

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

09 September 2026

Security

- ◆ **Pakistan condemns Houthi strikes, reaffirms support for Saudi Arabia** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** strongly denounced the **Houthi attacks on civilian and energy facilities in Saudi Arabia**, which injured over 70 people, declaring that Pakistan stands in “**unwavering solidarity with King Salman, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the brotherly people of Saudi Arabia.**” He emphasised that such “**dastardly attacks threaten innocent lives as well as regional peace and security.**” The **Foreign Office** echoed this stance, calling the strikes a “**flagrant violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity**” and affirming Saudi Arabia’s right to defend itself. **Türkiye also condemned the attacks**, urging Houthis to halt hostilities, while the UN and EU called for de-escalation. (*The News*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Seminar highlights defence, unity and national pride** — At a seminar organised by the **Mir Khalil-ur-Rehman Memorial Society** and **Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Society**, speakers stressed that “**the defence of homeland is not merely about protecting its borders; it is also closely linked to national unity and respect for state institutions.**” Chaired by **Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan**, Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, the event commemorated Defence Day and the sacrifices of martyrs. Participants, including **Sarah Ahmed, Hina Pervaiz Butt, Athar Ismail, Dr Masood Rabbani, Falahat Imran, Brig (retd) Shafi Ghazi** and others emphasised that Pakistan’s resilience, constitutional principles and citizen responsibility underpin national security. “**We will not allow any harm to come to Pakistan’s security, sovereignty and honour,**” Brig (retd) Shafi Ghazi affirmed. (*The News*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan warns Houthis as Makkah Defence Pact looms** — Defence Minister **Khawaja Asif** has cautioned that the **Makkah Defence Alliance** — a trilateral pact between **Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye** — will be activated if aggression against any member state occurs. His remarks followed **Houthi strikes on southern Saudi Arabia**, which injured at least 73 civilians and targeted economic infrastructure. Asif stressed: “**There should be no ambiguity; this is a joint defence agreement... we will honour them in case there is a need.**” He clarified the pact is defensive, not aggressive, but warned Houthis against exporting Yemen’s conflict. Analysts say the alliance formalises decades of cooperation, aiming to strengthen **collective deterrence and regional stability**. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Oil prices surge amid Houthi escalation** — The editorial warns that **Houthi brinkmanship is driving the region toward a major conflict**, with coordinated strikes on Saudi energy installations rattling global markets. Despite Riyadh branding the attacks a dangerous escalation, **Saudi FM Prince Faisal bin Farhan** told **Sergey Lavrov** that “*the road to diplomacy is not closed*”, while Lavrov stressed there is “*no military solution.*” Mediation efforts by **Qatar, Pakistan and other Gulf states** have sought to revive talks, yet the ground situation remains volatile as **oil prices hit new highs** —

Brent crude at \$98 and US futures at \$93.65. The editorial concludes that implementing the **Islamabad MoU** offers the best chance for peace. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan unveils Chinese-style air defence system** — Pakistan's military has showcased an air defence platform resembling China's **HQ-17A short-range surface-to-air missile system**. The system, mounted on a six-wheeled vehicle with a large radar array, appeared in a promotional video released by the military's official X account. **Tianran Xu, senior analyst at Open Nuclear Network**, noted its features closely match the HQ-17A, originally developed from Russia's Tor system. Chinese media later confirmed Pakistan as the **third foreign buyer of the HQ-17AE export variant**. Analysts suggest the system could defend against cruise missiles and low-altitude aircraft, though its effectiveness against evolving drone threats remains untested. (*Daily Times*, [9 September 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **PM highlights Rs800bn recovery** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** told leading industrialists and entrepreneurs that **Rs800 billion had been recovered in one year through enforcement actions alone, without imposing new taxes**. He said cases pending for a decade were pursued, marking unprecedented improvement in enforcement. Stressing that **“any economic growth achieved must be export-led,”** he noted special tax relief for exporters and praised structural reforms achieved through teamwork with the business community. Business leaders including **Arif Habib, Amir Ibrahim, Umar Saeed and Javaid Balwani** welcomed regular consultations, highlighting AI infrastructure, IT exports and FBR facilitation. Separately, Shehbaz handed over **50 electric vehicles to Islamabad Police** to promote modern, green policing. (*The Nation*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **SIFC engages Japan's Sumitomo for mining investment** — The **Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC)** has initiated collaboration with **Sumitomo Corporation of Japan** to explore opportunities in Pakistan's **mining and minerals sector**, including projects with significant investment potential. The move reflects SIFC's strategy to connect global investors with Pakistan's strategic economic sectors through a coordinated facilitation mechanism. With emphasis on **policy continuity, dedicated security arrangements and investor-friendly frameworks**, SIFC aims to unlock Pakistan's resource potential and attract international participation. The engagement underscores rising global interest in Pakistan's mining landscape and SIFC's role in building investor confidence. (*The Nation*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **PAEC to link Pakistani businesses with Africa's markets** — The **Pakistan-Africa Economic Council (PAEC)** will be formally launched this Friday as Pakistan's first **SECP-registered Africa entrepreneurship platform**, designed to expand trade, investment and joint ventures with Africa's fast-growing economies. With Africa's population at **1.59 billion**, PAEC aims to connect Pakistani capital and production capacity with viable projects. Its initial focus will be **East Africa — Rwanda, Ethiopia, Uganda and Djibouti — followed by Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan**. Two business opportunity trips are scheduled for late 2026 to explore partnerships. The Council's vision is to serve as a **bridge between Pakistan and Africa**, facilitating high-impact projects, industrial growth and regional connectivity. (*The Nation*, [9 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **K-P surpasses revenue targets with Rs150.84b collections** — Adviser to the Chief Minister on Finance, **Muzzammil Aslam**, announced that **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's own-source revenue for FY 2025-26 reached Rs150.84 billion**, exceeding the revised target of Rs139.77 billion by about **108 per cent**. Against the original budget target of Rs129 billion, collections stood at 107.9 per cent. Tax revenue amounted to **Rs87.74 billion**, while non-tax revenue reached **Rs63.10 billion**, achieving **120.5 per cent of the revised target**. The figures highlight strong fiscal performance, with non-tax revenue playing a particularly significant role in surpassing expectations. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **AJK PM calls for wider tax net** — Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister **Iftikhar Gilani** has directed the Inland Revenue Department to broaden the tax base and strengthen collection mechanisms, stressing that **“negligence in achieving the prescribed revenue targets will not be tolerated.”** Chairing a meeting, he urged officials to create a **simpler, transparent and taxpayer-friendly regime** while ensuring effective monitoring and administrative reforms. Gilani emphasised that fiscal stability requires sustained improvement in revenue mobilisation, calling for modern systems, timely prosecution of pending cases, and adequate institutional capacity. He insisted taxpayers must be facilitated to encourage compliance and strengthen government resources. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Govt approves further sugar exports despite IMF concerns** — The government has allowed the export of **200,000 metric tonnes of sugar**, the second such decision in three weeks, even though last year's exports pushed domestic prices to **Rs220 per kg**. Deputy PM **Ishaq Dar** chaired the steering committee, which claimed sufficient stocks exist, with **600,000 tonnes surplus** expected after meeting local needs. Federal Minister **Rana Tanveer Hussain** confirmed exports subject to ECC approval, while pledging mechanisms to prevent price hikes. However, past experience shows exports often trigger sharp increases. The **IMF's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment** has criticised Pakistan's sugar sector as a nexus of **economic elites and regulators**, citing collusion, hoarding and manipulation. Despite IMF conditions for liberalisation, politically connected mill owners continue to benefit from favourable policies. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **PM vows deeper Pakistan–Italy cooperation** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** assured Pakistan's full support for strengthening ties with Italy across **agriculture, IT, artificial intelligence, industry, textiles and people-to-people contacts** during a meeting with newly appointed Italian Ambassador **Ugo Ciarlatani**. Welcoming the envoy, Shehbaz recalled his meetings with **Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni**, congratulating her on becoming Italy's longest-serving leader. He emphasised Pakistan and Italy's “excellent bilateral relations” and pledged continued cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Ambassador Ciarlatani thanked the prime minister and committed to consolidating relations during his tenure. Senior officials including **Deputy PM Ishaq Dar** and **Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch** attended. (*The Nation*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Three senior diplomats shortlisted for Foreign Secretary post** — The government has finalised a panel of three ambassadors for the appointment of Pakistan's next **Foreign Secretary**, with **Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad**, Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN in New York,

emerging as the leading contender. The other names include **Shafqat Ali Khan**, ambassador to the UAE, and **Rahim Hayat Qureshi**, ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU. A summary will be sent to **Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif**, with a decision expected this week. Current Foreign Secretary **Amna Baloch** retires on September 18, after which **Nabil Munir** may hold acting charge until the new appointment. (*The Nation*, [9 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **India's cartographic claims and Kashmir's reality** — In its latest editorial, *The News* argues that India's objection to UN-supported maps showing **Jammu and Kashmir as disputed territory** reflects "**New Delhi's growing audacity when it comes to international law.**" Pakistan has rejected India's assertions, stressing that unilateral actions and illegal occupation cannot alter the region's recognised status. The piece highlights India's attempt to legitimise its control by insisting the world adopt its "official map," but notes: "**An occupation does not become legitimate because the occupying power draws a different line on a map.**" The editorial also cites the case of **Yasin Malik**, detained journalists, and India's broader record of repression, concluding that cartography cannot erase Kashmir's disputed reality. (*The News*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Punjab land records now accessible in UAE** — Overseas Pakistanis in the UAE can now obtain **Punjab land and property records** without travelling back home. The Embassy of Pakistan in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate General in Dubai have launched **Punjab Land Record Services** in collaboration with the **Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA)**. The missions have begun issuing *Fard* (official land ownership record), making property matters simpler and more transparent for the diaspora. Officials said the initiative is part of broader efforts to improve **digital facilitation for overseas Pakistanis**, reduce logistical hurdles, and strengthen access to government services. Citizens can contact the missions' **24/7 helplines** or visit during office hours to use the facility. (*Pakistan Observer*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Residents demand reopening of Gursal border** — A jirga in **Khwezai Baizai tehsil, Mohmand district**, has urged the government to reopen the **Gursal border crossing with Afghanistan** and address pressing local issues. Elders including **Bakht Buland Khan, Niaz Wali and Malik Fazal Manan** highlighted challenges such as **damaged roads, inadequate healthcare and education facilities, unemployment and deteriorating public buildings**. They noted that a flood-damaged bridge near **Kozo Kas**, washed away nearly two years ago, has yet to be rebuilt, disrupting daily commuting and access to schools, hospitals and markets. The jirga stressed that reopening the border would boost trade and create jobs for youth, while improved infrastructure and services are essential for socioeconomic development. (*Dawn*, [9 September 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Bilawal urges parliamentary debate on 'collapsed system'** — Speaking in London, **PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari** challenged **Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi** to take his claim of a "failed system" to the **National Assembly**, insisting that "**the fate of the country cannot be decided by a handful of businessmen.**" Bilawal criticised Naqvi's absence from parliament and said he was ready to debate governance failures openly. He warned against presenting **new provinces as a cure-all**, stressing that poverty, unemployment and inflation cannot be solved by redrawing boundaries. Bilawal also rejected rumours of PPP distancing from the federal

government, confirmed ongoing talks with PML, and criticised PTI's parliamentary boycott as damaging to institutions. (*The News*, [9 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi meet in Adiala jail** — Former prime minister **Imran Khan** and his wife **Bushra Bibi** held a **35-minute meeting inside Rawalpindi's Adiala jail**, where they inquired about each other's well-being and discussed ongoing legal cases. The meeting took place in the Conference Room of the Central Jail, after which both were escorted back to their cells. **No family member, political leader or lawyer was permitted to meet them**, according to prison sources. The encounter underscores the restrictions surrounding Khan's incarceration and the limited access granted to him and his spouse. (*The News*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **SC affirms financial aid for Hindu minors** — The **Supreme Court of Pakistan**, led by Chief Justice **Yahya Afridi**, upheld a **Sindh High Court directive requiring Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) to provide financial assistance to two Hindu girls, Jessica and Sanika**. In a 13-page judgment, the Court ruled that welfare cases should be referred to PBM, which can assess applicants under its policies. The apex court confirmed that the girls be registered as regular beneficiaries, receiving **Rs 10,000 monthly stipends until marriage, with a 10% annual increase**. Their mother, Shrimati Rita, had sought maintenance after her husband's death, but neither family members were financially capable. The Court stressed that PBM's mandate allows such support. (*The Nation*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Blind spots in Pakistan's data governance** — In her column, **Roshaan E Ali** warns that with AI, **"incomplete national datasets will translate into socio-economic inequalities faster than we think."** He critiques the **National Data Governance Policy 2026** and **National AI Policy 2025** for lacking measurable benchmarks to ensure datasets are representative. Citing a **World Bank 2025 assessment** of the **National Socio-Economic Registry**, which excluded 2.2 million poor households, he argues omissions risk embedding inequality into AI systems. Ali stresses that without clear standards of **coverage, completeness, accuracy, timeliness and representativeness**, Pakistan risks producing "excellent systems" but **"incomplete governance."** (*The Nation*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan must prioritise climate resilience over provincial restructuring** — In his column, **Farhan Bokhari** argues that Nepal's devastating August floods, triggered by glacial cracks and super floods, are a stark reminder of the urgency of climate change. He warns Pakistan against focusing on creating new provinces, which risks weakening national identity and policymaking, while **"climate-related disasters must become the single most vital issue for the country's future."** Bokhari stresses that resources should be diverted from "fancy roads" to **dams, water storage, supply channels and agriculture**, as food insecurity and shrinking forests deepen Pakistan's crisis. He concludes that carving out more provinces can wait, but delaying urgent climate and food security reforms will worsen vulnerabilities. (*Dawn*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Sindh's history and today's divisions** — In his column, **Dr Miftah Ismail** reviews Sindh's layered past to contextualise current debates on provinces and administrative divisions. He recalls how **Mughal Emperor Akbar** brought Sindh under imperial control, later recognising the **Kalhoros in 1701**, who unified Sindh under **Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhoro**. The **Talpurs** then rose in 1783, dividing Sindh into three branches, until the **British conquest (1839–1843)** reshaped Karachi and Sindh's governance. Ismail notes Karachi only became part of a unified Sindh after **General Yahya**

Khan dissolved One Unit in 1970. He argues that today's dominant parties resist meaningful devolution, with Sindh's majority keen to retain **Karachi, its richest area.** He concludes: **"The history and politics of Sindh and Pakistan have never been simple or linear."** (*The News*, [9 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Court upholds ban on Ahmadiyya publications** — The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) has upheld the **Lahore High Court's decision** endorsing the Punjab government's notification banning the publication of a book on the **Ahmadiyya community's religion.** In a 14-page judgment, **Justice Aamir Farooq** wrote that while the Constitution guarantees religious freedom, it is subject to law, public policy and morality. The ruling stressed that **"the correct approach is not to broadly label an act as 'executive,' but to determine the exact legal source from which the challenged action derives its authority."** The Court concluded there was no violation of fundamental rights, noting the petitioners failed to pursue remedies under relevant statutes within the prescribed time. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **IHC convenes larger bench on PTI protest** — The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has formed a larger bench to hear a petition seeking to stop **PTI's planned protest in Islamabad on September 27.** Chief Justice **Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar** termed the matter a **"constitutional crisis"** and issued notices to respondents, including the chief secretaries and police chiefs of all four provinces, as well as Islamabad's top officials. The bench, comprising **Justice Muhammad Azam Khan** and **Justice Muhammad Asif** alongside Dogar, also sought assistance from Attorney General **Mansoor Awan.** The petitioner argued that protests over pending cases undermine judicial process, citing past PTI demonstrations that caused deaths and financial losses. The hearing resumes September 10. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Senate embraces digital transformation** — Acting President and Senate Chairman **Yousuf Raza Gilani** has launched the **Senate Mobile Application**, calling it a milestone in Pakistan's parliamentary journey. At the ceremony in Parliament House, Gilani described the initiative as a **"significant step towards digital empowerment, greater institutional efficiency and a more transparent and responsive parliamentary system."** He emphasised that the app represents not just technology adoption but **"a new way of working,"** marking the Senate's move towards digital transformation since its establishment in 1973. The launch underscores efforts to modernise governance and improve accessibility for citizens and legislators alike. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Senate panel presses govt on devolved ministries** — The federal government has yet to wind up **17 ministries devolved to provinces under the 18th Amendment**, prompting sharp warnings from the Senate's Functional Committee on Devolution. Convened by **PPP Senator Zamir Hussain Ghumro**, the subcommittee said it may summon **Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif** over non-compliance and even issue warrants for Cabinet Secretary **Kamran Afzal.** Officials argued ministries were retained to meet international commitments, but Ghumro dismissed this as unconstitutional, citing **Article 173**, which allows provinces to enter agreements. The committee gave two weeks to close ministries including **health, education, agriculture, climate change and petroleum**, criticising federal encroachment on provincial domains and resource allocations. (*The Express Tribune*, [9 September 2026](#))

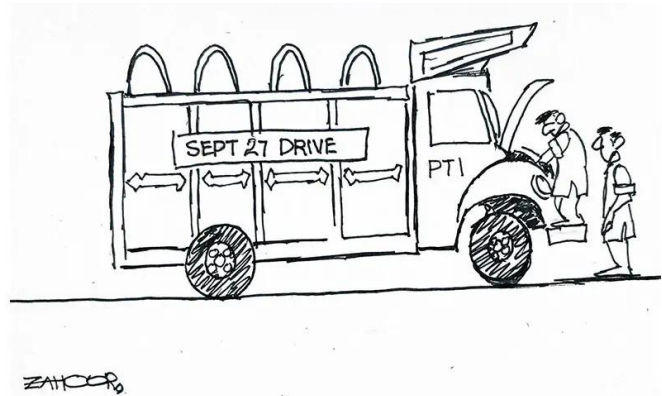
- ◆ **Punjab needs Rs135bn for literacy drive** — Punjab requires **Rs135 billion by 2035** to achieve a **90% literacy rate**, according to the **Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department (LNFBED)**. The province faces the dual challenge of **9.6 million out-of-school children** and **26.8 million adult illiterates**. LNFBED Director General **Asim Javed** explained that funds would expand non-formal schools, train teachers, and establish new adult literacy centres (ALCs). The department's accelerated learning programmes allow elementary education in 18 months and adult literacy in six months, integrating skills training in trades like agriculture and health. Chief Minister **Maryam Nawaz** pledged: *"Knowing and learning is the right of every conscious individual, and we will ensure that this right is fulfilled in every possible way."* (Dawn, [9 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Protest politics and democratic space** — The editorial notes that with **PTI determined to march on Islamabad on September 27**, a legal challenge has been lodged in the **Islamabad High Court (IHC)**. The court has formed a larger bench to hear the "sensitive" case, reflecting unease within the state. The government fears violence, recalling the deadly **November 2024 protest**, yet the piece stresses two points: **"Holding a protest is a democratic right"** and must not be obstructed, while **violence is unacceptable** and party leaders must ensure discipline. The editorial also cites **Jamaat-i-Islami's sit-ins over fuel prices** as proof that peaceful protest is integral to democracy. It urges engagement with PTI to avoid confrontation and further instability. (Dawn, [9 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan's first shark conservation blueprint** — Maritime Affairs Minister **Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry** has unveiled the country's inaugural **National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA)**, a 10-year strategy to run until 2035. The plan aims to **restore declining shark populations, curb illegal finning and bycatch, and protect critical marine habitats**. It will be implemented in three phases, with \$3.8–5 million allocated in the first five years, overseen by a multi-stakeholder advisory committee. Measures include **mandatory fins-attached policies, shark sanctuaries, mangrove restoration and livelihood support for coastal communities**. WWF-Pakistan earlier reported an **85% decline in shark landings over five decades**, underscoring the urgency of action. (Dawn, [8 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan's evolving framework for minority rights** — The special report traces how **Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 1947 vision of equal citizenship** is being translated into policy and practice. The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and conscience, while minorities now hold **reserved seats in parliament and a 5% job quota in federal services**. The **National Commission for Minorities**, chaired for the first time by a minority member, shapes policy directly. Pakistan hosts thousands of churches, temples and gurdwaras, with state funds allocated for their upkeep. Legal reforms include the **Hindu Marriage Act (2017), Sindh Hindu Marriage Act (2016/2018)** and **Punjab Sikh Marriage Act**, alongside draft Christian marriage laws. Initiatives against **forced conversions**, scholarships, endowment funds, and interfaith festivals reinforce inclusion. Religious tourism projects like the **Kartarpur Corridor** and Buddhist heritage conclaves highlight Pakistan's pluralism. Challenges remain, but the report concludes that **"citizenship in Pakistan is not conditional on religious identity."** (Daily Times, [9 September 2026](#))

NO CHANGE IN PAKISTAN'S AFGHAN POLICY



[Disclaimer: We do not subscribe to the views expressed by the Pakistani reporters, leaders and commentators, we are making available for perusal by our experts/analysts/policymakers every day. We put it all together in Daily Pakistan Watch (DPW) with a view to acquainting our readers with the prevalent thought process in Pakistan having its bearing on India, with the hope that such effort will help us in devising appropriate policies to deal with Pakistan in a more effective manner. DPW is curated by **Dr. Afroz Khan, CPS, New Delhi**].