

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

10 September 2026

Security

- ◆ **Security forces killed 11 terrorists in Balochistan** — Pakistan's military has confirmed that **11 terrorists linked to an 'Indian' proxy group, Fitna al-Hindustan, were killed in two operations** in Balochistan. According to the **Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR)**, the first engagement on **September 6 in Kharan** saw eight terrorists neutralised after they attempted to block a road and disrupt traffic. The following day, troops conducted an intelligence-based operation in **Washuk district**, killing three more terrorists after an intense exchange of fire. Security forces also recovered **2.9 tonnes of explosives** intended for improvised explosive devices. Sanitisation operations are ongoing to clear the area of any remaining militants. (*The News International*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Adapting to the drone age** — Every war leaves behind lessons, and the conflict in Ukraine has shown how **inexpensive drones can transform the battlefield, threaten costly equipment and expose vulnerabilities in military doctrine**. Pakistan must urgently study these lessons rather than wait for them to arrive at its own doorstep. The installation of protective nets over police posts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, borrowed from Ukrainian experience, is a welcome adaptation against the **TTP's growing use of commercially available drones**. Yet nets are only part of a wider transformation: electronic warfare, jamming, improvised protection and unmanned reconnaissance must all be integrated into a **counter-drone doctrine**. Preparing for future conflicts requires **institutional learning, sustained investment and continuous adaptation**. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Clarifying defence commitments in volatile times** — Rising tensions in the Middle East, with Iran's retaliatory strikes against US bases, Houthi attacks on Saudi oil facilities and threats to shipping, have raised fears of a wider conflagration. Against this backdrop, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's warning that the **Makkah Defence Alliance could become operational if the Yemen conflict spills into Saudi Arabia** requires careful scrutiny. The editorial asks: *Does the pact distinguish between aggression by states and non-state actors? What circumstances would trigger Pakistan's obligations, and what limits would govern its involvement?* It stresses that **"strategic ambiguity may sometimes serve diplomacy, but public uncertainty over the possibility of war serves little purpose."** Parliament and citizens deserve clarity on the scope, mechanisms and constitutional processes of such commitments. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Who governs Pakistan's water resources?** — In a detailed column, **Mohsin Leghari** argues that Pakistan's water challenge is not the absence of institutions but the lack of an **"enforceable chain of accountability connecting them."** From glaciers to aquifers, responsibility shifts between **WAPDA, IRSA, provinces and local utilities**, yet coordination remains weak. The piece highlights the **1991 Water Apportionment Accord** and IRSA's burden of administering it amid disputes. Leghari stresses that **"a federation that shares a river but not a trusted measurement of it is a federation arguing in the dark."** He calls for a shared national water account, stronger IRSA

capacity, empowered CCI procedures, and provincial regulation of groundwater. Ultimately, governance must follow the water across boundaries. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **ADB to lead ML-1 financing push** — Pakistan has sought **\$2.5 billion** for the first phase of the long-delayed **Mainline-1 (ML-1) railway project**, with the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** expected to take the lead role. Other lenders, including the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** and the **World Bank**, are also likely to join the consortium. ADB may contribute over **\$1 billion** in the initial tranche. Conceived nearly two decades ago under the **National Trade Corridor**, ML-1 was later included in the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** but financing stalled until now. Federal Minister **Ahad Cheema** met ADB officials this week, stressing close coordination to finalise the project design by October and move swiftly to procurement and implementation. (*The News International*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM pushes banks to expand lending for farmers, SMEs and housing** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** has directed provincial chief secretaries to conduct a survey of properties suitable for loans under the **Apna Ghar Scheme**, emphasising affordable housing for low- and middle-income families. Reviewing the **Access to Finance Plan 2026-28**, he noted that **147,504 applications** had been received, with **53,127 approved** worth Rs313.42 billion, and Rs45.43 billion already disbursed. The PM urged banks to extend loans to **farmers, SMEs and the housing sector**, stressing agriculture as the “backbone of the economy.” Lending targets stand at **Rs2 trillion each for agriculture and SMEs by June 2028**. He also congratulated newly elected AJK PM **Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani**, assuring full cooperation for development and welfare projects. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Govt hikes fuel prices** — The federal government has announced an increase in petroleum prices, raising **diesel by Rs6.72 per litre** and **petrol by Rs3.40 per litre**, effective Thursday. According to the **Ministry of Energy’s Petroleum Division**, diesel now costs **Rs392.67** (up from Rs385.95), while petrol has risen to **Rs367.75** (from Rs364.35). The **Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA)** set the new rates under the revised petroleum pricing mechanism. The hike is expected to intensify pressure on **transport costs and consumer goods prices** nationwide. (*The News International*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Remittances surge in early fiscal year** — The **State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)** reported that overseas workers’ remittances rose by **14.7 percent to \$7.3 billion** during July–August of fiscal year 2026-27, compared with \$6.4 billion in the same period last year. On a year-on-year basis, inflows in **August 2026 surged by 16.5 percent to \$3.7 billion**, while month-on-month growth stood at 0.7 percent. The SBP highlighted that remittances were mainly sourced from **Saudi Arabia (\$873.5m)**, the **UAE (\$749.8m)**, the **UK (\$563.7m)**, and the **US (\$308.9m)**. This steady rise underscores the critical role of overseas Pakistanis in supporting the national economy. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Asim Iftikhar named Pakistan’s new foreign secretary** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** has approved the appointment of **Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmed** as Pakistan’s **34th Foreign**

Secretary. Currently serving as Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, he will succeed **Amna Baloch**, who retires on September 17 after a distinguished three-decade career. Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** praised Baloch's leadership during a "consequential period in Pakistan's diplomatic history" and expressed confidence that Iftikhar will advance Pakistan's interests with "clarity, professionalism and purpose." Meanwhile, **Baloch has been appointed as Pakistan's new Ambassador to Türkiye.** (*The News International*, [10 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **PM Shehbaz to attend UNGA 81st session** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** will travel to New York on **September 21** for a six-day visit to participate in the **81st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**. He will attend the **opening of the high-level general debate on September 22** and later the same evening join a reception hosted by **US President Donald Trump**. His **address to the UNGA is scheduled for September 25**, focusing on Pakistan's foreign policy priorities, regional and international developments, peace and security, and issues critical to the developing world. During his stay, Shehbaz will also hold bilateral meetings with world leaders and engage with the diplomatic community. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan conveys Saudi warning to Iran over Houthi attacks** — Following a surge in **Houthi missile and drone strikes** on Saudi cities including Abha, Khams Mushait and Jazan, Pakistan has relayed Riyadh's demand that Tehran rein in its Yemeni allies. **According to sources, the warning carries weight due to Pakistan's defence pact with Saudi Arabia and Turkey.** Defence Minister **Khawaja Asif** stated on *Geo News* that aggression spilling into Saudi territory could trigger the **Makkah Defence Alliance**, under which **"any aggression against any of the three (countries) is regarded as an aggression against all."** He stressed Pakistan's role would remain defensive, confined to protecting Saudi territory, while Islamabad continues mediation efforts between the **US and Iran.** (*The News*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Islamabad's rare greeting to Pyongyang** — Pakistan extended an unusual diplomatic gesture to **North Korea** on its **78th founding anniversary**, with **President Asif Ali Zardari** sending a letter to **Kim Jong Un** highlighting "cordial relations based on mutual trust and goodwill." The **Foreign Office** also issued public felicitations on X, tagging Pakistan's mission in Pyongyang, though it remains closed. Such exchanges have been rare in recent years, given sanctions on North Korea over its nuclear and missile programmes. FO spokesman **Sajjad Haider Khan** downplayed the move, saying *"exchange of felicitation messages are a common practice."* Despite Islamabad's compliance with **UNSC sanctions**, Pyongyang maintains an embassy in Islamabad and hosted its national day reception. (*Dawn*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **HRCP condemns repatriation of Afghan students** — The **Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)** has strongly criticised the decision to rusticate and repatriate Afghan students enrolled in medical and dental colleges, warning it could turn an education policy into a **humanitarian crisis.** HRCP noted that around **100 Afghan students in Lahore alone, including 20–40 women,** may be affected. The commission emphasised the principle of **non-refoulement**, stating *"no student should be forcibly returned without an individual assessment of the risks they face."* It acknowledged Pakistan's security concerns but argued these cannot justify **collective punishment** of students. HRCP demanded suspension of repatriation orders, restoration of enrolments, and arrangements for protection and shelter. (*Dawn*, [10 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Kashmiri groups urge UN for action beyond rhetoric** — Two ‘pro-freedom’ organisations in ‘India-occupied’ Jammu and Kashmir have welcomed the UN’s reaffirmation of the region’s disputed status but insisted that the world body must move beyond reiterating its position. In Srinagar, **Dr Ghulam Rasool, General Secretary of the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP)**, stressed that UN resolutions are “*not merely historical documents but international commitments*” and warned that their non-implementation undermines credibility. He linked the dispute to regional security, citing the risks of escalation among three nuclear powers. **Dr Irfan Ghani, spokesman for the Jammu Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM)**, called for a “**clear roadmap, effective monitoring and a workable mechanism**” to advance a plebiscite. Both urged inclusion of Kashmiri voices in any process, emphasising that **lasting peace cannot be achieved through force or unilateral measures**. (*Dawn*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **HRW warns Taliban over rights abuses** — The Human Rights Watch (HRW) has issued a stern warning to the Taliban, declaring that its “**gender apartheid**” policies are a **crime against humanity**. The watchdog accused the regime of “*institutionalising a system of discrimination, repression and ideological control*” and urged the international community not to grant diplomatic recognition unless genuine reforms are enacted. HRW demanded **quality education, freedom of expression and meaningful participation for women** in public life, setting a benchmark for future engagement. The warning coincides with a report by **Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur**, highlighting the devastating impact of Taliban policies on children. The editorial insists the Taliban must abandon radicalism, strengthen child protection, prevent forced marriages and ensure inclusive healthcare and education. (*The Express Tribune*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dangerous triumphalism in Modi’s rhetoric** — In her column, **Durdana Najam, public policy analyst**, critiques Prime Minister **Narendra Modi’s speech at Shri Ram College of Commerce**, noting that the most troubling aspect was his warning that if Pakistan undertakes any “misadventure,” Indian forces would strike across the border. She argues that such language reflects a “**dangerous misunderstanding of deterrence**” between two nuclear-armed states. Najam highlights contradictions in Modi’s claims of peace in Kashmir and the Northeast, pointing to the **Pahalgam attack of April 2025** and the **Manipur ethnic conflict**. She underscores India’s democratic decline, citing **Reporters Without Borders ranking India 157th in press freedom** and V-Dem’s classification as an electoral autocracy. Najam concludes that “**confidence becomes convincing only when it is accompanied by restraint**”; otherwise, it risks becoming theatre. (*The Express Tribune*, [10 September 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

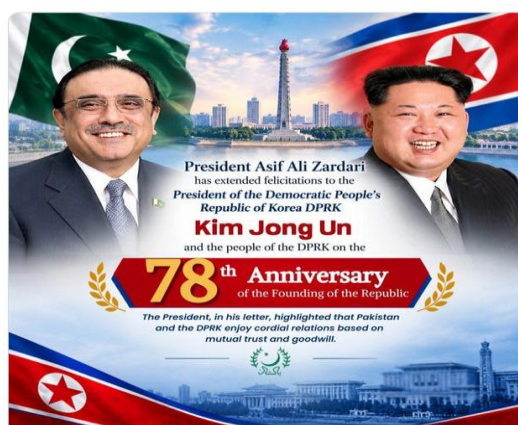
- ◆ **Debate over new provinces intensifies** — With the National Assembly session set for September 21, opposition parties are considering a requisition for a special session to debate the creation of new provinces and the possibility of a referendum. The discussion was sparked by Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi’s statement suggesting new administrative units could be considered with public opinion**. While the ruling coalition has not fully endorsed the idea, it has fuelled political momentum. **PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari remarked that such matters should be debated in parliament, not business forums**. Minister for Parliamentary Affairs **Tariq Fazal Chaudhary** also acknowledged the issue’s importance once formally raised in the assembly.

Analysts believe opposition lawmakers may push to constitutionally bind the Speaker to summon a special session. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))

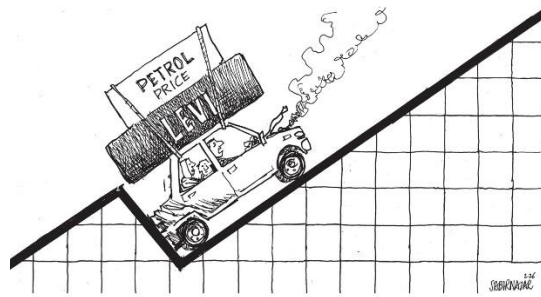
- ◆ **PTI warns against crackdown ahead of long march** — The **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)** has cautioned the government against intensifying arrests of its workers before the planned **September 27 long march**. In a joint meeting of its **Core and Political Committees**, the party expressed concern over alleged detentions and harassment, stating: *“Arresting workers for engaging in peaceful political activities... only serves to further aggravate the political environment.”* The committees demanded immediate release of workers, condemned the arrest of **Hammad Azhar**, and stressed that such tactics would only strengthen resolve. PTI praised its mobilisation in Sindh under **KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi**, while also raising alarm over **Imran Khan’s health** and urging urgent court action. The party rejected remarks by **Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz**, calling them divisive and contrary to national unity. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **ANP aligns with JI in anti-levy protests** — The **Awami National Party (ANP)** has agreed to join **Jamaat-e-Islami’s (JI)** nationwide sit-ins against the petroleum levy. JI chief **Hafiz Naeemur Rehman** contacted ANP President **Senator Aimal Wali Khan**, inviting his party to participate in the demonstrations. Aimal accepted, stressing that *“inflation and the petroleum levy are not issues confined to a single political entity, but rather a collective ordeal facing the entire nation.”* He pledged ANP’s active role in defending the economic rights of citizens and called for unity among democratic forces. Rehman reiterated JI’s demand that the government **abolish heavy taxes and petroleum levies** to provide relief to the public. (*The News International*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **ATC upholds warrants in protest case** — An **Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC)** has upheld arrest warrants for **Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, Junaid Akbar, Abdul Ghani Afridi and others** in connection with the **November 26 protest case**. Judge **Tahir Abbas Supra** rejected pleas for exemption from personal appearance, noting the accused had repeatedly failed to attend proceedings. The court directed police to submit the challan promptly and adjourned the hearing until **September 30**. The case, registered at **Margalla Police Station**, continues against the chief minister and his associates, with the ATC stressing accountability through due legal process. **Repeated absence from hearings has left no room for leniency.** (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Supreme Court protects Indian migrant widow’s property rights** — The **Supreme Court of Pakistan** has ruled in favour of a widow who migrated from India, confirming that the disputed property was never owned by her deceased husband, **Abdul Karim**, who had died before Partition. Justice **Jamal Khan Mandokhail**, authoring the judgment, observed that the widow had personally applied for allotment of land as a displaced person for permanent settlement. The Court stressed that **“the property had been allotted to a homeless migrant widow for her rehabilitation in Pakistan”** and that relatives of **Abdul Karim** could only claim land left behind in India. The apex court set aside both the **2000 trial court order** and the **2014 High Court judgment**. (*The Nation*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Sindh Assembly reviews local government amendments** — The **Sindh Assembly** has formed an **11-member special committee** to examine the **Sindh Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, which proposes significant changes to the 2013 law. The committee includes **seven PPP lawmakers** and **four opposition members**, tasked to report within a week. Key provisions include allowing **outgoing mayors and chairmen to continue as administrators until new elections**, empowering

councils to establish institutions independently or via public-private partnerships, and creating **Reconciliation Forums** in local bodies to amicably settle disputes. The bill also expands responsibilities of union councils to monitor **solid waste management and building violations**. (*Dawn*, [10 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Federal backing for AJK welfare** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** assured newly elected ‘Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister **Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani** of the federal government’s full cooperation for the welfare and well-being of the region’s people. During their first meeting in Islamabad, Shehbaz congratulated Gilani and expressed best wishes for his tenure. The two leaders discussed peace, development and ongoing welfare projects in AJK. The premier reaffirmed that **“the federal government will continue to take all possible measures for the development and prosperity of the people of ‘Azad’ Jammu and Kashmir.”** Gilani thanked Shehbaz for his support, pledging to utilise his capabilities for the progress and welfare of AJK. (*The Express Tribune*, [10 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dialogue as the path forward** — The PTI has announced a nationwide protest for 27 September, criticising restrictions on meetings with **Imran Khan** and alleging suppression of constitutional rights. While peaceful protest is a democratic right, the editorial warns that **“the PTI’s reliance on street protests as a pressure tactic has become less effective.”** Past confrontations, notably November 2024, left workers wary and reduced political space. Observers suggest PTI may be cautious, seeking relief for Khan amid mixed signals from institutions. The editorial argues that **“dialogue, rather than protest, is the only way forward,”** urging PTI and the government to resolve disputes through Parliament and accountable institutions. (*The News*, [10 September 2026](#))



Pakistan made an unusual diplomatic gesture towards North Korea, with President Asif Ali Zardari and the Foreign Office congratulating Pyongyang on the 78th anniversary of its founding. [here](#)



*[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, Research Fellow, CPS, New Delhi**].*