

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

24 September 2026

Security

- ◆ **Pakistan's Lt Gen Nauman Mahmood Named First Secretary General of Makkah Defence Alliance** — The Government of Pakistan has appointed **Lieutenant General Nauman Mahmood (retd), Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military)** as the first Secretary General under the **Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA)**. He will head the **General Secretariat of the Makkah Defence Alliance in Riyadh**, marking Pakistan's prominent role in the newly established regional security framework. The retired general previously commanded Peshawar Corps, led the National Defence University and served as Director General of the ISI's Analysis Wing. Separately, at the United Nations General Assembly, **Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar** urged the OIC Contact Group to intensify diplomatic efforts on Kashmir, emphasising that **dialogue and diplomacy remain the only sustainable path to resolving longstanding disputes**. (*The News*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Claims Interception of Afghan-Origin Drones and Foiling of Border Infiltration Bid** — Security sources said Pakistan's armed forces shot down **eight drones that allegedly entered Pakistani airspace from Afghanistan**, with four intercepted near the Torkham border and four in mountainous areas close to Kohat. **According to the sources, the Pakistan Air Force's air defence system detected and neutralised all the drones, preventing any intrusion**. The sources further alleged that the incident reflected support for militant groups from across the border. Separately, they stated that security forces repelled an attempted infiltration by **Fitna al-Khwarij** militants in the Kurram sector and responded after Afghan Taliban forces allegedly opened fire on Pakistani border posts. (*The News*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Security Forces Continue Counterterrorism Operation in Quetta's Shaban Area** — According to the **Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR)**, security forces have killed **13 terrorists** during an ongoing clearance operation in the **Shaban area of Quetta district**, launched after intelligence reports indicated the presence of multiple militant hideouts. **The military stated that weapons, ammunition and explosives were recovered as forces cleared several hideouts, and that the operation would continue until the threat was fully neutralised**. In separate intelligence-based operations in **Kech and Quetta West districts**, **six additional terrorists were reported killed**. During one of the engagements, **Subedar Muhammad Jamil**, a resident of Dera Ghazi Khan, was killed in action. **The ISPR said the counterterrorism campaign under "Azm-e-Istehkam" would continue across the country**. (*The Nation*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Five Muzaffargarh Workers Recovered After Abduction in Balochistan** — Five workers from **Muzaffargarh**, who were abducted while travelling to Balochistan for employment, have returned home safely following efforts by police and relevant agencies. **According to police, the workers were reportedly taken hostage by the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) while travelling in two trucks**. After their families sought assistance, **District Police Officer Syed**



Ghazanfar Ali Shah coordinated with concerned authorities, leading to their recovery. The workers expressed gratitude, saying they had lost hope of returning safely during their captivity. **Police stated that the successful recovery brought significant relief to the affected families, who later thanked officials for their prompt response and assistance.** (*The Nation*, [24 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan Strikes 10 Afghan Locations Following Drone Incursion** — Information Minister Attaullah Tarar announced that **Pakistan conducted precision aerial and drone strikes across 10 locations in Afghanistan** in retaliation for an airspace violation. Tarar stated the operation was **“deliberate, precise, calibrated and proportionate”**, exercising the country's sovereign right to self-defence. The action followed eight drones entering Pakistani airspace near Torkham and Kohat before being neutralised. Islamabad condemned the incident as a **“blatant violation of Pakistan’s sovereignty”** and accused the Afghan Taliban of harbouring terrorist networks. Tarar warned that **“any further provocative act... will be responded with a firm and resolute response”**, urging Kabul to take concrete action against cross-border terrorism. (*Dawn*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **UNSC Condemns Deadly Kohat Mosque Bombing** — Members of the United Nations Security Council strongly condemned the **“heinous and cowardly suicide bombing”** at a Kohat mosque, which claimed the lives of at least 24 people, including 17 security personnel. Led by UNSC President Jerome Bonnafont, the council offered condolences to the victims' families and emphasised that terrorism constitutes **“one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.”** The UNSC urged all states to actively cooperate with Islamabad to **“bring the perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors”** to justice, reiterating that terrorist acts remain entirely unjustifiable regardless of their motivation. (*The Express Tribune*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dangerous Border: Escalating Tensions and the Afghan Terror Threat** — This editorial highlight that Pakistan is trapped in a dangerous cycle of escalation because **“Kabul is unwilling to act against terrorist groups active on its soil, such as the banned TTP.”** Following a spate of cross-border drone incursions, airspace violations, and deadly attacks like the Kohat mosque bombing, Pakistan has been forced into kinetic self-defence actions along the border. While Islamabad has successfully rallied international diplomatic backing—including UNSC condemnations and OIC support—the editorial stresses that military measures are only immediate stopgaps. Long-term stability requires the Afghan Taliban to choose between **“integrating with the rest of the region, or remain a pariah regime because of their stubborn ideological attachment to their violent comrades.”** (*Dawn*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Navy and Coast Guards Foil Major Smuggling Attempt in Balochistan** — A joint operation by the Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Coast Guards, and the Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) successfully thwarted an attempt to smuggle a large cache of contraband in the Pishukan area of Balochistan. Acting on actionable intelligence, the forces seized **“a sizeable quantity of liquor and illegal medicines,”** which have since been transferred to the Coast Guards for legal action. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commended the security forces for the successful operation, emphasising that **“coordination among institutions is of utmost importance to root out the menace of smuggling from the country.”** (*Daily Times*, [24 September 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **PM Reaffirms Commitment to IMF Reforms and Economic Stability** — Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, during a meeting with IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the IMF-backed reform programme and pledged to maintain momentum on structural reforms. **He stated that Pakistan was successfully transitioning from macroeconomic stabilisation towards economic recovery, supported by prudent fiscal and monetary policies, improved fiscal discipline, stronger external buffers and renewed investor confidence.** Georgieva praised Pakistan's performance under the IMF programme, noting that **"strong implementation has helped preserve stability, restore confidence and regain market access"**. The two leaders also discussed the forthcoming IMF review and continued cooperation to strengthen resilience and support sustainable growth. Separately, the prime minister held meetings with international leaders and philanthropist **Bill Gates**. (*The News*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan and Bangladesh Explore Agrifood and Climate Partnership** — Federal Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain met with Bangladeshi officials—including Environment Minister Abdul Awal Mintoo and State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Sultan Salauddin Tuku—on the sidelines of the FAO Global Conference in Rome to discuss bolstering bilateral cooperation. The talks focused on **strengthening sustainable agrifood systems, livestock, fisheries, and climate resilience** to combat shared environmental pressures. Hussain emphasized that closer collaboration can **"help strengthen food security, protect rural livelihoods and improve the resilience of agricultural communities,"** while proposing expansions in agricultural trade, research, and veterinary sciences. Both sides underscored the necessity of coordinated action and technical knowledge exchange. (*The Express Tribune*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **CM Murad and ADB Country Head Review Sindh's Development and Education Projects** — Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and ADB Country Director Emma Fan met at the CM House to review ongoing development priorities, focusing heavily on education infrastructure and future investment pipelines. Highlighting education as a top priority, CM Murad noted that the Sindh Secondary Education Improvement Project (SSEIP) has completed its first batch of newly constructed school blocks, with plans to finalize over **200 schools by the end of the year and 800 overall**. Discussions also addressed post-flood school reconstruction, upcoming initiatives like the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), health workforce strengthening, and urban transport projects. Emma Fan praised the province's commitment, stating that **"the progress achieved under SSEIP demonstrates what can be accomplished through effective collaboration."** (*Daily Times*, [24 September 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Prime Minister Reaffirms Pakistan's Solidarity with Saudi Arabia on National Day** — Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for **Saudi Arabia**, strongly condemning recent Houthi attacks against the Kingdom and stressing that Pakistan stands **"shoulder to shoulder"** with Saudi Arabia in safeguarding its sovereignty, security and the sanctity of Islam's holiest sites. In a message marking the Kingdom's National Day, he extended congratulations to **King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman**

and the Saudi people. **The prime minister highlighted the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement and the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement as milestones that have strengthened bilateral ties and transformed the longstanding brotherhood into a deeper strategic partnership.** (*The Nation*, [24 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Regional Cooperation to Tackle Cross-Border Terror Threat** — In its editorial, *Dawn* argued that Pakistan's recent military actions along the Afghan border reflect the continuing threat posed by militant groups operating from Afghan territory and the failure of the Taliban authorities to act decisively against them. **The editorial maintained that Pakistan remains trapped in a cycle of escalation because "Kabul is unwilling to act against terrorist groups active on its soil", making improved bilateral relations difficult.** While acknowledging Pakistan's right to respond to immediate security threats, the newspaper emphasised that **"long-term peace can only come through dialogue, and a commitment by the Taliban to curb cross-border terrorism"**. It further argued that a coordinated regional strategy is essential, as several militant organisations based in Afghanistan pose a threat to the wider region, not only Pakistan. (*Dawn*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **EU Launches Climate and Agriculture Initiatives in Gilgit-Baltistan** — European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Raimundas Karoblis launched two major projects in Gilgit-Baltistan: the inaugural **GB Carbon Strategy and Action Plan** and the proposed **Agriculture Policy and Action Plan (2027–2036)**. Developed with EU backing, the initiatives aim to combat climate change, safeguard the environment, and drive sustainable economic growth. Ambassador Karoblis reaffirmed that the EU is **"committed to supporting GB in addressing the growing impacts of climate change"** and pledged to expand technical and financial cooperation for the strategy's execution. Ashab Ullah Baig, Team Leader and Carbon Expert, briefed attendees on the strategic priorities of the carbon plan during the launch event at the Gilgit secretariat complex. (*Dawn*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Shehbaz Reaffirms Commitment to US-Iran Détente and UNGA Engagements** — Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated during UNGA sidelines in New York that **Pakistan remains "completely focused" on mediating an end to the Middle East conflict** and is **"not losing hope"** in fostering US-Iran détente. Reviewing diplomatic milestones, he highlighted past trilateral efforts involving presidents Donald Trump and Masoud Pezeshkian. During his visit, the premier held high-level meetings with global leaders—including Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa, Bill Gates, and regional counterparts—addressing critical issues such as regional peace, trade, polio eradication, and climate action. Stressing global equity, Shehbaz warned that **"debt servicing was shrinking fiscal space"** and called for structural reforms in the international financial architecture. (*The Express Tribune*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Hindutva Ideology Undermines Indian Regional Diplomacy** — Public policy analyst Durdana Najam argues that India's diplomatic rhetoric of peace and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* contradicts its actual conduct toward its neighbours. The rise of **Hindutva-driven politics** has not only intensified domestic discrimination against religious minorities and the removal of Muslim historical sites, but has also driven foreign policy. Najam highlights **India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty**, despite a unanimous Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling, and the ongoing paralysis of SAARC as examples of leveraging power over regional cooperation. Furthermore, despite engaging with the Afghan Taliban, India fails to use its channels to mitigate cross-border terrorism against

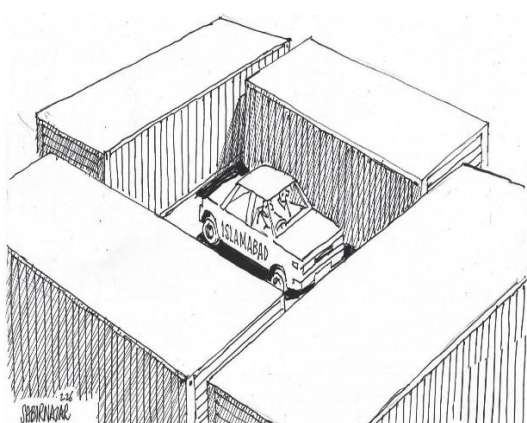
Pakistan. Najam concludes that South Asia will ultimately judge India by its concrete actions rather than its slogans. (*The Express Tribune*, [24 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Indus Waters Treaty: Pakistan Calls Out India's Lawless Approach** — An editorial critiques Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar's remarks at the OIC meeting, emphasising that India's decision to set aside the Indus Waters Treaty constitutes a **"lawless attitude"** and a dangerous weaponisation of vital water resources. The editorial argues that the treaty is a vital cornerstone of regional peace rather than a flexible technical agreement, warning that **"a strategy that ignores the legal rights of a downstream partner is a strategy that invites instability."** It concludes that coordinated international pressure is urgently required to force New Delhi to respect its legal commitments and prevent water from becoming a catastrophic regional flashpoint. (*The Nation*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **PIA Plans Direct Flights to Maldives Amid Fleet Expansion** — Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) CEO Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Amir Hayat announced that **direct flights to the Maldives will be launched as soon as new aircraft are added to the airline's fleet**. During a meeting with a high-level Maldivian delegation led by National Assembly Speaker Abdul Raheem Abdulla, both sides emphasised that improved air connectivity will significantly boost bilateral tourism, trade, and people-to-people ties. **The announcement coincides with PIA's ongoing fleet modernisation and discussions with Boeing regarding aircraft acquisition**, as Islamabad simultaneously pursues broader aviation reforms and privatisation initiatives. (*Daily Times*, [24 September 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **PTI Alleges Fresh Raids and Detentions Ahead of Islamabad Protest** — Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) claimed that police and security agencies intensified raids and arrests of its leaders and lawmakers ahead of the party's planned 27 September march on Islamabad demanding the release of Imran Khan. **According to PTI, the residences of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ministers Syed Fakhar Jehan and Riaz Khan were raided, while MNA Mohammad Zubair Khan Wazir was arrested following a police operation.** The party described these actions as a violation of democratic norms, parliamentary privilege and the rule of law. **Raja Nasir Abbas, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, questioned whether the arrests of MNAs had received the required approval from the National Assembly Speaker, calling the situation "an attack on Parliament".** (*The Nation*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **AJK Legislative Assembly Set to Elect New President** — The 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly is scheduled to elect a new president following the death of former president Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary. **A total of 53 elected assembly members and two serving members of the Kashmir Council are expected to participate in the voting process.** The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has nominated former minister **Dr Najeeb Naqi**, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has fielded former Legislative Assembly speaker **Chaudhary Latif Akbar** as its candidate. **Given the PML-N's majority in the assembly, Dr Najeeb Naqi is widely expected to secure victory and become the region's next president.** (*The Nation*, [24 September 2026](#))

- ◆ **Special Committee Voices Concern Over NCSW Leadership Vacancy** — The Special Committee on Gender Mainstreaming, headed by Chairperson Dr Nafisa Shah, expressed deep concern over the **continued delay in appointing chairpersons for the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women**, warning that prolonged vacancies impair institutional continuity. The committee highlighted that **“prolonged vacancies were affecting the functioning”** of these statutory bodies and urged immediate appointments under the relevant legal framework. Discussions at Parliament House also addressed staff shortages, resource constraints, and the need for a results-oriented approach to safeguard women's rights effectively. (*Dawn*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **PAEC Foundation Signs Agreement for 5MW Chashma Hydropower Project** — The PAEC Foundation has signed an agreement to construct a **5-megawatt hydropower project at Chashma**, marking its fifth hydel venture and expanding its renewable energy portfolio. The new plant, designated as the Foundation Hydel Power Plant Unit-05 (FHPP-05), will be built at the outfall of the Chashma-5 Nuclear Power Plant. The formal agreement was concluded at the PAEC headquarters in Islamabad by representatives from the PAEC Foundation, China Ocean Engineering Construction Corporation Limited, Ningbo Water Conservancy and Hydropower Planning and Design Institute Company Limited, and Habib Rafiq Engineering (Private) Limited. (*The Express Tribune*, [24 September 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Highlighted as Vulnerable to 'Super' El Niño Extreme Heat Risks** — Researchers at the University of Chicago's Climate Impact Lab warn that this year's **“super-El Niño” weather pattern could trigger up to 451,000 excess deaths globally** between June 2026 and February 2027, driven by a 44% increase in extremely hot days. While countries like Nigeria, Indonesia, and Sudan face immediate heavy fatalities, researchers noted that **key areas of the northern hemisphere, including India and Pakistan, are especially vulnerable** as the phenomenon extends into their summer months. Describing the climate event as a **“postcard from the future”**, experts emphasised that targeted emergency response efforts are urgently required to mitigate heat-related mortality. (*The Express Tribune*, [24 September 2026](#))



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