

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

17 September 2026

Security

- ◆ **Pakistan protests Indian naval incursion** — Pakistan lodged a strong protest after Indian Navy warship **INS Kolkata** entered its **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** during the **Sea Spark-26 exercise**, calling the manoeuvres “provocative and irresponsible.” According to **Foreign Office spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan**, the vessel carried out “*dangerous and provocative manoeuvres*” near Pakistan Navy ships and even made contact with **PNS Hunain** on 15 September. Islamabad summoned India’s charge d’affaires, terming the incident a violation of **international law** and the **1991 Agreement on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Manoeuvres and Troop Movements**. Pakistan urged the international community to press India to abandon its “*belligerent posture*”, warning that South Asia “*can ill-afford to remain perpetually hostage to India’s reckless pursuit of conflict and instability.*” (*The News*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan, US firm explore defence technology cooperation** — At GHQ Rawalpindi, **Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir**, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, met a delegation from **POWERUS**, a US-based company specialising in defence and critical infrastructure solutions, led by **Robert Bret Velicovich**. According to an ISPR statement, discussions focused on **mutual interests, evolving defence technology trends, and cooperation in procurement, production and capacity building**. The COAS underscored the importance of **technological innovation and advanced solutions in strengthening national security and resilience**. Both sides expressed interest in further developing engagement across areas of shared concern. (*The News*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan denounces attempted strike on Makkah** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** condemned the attempted Houthi drone attack on Makkah as “*dastardly and heinous*” and an “*unforgivable act*”, pledging that Pakistan stands “**shoulder to shoulder**” with Saudi Arabia in defending the sanctity of the holy sites. He praised the **Royal Saudi Armed Forces** for their vigilance and urged restraint, stressing that “*dialogue and diplomacy remain the only sustainable path towards peace.*” Deputy Prime Minister **Ishaq Dar** said the act “*gravely offended the religious sentiments of Muslims worldwide*”, while Defence Minister **Khawaja Asif** called it “*a cowardly, terrorist act that crosses every red line.*” PPP Senator **Sherry Rehman** emphasised that under the **Makkah Defence Agreement**, member states would respond firmly, and **Maulana Fazlur Rehman** warned such an attack would be considered against the entire Muslim world. (*The News*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan rejects Balochistan ‘insurgency’ narrative** — DG ISPR Lt. Gen. **Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry** stressed that “**dialogue and a negotiated settlement remain the only sustainable way to end the Iran war**”, highlighting Pakistan’s role as an “objective arbiter” due to its ties with both the US and Iran. He said Islamabad’s sole objective was to prevent the conflict from spiralling “horizontally as well as vertically.” On Balochistan, he firmly rejected the term insurgency, declaring: “**There is no insurgency. There is terrorism. Just terrorism.**” He revealed that security

forces had conducted over **40,000 intelligence-based operations**, including **32,000 in Balochistan**, combining kinetic action with political, social and economic engagement. He emphasised focusing on youth rather than elites, asserting: *“The elites and sardars don’t matter... it’s the young, boys and girls of Balochistan who matter.”* (*The Nation*, [17 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Google–Pakistan partnership sparks privacy concerns** — The Islamabad-based watchdog **Freedom Network** has questioned the transparency of the recent agreements signed between **Google and the Pakistan government**, following the tech giant’s office opening in Islamabad. While welcoming the move as a boost to the digital economy, the watchdog asked: *“What exactly has been agreed? Will the government or Google publish all MoUs, agreements, contracts or other arrangements signed between them?”* It raised concerns about **undisclosed commitments on access to user data, metadata or government databases**, stressing whether requests would require judicial oversight. Freedom Network also demanded safeguards against government access to journalists’ Gmail, Drive and YouTube accounts, and clarity on **where Pakistani citizens’ data will be stored**. It insisted: *“There should not be informal or undocumented data-sharing arrangements between Google and the Pakistan government.”* (*Dawn*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Govt links banned JAAC to Afghan arms network** — Minister of State for Interior **Talal Chaudhry** alleged that the proscribed **Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)** in AJK was involved in **arms trafficking through an Afghan nexus and local facilitators**. At a press conference, he said security agencies had apprehended a network supplying illegal weapons, with one accused, Zia, allegedly providing consignments to JAAC associates for two years. Chaudhry presented pictorial and audio “evidence” of discussions on sniper guns, claiming Zia worked for Zarshad in Afghanistan. He stressed: *“There is no insurgency. There is terrorism. Just terrorism.”* He warned that unless such “terror crime networks” were dismantled, terrorism would persist, urging stronger laws and faceless courts for trials. (*The Nation*, [17 September 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **Pakistan’s current account deficit narrows on remittances** — Pakistan posted a **current account deficit of \$543 million in July–August FY27**, down 36% from \$853 million a year earlier, largely due to **robust remittance inflows of \$7.3 billion, up 14.7% year-on-year**. August’s shortfall was \$98 million, sharply lower than July’s \$445 million. Goods exports rose just 3.8% to \$2.51 billion against imports of \$5.68 billion, widening the monthly goods deficit to \$3.17 billion. Services exports surged 29% to \$872 million, with IT exports at **\$394 million, up 17% year-on-year**. Net IT exports reached \$336 million, underscoring their importance. Foreign direct investment also jumped 80% year-on-year in August to \$316 million. (*The Express Tribune*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan seeks foreign investment in energy infrastructure** — Federal Minister for Petroleum **Ali Pervaiz Malik** met delegations from **VTTI and Honeywell UOP** to explore opportunities in Pakistan’s energy sector. VTTI expressed interest in developing **bonded warehousing, LPG terminal infrastructure and re-export facilities**, while Honeywell UOP discussed expanding its role in **refinery up-gradation through advanced technologies**. Malik welcomed their interest, stressing the government’s commitment to **clean, reliable and affordable energy under a transparent pricing framework**. Honeywell’s **Shams Qureshi** highlighted opportunities to tap into **US financing for refinery modernisation**, particularly for producing environmentally clean fuels.

The discussions reflect Pakistan's push to attract capital flow into energy infrastructure and advanced refining technology. (*The Express Tribune*, [17 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan invites Japanese investment in digital transformation** — Federal Minister for IT and Telecom **Shaza Fatima Khawaja** addressed the **Pakistan Business Seminar in Tokyo**, organised by **JETRO** and the **Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB)**, highlighting opportunities for partnership in **digital technology, R&D and innovation**. She emphasised that the next chapter of Pakistan–Japan friendship would be defined by **digital collaboration**, citing Pakistan's expanding infrastructure with **161 million broadband subscribers, a 17,200-km fibre optic backbone and over 750 MHz of released spectrum**. Stressing complementary strengths, she noted Japan's precision and engineering expertise alongside Pakistan's **young, skilled workforce**, with 75,000 IT graduates annually. Khawaja urged greater Japanese investment in **R&D centres and technology development**, positioning Pakistan as a strong innovation partner. (*The Express Tribune*, [17 September 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **23,000 Afghans await repatriation from Quetta** — Authorities in Balochistan are continuing efforts to repatriate Afghan refugees and undocumented foreigners, with **over 23,000 Afghan nationals still residing in Quetta** expected to be sent back soon. The figure was disclosed at a review meeting chaired by **Quetta Division Commissioner Zeeshan Lashari**, which assessed progress, challenges and plans for the repatriation process. Officials reported that **joint operations involving district administration, police, Frontier Corps and other institutions** are underway to facilitate departures. The meeting emphasised administrative coordination to ensure smooth implementation of the repatriation drive. (*Dawn*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **China to support Pakistan in modernising law enforcement** — During a meeting between **Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi** and **Chinese Vice Minister of Public Security Gao Qi**, it was agreed that China will help establish a **modern law enforcement centre in Pakistan**. The initiative aims to strengthen policing through **advanced infrastructure, technology and specialised training**, while enhancing cooperation in **counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics measures**. Both sides also discussed expanding **police training exchange programmes** and the use of **AI-based technology and equipment**. Gao Qi praised Pakistan's sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, while Naqvi described the centre as a "bright symbol of Pakistan-China friendship" and stressed the need to expand cooperation in internal security. (*Dawn*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan and China strengthen border cooperation through new commission** — Pakistan and China have formally operationalised the **Boundary Joint Commission**, providing a structured platform for **border management, joint surveys, trade facilitation and people-to-people connectivity**. The inaugural meeting in Islamabad was co-chaired by **Li Ya**, Deputy Director General of China's Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, and **Bilal Mahmood Chaudhary**, Director General (China) at Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The commission is expected to enhance coordination along the shared border, particularly at the **Khunjerab Pass**, which has become a vital trade link under the upgraded **CPEC framework**. Pakistan Customs collected **Rs15 billion in imports and Rs2.8 billion in exports** through the crossing in 2025-26. The initiative

aligns with the **2025-2029 Action Plan** for deeper connectivity and cooperation. (*The Nation*, [17 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Gilani urges deeper Pakistan–Somalia digital cooperation** — At the closing ceremony of the **Somalia–Pakistan Peer Learning Programme on Foundational ID and Digital Public Infrastructure**, **Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani** called for stronger collaboration in **digital governance, foundational identity, AI and digital public infrastructure**, stressing the importance of **South–South cooperation**. He praised the partnership between **Pakistan’s NADRA** and **Somalia’s NIRA** as a valuable example, noting that a foundational identity system is “*a key building block of a modern state*”. Gilani highlighted Pakistan’s own digital transformation, including the Senate’s move towards a paperless e-Parliament and the launch of its mobile app. He also pointed to Pakistan’s role as a founding member of **WAICO**, reaffirming commitment to international AI cooperation. (*The Nation*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan extends airspace ban on Indian flights** — The **Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA)** has issued its 17th **Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)**, extending the closure of Pakistani airspace to **Indian-registered aircraft and those operated or leased by Indian airlines, including military flights, until 24 October**. The restriction, first imposed on **23 April 2025**, followed India’s suspension of the **Indus Waters Treaty** after the **Pahalgam attack in IIOJK**, which New Delhi blamed on Pakistan — an allegation Islamabad denied. Tensions escalated with Indian strikes on Pakistani cities in May 2025, prompting Pakistan’s **Operation Bunyanum Marsoos**, during which eight Indian fighter jets, including three Rafales, were downed. Though a US-brokered ceasefire ended hostilities after 87 hours, the airspace closure remains, with Pakistan’s aviation sector less affected than India’s. (*The Nation*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Punjab housing scheme wins UN recognition** — Punjab Chief Minister **Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s** flagship project ‘**Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar**’ has been selected for the prestigious **United Nations Scroll of Honour Award**, ranking among the five most successful housing programmes worldwide. The award, to be presented at the **World Habitat Day event in Muscat on 5 October**, recognises the scheme’s efforts to provide **safe and adequate housing for low-income families**. Under the initiative, loans worth **Rs260 billion have been disbursed for over 200,000 houses**, making it Pakistan’s largest and first fully digital housing finance scheme. Around **125,000 families have already moved into new homes**, with the programme praised for its innovative and inclusive approach to housing development. (*The Nation*, [17 September 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **KP CM alleges assassination attempt in Punjab** — **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi** claimed in a video statement that an armed assailant was sent to kill him during his **Punjab street movement** in Wazirabad, alleging his security team caught the suspect and recovered a pistol. Afridi also said electricity was cut off at residences where he stayed in Sialkot. However, **Gujranwala police rejected the claims**, stating the man was a police constable deployed for security duty, who was assaulted despite showing his card. Punjab Information Minister **Azma Bokhari** condemned Afridi’s remarks, sharing safe city footage and insisting the constable was wrongly accused. (*The News*, [17 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Punjab launches sweeping reshuffle of patwaris** — In a major anti-corruption drive, the **Punjab government transferred over 3,000 patwaris in a single day**, marking one of the largest administrative reshuffles at the grassroots revenue level. Patwaris, though low-ranked, wield significant influence over **land records, ownership documents and revenue services**, making the move highly consequential. The campaign, led by **Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz**, also targeted officials in police, food, excise, housing and mines departments, with the **Anti-Corruption Establishment acting against 176 officials**. Authorities claim reforms in the Mines and Minerals Department alone protected or recovered **Rs42 billion**. The effectiveness of the reshuffle will be judged by whether it reduces corruption and improves land-related services. (*The News*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Supreme Court raises jurisdictional questions in Imran Khan's hospital case** — A three-member bench of the **Supreme Court**, headed by **Justice Shahid Waheed**, questioned the authority of the **Federal Constitutional Court (FCC)** in hearing petitions related to **Imran Khan's transfer to a private hospital**. The apex court noted that the FCC's order summoning records of Khan's case raised "questions of considerable constitutional and legal significance." The SC stressed the need to avoid conflict between the two apex judicial institutions and sought the **Attorney General's assistance**, granting him three weeks to prepare submissions. The court confirmed its **18 August order allowing medical facilities remained in force**, while noting the government's review petition opposed treatment in private hospitals. (*The News*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM orders facilitation desks for fuel subsidy access** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** directed the establishment of facilitation desks at petrol stations nationwide to ensure **low-income and middle-class citizens can smoothly access the government's fuel subsidy scheme** amid rising petroleum prices. The desks will be staffed by officials, volunteers and pump personnel to guide applicants through registration, which requires only four basic details: CNIC, vehicle number plate, province of registration and registration date. Subsidies cover motorcycles, rickshaws and vehicles up to 800cc. The scheme, piloted in Islamabad, has now expanded nationwide, including AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan. The PM also met with the **Pakistan-Japan Group** to discuss boosting exports and investment, reaffirmed ties with France during a farewell call with Ambassador Nicolas Galey, and directed **SMEDA** to design a comprehensive SME support strategy. (*The Nation*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Petroleum dealers reject fuel relief scheme** — The **Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA)** announced it will not sell petrol under the government's newly launched **Rs100-per-litre relief scheme** for motorcyclists, rickshaw owners and small vehicle drivers. At a press conference in Karachi, PPDA Vice Chairman **Anwar Kamal** said dealers were not consulted and the current mechanism is "difficult to implement." He argued that relief should be provided directly to consumers, adding that dealers' capital is already strained by inflation and pending payments from oil marketing companies. Kamal questioned, "*How will the government pay dealers the amount for cheaper petrol?*" and demanded higher margins. He reiterated that dealers would not participate unless the scheme is revised. (*The News*, [17 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **CDA cancels Bahria Town layout plan over violations** — The **Capital Development Authority (CDA)** has cancelled the layout plan for **Bahria Town phases III-E and IV**, covering **2,999 kanals**, citing violations of agreed conditions and failure to obtain a valid NOC despite 15 years since approval in 2010. The CDA noted that plots designated for public amenities such as parks and

playgrounds were not vacated, and illegal commercial buildings had been constructed in riverbeds, graveyards and open spaces. A **final show-cause notice** was issued last year, and the **Federal Audit** flagged the violations in 2023-24. The CDA has also suspended approval of other Bahria Town cases and directed its enforcement wing to demolish unauthorised structures. A Bahria Town official criticised the move as “illegal” and vowed to challenge it in court. (*Dawn*, [17 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Nawaz nominates Najeeb Naqi for AJK presidency** — Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President **Mohammad Nawaz Sharif** has nominated **Dr Muhammad Najeeb Naqi** for the vacant office of **Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) president**, with the election scheduled for **24 September**. Punjab Senior Minister **Marriyum Aurangzeb** announced the decision, noting that Dr Naqi, a seasoned political figure from **Sudhanoti-Palundri in Poonch Division**, has held several ministerial portfolios in the AJK government. Unlike the earlier controversy surrounding the nomination of **Iftikhar Ali Gilani** as **AJK prime minister**, no disagreement has so far emerged over Dr Naqi’s candidacy. The office has remained vacant since the death of **President Barrister Sultan Mahmood** in January, with interim duties carried out by successive speakers of the Legislative Assembly. (*The Nation*, [17 September 2026](#))

TWO CIVILIANS KILLED IN BANNU QUADCOPTER ATTACK, POLICE SAY



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