

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

08 September 2026

Security

- ◆ **Gwadar and Sohar ports to be linked for regional trade boost** — Pakistan and Oman have agreed in principle to establish **Gwadar Port and Sohar Port as sister ports**, aiming to enhance **direct maritime connectivity, investment opportunities and technical cooperation**. The initiative was discussed between **Gwadar Port Authority Chairman Noor Ul Haq Baloch** and **Oman's Consul General Sami Abdullah Salim Al Khanjari**, with both sides highlighting benefits for trade, shipping and logistics. The arrangement is expected to link the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** with Gulf and Central Asian markets, reduce transit times and strengthen cargo flows. Plans also include **direct air connectivity via Salam Air**, Omani investments in the **Gwadar Free Zone**, and joint ventures in fisheries, warehousing and port management. (*Dawn*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Honours Pakistan Navy on Defence Day** — On **Pakistan Navy Day**, Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** paid glowing tributes to the martyrs, veterans and serving personnel for their courage and devotion in defending the motherland. He recalled the legendary **Operation SOMNATH of 1965**, when the Pakistan Navy struck Dwarka with precision, and the presence of submarine '**GHAZI**' paralysed enemy movements, etching a golden chapter in naval history. The PM highlighted the Navy's role in **securing sea lines of communication**, citing its resolve during recent tensions in the **Strait of Hormuz**. He praised initiatives like **Exercise AMAN** and noted the induction of **MILGEM corvettes, HANGOR submarines and indigenous missiles**, affirming full confidence in the Navy's professionalism. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Drone Strike Kills Two in Kurram** — Two members of the **Ali Sherzai tribe** were killed in a **drone strike** in the **Tindu Ado area of central Kurram** on Monday, police confirmed. The victims, critically injured in the attack, were shifted to **Sadda Hospital** but later succumbed to their injuries. Local sources report that incidents of terrorism, including drone attacks, have increased in the region. Separately, a **station house officer (SHO)** abducted from the **Trali area** four days ago remains missing, with police continuing investigations into both the drone strike and the abduction. (*The News*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **PAF Observes Martyrs' Day Across Bases** — The **Pakistan Air Force (PAF)** observed **7th September as Martyrs' Day** nationwide to honour the supreme sacrifices of its personnel. The day began with **special Du'aa and Quran Khawani** for martyrs of the 1965 and 1971 wars, **Marka-e-Haq**, and all PAF personnel who laid down their lives in service. At Air Headquarters Islamabad, **Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu** paid rich tribute, stating that "**our Shuhada are enduring symbols of courage, sacrifice and national resolve.**" He laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs' Monument. In Karachi, a ceremony at the mausoleum of **Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider**, honoured his legendary sacrifice. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan Air Force: Redefining the Battlespace** — Columnist Izmi Herlani portrays the **Pakistan Air Force (PAF)** as a force forged in adversity since 1947, evolving into a **multi-domain combat organism** under **Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu**. No longer confined to altitude and firepower, PAF integrates **cyber operations, electronic warfare, drones, AI, space and precision weapons** into a seamless kill chain. Herlani highlights **Operation Zarb-e-Karrar (May 2025)** as proof that integration and intelligence outweigh sheer numbers, creating **strategic paralysis** for adversaries. Initiatives like the **National Aerospace Science and Technology Parks** embody self-reliance, innovation and deterrence. Herlani concludes that PAF's greatest weapon is not its machines but the **purpose with which it fights**. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **ANP blames state policies for terrorism** — At a press conference, **Awami National Party (ANP)** central president **Senator Aimal Wali Khan** declared that terrorism is “**not the product of any particular province but a consequence of state policies.**” He criticised what he termed a **double standard in dealing with militancy**, noting that while Punjab enjoys safety, **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have paid the heaviest price for five decades**. He recalled warnings by **Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Khan Abdul Wali Khan** that the Afghan conflict would spill into Pakistan, but said they were branded traitors. Aimal Wali demanded an independent **truth and reconciliation commission** to investigate Pakistan's history since 1947 and hold accountable those who violated the Constitution for vested interests. (*Dawn*, [8 September 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **Japan Grants \$16.4m for Flood Protection in Sindh** — Pakistan and Japan have signed agreements for the “**Project for Flood Protection and Dike Improvement on Indus River in Sindh Province**”, aimed at strengthening flood infrastructure and enhancing resilience of vulnerable communities. The grant of **JPY 2.58 billion (approx. \$16.4m)** will focus on improving the **Old Abad Bund in Larkana** along the Indus River. The agreements were signed by **Muhammad Humair Karim Kidwai** (Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs) and **Akamatsu Shuichi** (Ambassador of Japan), with **Sabina Qureshi** and **Sugawara Takayuki** (JICA) finalising the grant. Pakistan expressed gratitude for Japan's longstanding development partnership, while JICA reaffirmed its commitment to supporting flood-prone areas in Sindh. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Urged to Align with China's New Priorities** — A policy paper launched by **EMPAK Strategies' China Desk** stresses that Pakistan must strengthen **institutional capacity** to benefit from China's evolving economic focus. China's **15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030)** emphasizes **technology, innovation and productivity**, moving beyond earlier infrastructure-driven cooperation. The report highlights China's concept of “**new quality productive forces**”, noting its massive investment in **R&D (3.93 trillion yuan in 2025)** and leadership in **industrial robotics**. Despite Pakistan's exports to China rising 10% to **\$2.67 billion**, imports surged to **\$22.2 billion**, widening the trade deficit to **\$19.53 billion**. Experts, including **Gulmina Bilal**, urged Pakistan to focus on China's eight strategic sectors and six future industries, preparing a workforce with globally competitive skills. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **ECC clears donkey meat exports from Gwadar** — The **Economic Coordination Committee (ECC)** has approved the export of **donkey meat and hides** from the **Gwadar Free Zone** to China,

under safeguards proposed by the **Ministry of National Food Security and Research**. Dedicated farmhouses and slaughter facilities will be established to meet demand, potentially earning Pakistan millions. Chaired by **Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb**, the ECC also sanctioned **Rs6.6 billion for 30 bulletproof vehicles** ahead of the **SCO Summit 2027**, approved **Rs5 billion seed money for the Daanish Schools Authority Fund**, and extended gas supply to **FatimaFert and Agritech** until September 30, 2026. (*The News*, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Sugar industry warns of crisis as exports delayed** — The **Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA)** has criticised the government for delaying approval to export **surplus sugar stocks**, despite acknowledging their presence in meetings. The spokesperson warned that mills are burdened with **additional costs, including bank mark-ups**, while warehouses overflow with one million metric tons of unsold sugar. With the new crushing season only two months away, mills face **acute cash shortages** for repairs, farmer payments and salaries. Production costs have risen sharply, yet prices remain below cost. The PSMA urged immediate export approval, noting that favourable international markets could generate **\$700–800 million in foreign exchange**. (*The News*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan must tighten compliance for GSP+ renewal** — With the EU's **GSP-Plus renewal due**, Pakistan faces stricter trade regulation benchmarks. The Editorial warns that Islamabad must ensure compliance with the bloc's **27 international conventions on human rights, environment and governance**, stressing that **“concessions should not be taken for granted”** (EU Ambassador Raimundas Karoblis). Pakistan exports goods worth over **\$9 billion to the EU**, nearly 30% of its total exports, making reforms indispensable. While progress has been noted in labour, civil rights and hygiene standards, the editorial advises establishing a **high-powered monitoring commission** to guarantee stringent application of EU standards. (*The Express Tribune*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Debt repayment: progress or illusion of stability** — Pakistan's early retirement of **Rs1.2 trillion domestic debt owed to the SBP** marks the largest single repayment to date, bringing cumulative early retirements since October 2024 to **Rs5.92 trillion**. As **Hassan Naqvi** notes, this is encouraging but not a victory: while repayments reduce refinancing risks and strengthen the SBP's balance sheet, overall debt has still climbed to **Rs83.6 trillion** by June 2026. The editorial insight is clear: **“Pakistan cannot repay its way out of a structural fiscal problem.”** Sustainable relief requires expanding the tax base, tackling circular debt, and fostering growth through exports, investment and productivity. (*The Express Tribune*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **ECC approves funds but demands scrutiny** — The **Economic Coordination Committee (ECC)**, chaired by **Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb**, sanctioned a **Rs6.6 billion supplementary grant for 30 bulletproof vehicles** to be used during the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2027**. The Cabinet Division had sought Rs12.6bn for over 50 vehicles, but the ECC insisted on a detailed need analysis before considering further requests. It also approved the **export of donkey meat and hides from Gwadar Free Zone**, continuation of **gas supply to Fatima Fertiliser and Agritech until September 30, 2026**, and a **Rs5bn grant for the Daanish Schools Authority Fund**. Proposals on tobacco pricing were deferred for stronger justification. (*Dawn*, [8 September 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Pakistan Rejects Indian Sovereignty Claims on Kashmir** — Pakistan has categorically dismissed India's assertions regarding Jammu and Kashmir, calling them **“baseless and contrary to internationally recognised facts.”** According to **Foreign Office spokesperson Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan**, *“India's unilateral actions and continued illegal occupation cannot alter the internationally recognised disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir.”* He emphasised that the dispute remains one of the oldest unresolved issues on the **UN Security Council agenda**, with its final disposition to be decided through a **free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices**. Khan added that UN maps depicting Kashmir as disputed remain the only valid representation, urging the international community to hold India accountable for human rights violations in IIOJK. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Parliamentary panel alarmed over Gulf expulsions** — A **National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs** chaired by **PPP's Hina Rabbani Khar** raised concern over reports of Pakistani workers being expelled from **Bahrain and other Middle Eastern countries**. Khar described the matter as **“extremely concerning”**, noting allegations that expulsions may be linked to **sectarian and religious affiliations**. She criticised the **incomplete briefing** provided to the panel and objected to the **foreign secretary's absence**, stressing that Parliament must be taken seriously. Foreign Ministry officials termed the issue highly sensitive, while ambassadors of relevant countries briefed the committee in camera. (*The Express Tribune*, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Interpol Pakistan intensifies hunt for fugitives** — Pakistan's **National Central Bureau (NCB)-Interpol** has issued **286 red notices in the past seven months** to track fugitives wanted for **murder, fraud, terrorism and human trafficking**, according to **FIA Director General Dr Usman Anwar**, who heads NCB-Interpol Pakistan. Of these, **225 notices targeted suspects in murder cases**, while others covered fraud, trafficking, terrorism and cybercrime. **Fifty-three fugitives were arrested abroad and extradited to Pakistan**. In total, **290 notices** were issued, including two blue and two yellow notices. NCBs act as focal points for Interpol activities, linking national law enforcement with global agencies through the **I-24/7 communications network**. (*The Express Tribune*, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Water treaties and coercion in a changing world** — In her analysis, **Dr Maria Hamid** highlights the **Court of Arbitration's ruling on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)**, which reaffirmed that the Treaty remains binding and rejected India's attempt to place it in abeyance. The Court also imposed interim restrictions on construction at the Ratle Hydroelectric Plant. Hamid stresses that **“security accusations cannot unilaterally determine the life of a water treaty”**, warning that linking treaty obligations to unrelated disputes like terrorism undermines international law. As global water stress rises, upstream states gain leverage through infrastructure and control of flows. The ruling underscores that sovereignty cannot erase obligations voluntarily undertaken, and that legal commitments must prevail over coercive tactics. (*Dawn*, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Arch bridge milestone on alternative KKH** — The first **arch bridge on the relocated Karakoram Highway (KKH)** has been completed by the Chinese company executing the **Dasu hydropower project**, marking a major milestone as the existing highway will be submerged in the reservoir. The **Dogah Concrete Arch Bridge**, built over Dogah Nullah in Upper Kohistan, is **78 metres long and 11.3 metres wide**, with a 10-metre carriageway and shoulders. According to **Wapda**, several arch

bridges and tunnels are being constructed along the 52km alternative stretch to ensure **safe and uninterrupted connectivity even during floods**. The relocated KKH, developed under **CPEC standards**, will secure traffic flow once the Dasu reservoir is operational. (*Dawn*, [8 September 2026](#))

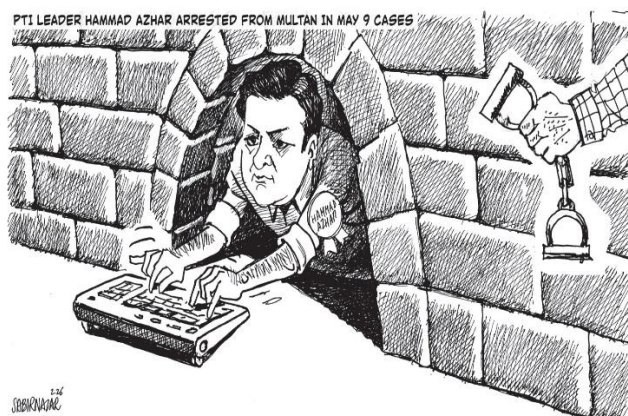
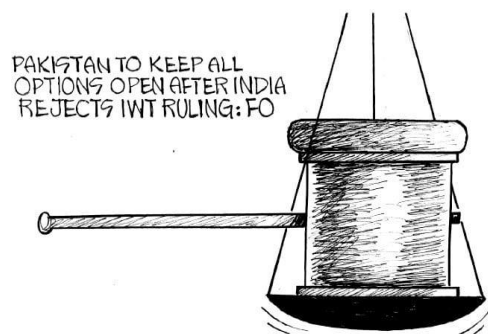
Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **SC Upholds State Support for Hindu Minors** — The **Supreme Court of Pakistan**, led by **Chief Justice Yahya Afridi** with **Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan** and **Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb**, upheld state support for two minor Hindu children in a family maintenance case. The Court dismissed Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal's appeal against the **Sindh High Court's 2022 order**, which directed monthly allowances of Rs10,000 per child with annual increments. In his 13-page judgment, **CJP Afridi** stressed that **"minority status is not merely another vulnerability; it shapes the manner in which every other vulnerability is experienced."** The Court highlighted Articles 35, 36 and 38 of the Constitution, affirming protection of family, minorities and social welfare. (*The News*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **ATC Grants Bail to 96 in AJK Protest Case** — An **Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC)** in Islamabad has granted bail to **96 individuals**, including **former Senator Mushtaq Ahmed**, in connection with a protest over **Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)** held in Sector F-10 of the capital. ATC Judge **Abual Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain** heard the post-arrest bail applications, with **Prosecutor Raja Naveed Hussain Kiani** representing the state and advocates **Sardar Bushik, Zahid Bashir Dar, Amina Ali** and others appearing for the suspects. The court approved bail against bonds of **Rs5,000 each**, ordering their release. The case had been registered by **Shalimar Police Station** under terrorism provisions. (*The News*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Restructuring Debate Not Targeting Provinces, Says Official** — A senior government official has clarified that the ongoing debate over creating new provinces or administrative units is **"not aimed at targeting any particular province or region"**, but rather seeks to improve governance and responsiveness. Speaking to *The News* anonymously, the official stressed that no final decision has been made on whether Pakistan requires new provinces, smaller units, or greater devolution to district and local levels. The official emphasised that the central consideration is whether restructuring would deliver **tangible benefits to ordinary citizens**. Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi** recently suggested that the matter should be taken to the people, sparking wider political discussion. The official added that the **PMLN leadership would support whatever course is ultimately in the national interest**. (*The News*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Punjab Government Pushes Inter-Muslim Unity Drive** — Acting on the vision of **Chief Minister Punjab**, the provincial government has accelerated efforts to promote **inter-Muslim and interfaith harmony**. A delegation led by **Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi**, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister and Chairman Ulema Council Pakistan, met **Provincial Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique** and senior officials at the Home Department. Rafique stressed that scholars play a vital role in establishing peace, urging all schools of thought to unite for Pakistan's security. **Dr Ahmed Javed Qazi**, Secretary Home, emphasised Islam's message of peace and tolerance, calling for collective responsibility in guiding youth. Ashrafi praised the government's initiatives, affirming ulema's partnership in strengthening unity. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Punjab to Introduce Global Citizenship Subject** — The Punjab government has decided to add a **100-mark subject on Global Citizenship** to the school curriculum from the next academic year, with support from **UNICEF**. Targeted at students from **grades 4 to 8**, the subject will raise awareness about **international citizenship, rights and duties at the global level**, and encourage responsible civic behaviour. The **Punjab Examination Commission (PEC)** is consulting UNICEF on curriculum design, while UNICEF is expected to fund printing and materials. Educationists believe the subject will broaden students' understanding of the world and help them recognise their responsibilities at the international level. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Federal Govt to Federalise Seven Roads in GB** — The **federal government** has decided to take over **seven key road links spanning 464 km** across **Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)** under Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif's tourism initiative**. These routes, including **Astore–Chilim Chowki (54 km)**, **Deosai–Skardu (31 km)**, **Skardu–Khaplu (100 km)**, **Skardu–Shigar (17 km)**, **KKH–Naltar to Satrangi Lake (36 km)**, **Thalichi–Astore–Rattu–Shounter (121 km)**, and **Gorikot–Shagarthang–Skardu (105 km)**, will be constructed, widened, rehabilitated and maintained by federal authorities. The move, approved by the **GB Cabinet** and shared with the **National Highway Authority (NHA)**, aims to strengthen connectivity to major tourist destinations, improve access for remote communities, and boost the region's tourism potential. (*The Nation*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Restructuring without consensus risks confrontation** — The debate over new provinces and administrative units has intensified, with **President Asif Ali Zardari** returning amid political uncertainty. It began with **Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi** and gained momentum when **Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal** proposed 12–15 provinces. Yet, as the **Editorial** cautions, “**administrative restructuring on this scale cannot be treated as political messaging or a decision announced after the fact.**” Sindh has strongly opposed division, with PPP leaders and **PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan** warning that dividing Sindh without consent would weaken the federation. The editorial insists that “**we need more democracy, not less**”, urging empowered local governments under Article 140-A before redrawing boundaries. (*The News*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Ex-Khasadars escalate protest with FIR boycott** — The **All-Fata Khasadar and Levies Force Core Committee** has announced a ban on **FIR registration across tribal districts**, intensifying its sit-in at **Bab-e-Khyber** over unresolved service issues. Committee chairman **Syed Jalal Wazir** told *The Express Tribune* that the boycott was taken “in accordance with tribal traditions,” citing fines imposed on police stations registering FIRs. Protesters demand full implementation of the **22-point service agreement**, including promotions, pensions, training, and recognition of pre-merger service. They also seek jobs for children of martyred personnel and reinstatement of dismissed staff. The committee insists promises made nearly seven years ago remain unfulfilled. (*The Express Tribune*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **AJK minister pledges afforestation drive** — During his maiden visit to the **Directorate of Forest Regeneration in Mirpur, Col (retd) Waqar Ahmed Noor**, Minister for Forests, Wildlife and Fisheries, announced that the **AJK government will prioritise afforestation, restoration of natural forests and effective management of resources** to combat climate change and protect biodiversity. He planted a sapling and reviewed conservation projects under the **Upscaling Green Pakistan Programme**, including measures against forest fires, illegal logging, and efforts to improve sapling survival. Noor described forests as “**one of AJK's most valuable natural assets**”, stressing

their role in ecological balance and warning that negligence in conservation would not be tolerated. (*The Express Tribune*, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **ECP to digitise operations by December** — The **Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)** will transition to a fully digital office system by year-end, according to **Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja**. Presiding over a meeting, Raja announced the establishment of an **Artificial Intelligence wing** to provide technical support across departments. He was briefed on the commission's **Digital Office (E-Office)**, AI integration, and the launch of a new website. Raja emphasised that the goal is to “**bring innovation to our capacity and ensure smooth handling of day-to-day official matters.**” The initiative aims to modernise workflows and strengthen institutional efficiency. (*Dawn*, [8 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Provinces or empowered local governments?** — The debate over **new provinces and administrative reform** has escalated since the interior minister's July admission that the present system had “collapsed.” The **Editorial Board** notes that the **Sindh Assembly's resolution rejecting new provinces** is crucial, as under **Article 239(4)** boundaries cannot be altered without a two-thirds majority in the provincial assembly. The editorial warns that restructuring must explain the **costs of new assemblies and secretariats** when citizens already face economic hardship. It stresses that “**better service delivery at the grassroots**” is already provided for in **Article 140A**, urging revival of local governments instead. Political parties, long guilty of hollowing out LG systems, must recommit to empowering them. (*Dawn*, [8 September 2026](#))



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