakistan risks stagnation under outdated frameworks. (*The Express Tribune*, [4 August 2026](#))



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