

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

25 August 2026

Security

- ◆ **Labourers Targeted in Balochistan's Pishin** — Five labourers from Punjab were killed on Monday when **armed men opened fire** on a road construction site near **Saranan town along the Quetta-Chaman Highway**. A senior police officer confirmed the attackers arrived on motorcycles and shot the workers, leaving one injured. The victims were shifted to the district hospital. This was the **second attack in three days**; earlier, militants blew up a police station in Saranan. The **Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies** reported a sharp deterioration in Balochistan's security last month, with overall deaths rising **241%** and security personnel casualties increasing by **933%**. (*Dawn*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Balochistan Tragedies Claim 13 Lives** — A series of accidents and shootings across **Balochistan** left **13 people dead** and **seven injured**, including children. In **Panjgur's Goran area**, a road accident killed five, including four women, and injured two children. In **Kohlu** and **Surab**, unidentified gunmen shot two men dead. In **Loralai**, two motorcyclists were killed when hit by a speeding vehicle, while a truck overturned trying to avoid them, injuring its driver. In **Awaran's Jhao area**, gunmen killed a father and son. Another motorcyclist was killed in **Bakhtiarabad**, with two others injured after being struck by a truck. Police and rescue teams shifted victims to hospitals, handing over bodies to families after medico-legal formalities. (*The Express Tribune*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Appeals for IMO Intervention on Captive Seafarers** — Pakistan has urged the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** to take "*urgent and effective institutional intervention*" for the release of **10 Pakistani sailors** held by Somali pirates since April, when the **MT Honour 25** tanker was seized off Puntland. Families in Karachi have staged protests, sharing videos of hostages suffering from illness, lack of food and clean water. During talks in London, **Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar** pressed IMO Secretary-General **Arsenio Dominguez** for action, while reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to maritime safety and governance. (*The News*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Info Ministry Denounces AI-Generated Video of Defence Minister** — Pakistan's **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting** has clarified that a circulating video of Defence Minister **Khawaja Asif** comparing Pakistan's progress with India's is **doctored**, with the audio created using **artificial intelligence (AI)**. The ministry posted on X: "*This news is FAKE and the voice in video is AI-generated. Please verify news from official sources before sharing.*" The fabricated clip falsely showed Asif questioning democracy, claiming "*Balochistan has slipped from our hands*" and alleging unrest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Kashmir. The ministry's fact-check followed traction of the video on social media and Indian outlets, underscoring growing concerns about **AI-driven misinformation**. (*The Express Tribune*, [25 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **CM Bugti Orders Surveillance Upgrade in Balochistan** — Chief Minister **Sarfraz Bugti** has directed authorities to accelerate the use of **modern technology for crime prevention** and upgrade the province's surveillance systems. Chairing a meeting on the **Balochistan Safe City Authority**, he was informed that the system had already identified **138 stolen vehicles** and detected **nine suspicious activities**, preventing major terrorist incidents. The authority also provided police with **631 pieces of evidence** in various cases. Bugti praised its role in protecting citizens and maintaining law and order. Meanwhile, the provincial government has ordered enhanced security measures across Balochistan to ensure safety during **12th Rabiul Awwal**. (*Dawn*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **India's Hydel Projects Threaten Indus Waters Treaty** — Pakistan's Indus Water Commissioner **Mehar Ali Shah** warned that while India's current ability to disrupt river flows for up to 10 days is manageable, the completion of ongoing hydropower projects could allow New Delhi to manipulate flows for **20–30 days**, breaching the **Indus Waters Treaty**. At an SDPI seminar, Shah cautioned this would undermine Pakistan's reliance on western rivers. Federal Minister for Water Resources **Mian Mueen Wattoo** described the Indus as "*the pulse of Pakistan*" and urged India to resume lawful data-sharing, stressing that "*water must not become a weapon.*" Legal expert **Ahmer Bilal Soofi** said India's move amounts to a breach of international law, drawing parallels with its unilateral revocation of Kashmir's special status. (*The Nation*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan's Water Crisis Rooted in Governance Failures** — Writer **Airaaf Ali** argues that Pakistan's worsening water scarcity is less about climate change or population growth and more about **political choices, institutional failure and the privatisation of a public resource**. Per capita water availability has collapsed to under 900 cubic metres, while groundwater — supplying nearly 70% of domestic needs — is being extracted faster than it can be replenished. The bottled water industry thrives because governments failed to provide safe drinking water, exploiting colonial-era laws that grant landowners rights over aquifers. Communities near extraction sites face falling water tables and unsafe supplies. Ali warns that "*a nation that cannot guarantee safe drinking water to its citizens cannot claim lasting security.*" He calls for treating groundwater as a **shared public trust**, enforcing transparent licensing, and investing in community-led solutions like rainwater harvesting and aquifer recharge. (*The Express Tribune*, [25 August 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **Economic Stability and Olive Policy Drive Pakistan Forward** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** hailed Pakistan's sovereign credit rating upgrade by **Moody's from Caa1 to B3** as "*clear evidence of stability.*" He praised the government's economic team, including **Ishaq Dar**, **Muhammad Aurangzeb**, and **Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir**, for reforms that boosted global confidence. The premier emphasised that Pakistan's economy is heading towards sustainability, with international institutions recognising its progress. Alongside this, he launched the **National Olive Value Chain Policy**, describing olive cultivation as a rare success story capable of reducing Pakistan's **\$4bn edible oil import bill**. Italy's cooperation was lauded, with Pakistan securing a permanent seat at the **International Olive Council**. (*The News*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Restore Wheat Support Price at Rs4,702, says Pakistan Kissan Ittehad** — Pakistan faces a looming **three-million-tonne wheat shortfall**, potentially costing **\$1.2bn in imports** unless urgent policy action is taken before the Rabi season. At a press conference, **PKI President Khalid**

Mahmood Khokhar warned that ineffective policies have caused farmers losses of **Rs2,200bn** over three years. He urged the government to reinstate the wheat support price at **Rs4,702 per 40kg**, noting that farmers' net cost is **Rs3,761 per maund**, and the proposed figure includes a 25% profit margin. PKI also demanded nutrient-based fertiliser subsidies across all phosphatic grades, warning that restricting relief to DAP alone would fuel speculation and drain foreign reserves. (*Dawn*, [25 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **ECC Approves Petroleum Storage and Re-export Policy** — The **Economic Coordination Committee (ECC)** chaired by Finance Minister **Muhammad Aurangzeb** has approved a landmark policy allowing **international oil suppliers to store petroleum products in Pakistan for later sale or re-export**. The framework, known as the *Policy Guideline on Import on Foreign Suppliers' Account through Customs Bonded Storage Facilities-2026*, aims to attract foreign investment and position Pakistan as a **regional petroleum storage hub**. Federal Petroleum Minister **Ali Pervaiz Malik** said the initiative would draw Gulf investment and enhance energy security, alongside Oman's **\$200m deferred-payment facility** for petrol and diesel imports. The ECC also approved wheat stock distribution, redevelopment negotiations for the Roosevelt Hotel, and funding for the **K-IV water project** and **Reko Diq security operations**. (*The News*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Partners with Google for Digital Transformation** — Pakistan has signed a landmark **MoU with Google** to advance its target of building a **\$30bn digital economy**, covering **digital skills, AI, education, payments, and government transformation**. Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** hailed the agreement as “*an important milestone in our partnership with Google*”, emphasising youth empowerment through modern technology. Google will issue **150,000 career certificates in 2026**, provide students with access to **Gemini AI Plus and Gemini Notes**, and explore establishing an **AI Centre of Excellence in Islamabad**. The partnership also includes accelerators for mobile apps and gaming, AI-driven reforms at the **Federal Board of Revenue**, and expanded digital payments infrastructure. (*The Express Tribune*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Consistent Upgrades Reflect Pakistan's Economic Stabilisation** — Pakistan's economy has seen repeated validation from international ratings agencies, with **Moody's upgrading the sovereign credit rating to B3 from Caa1** while maintaining a stable outlook. The agency cited stronger governance, rising reserves of around **\$17 billion**, improved debt affordability, and resilience to external shocks. Since 2024, all three major agencies — **Fitch, Moody's and S&P** — have upgraded Pakistan multiple times, while the **IMF, World Bank and ADB** have acknowledged stabilisation and reserve accumulation. The editorial notes that growth remains inadequate and structural weaknesses persist, but stresses that “*when agency after agency, lender after lender, records an improving trajectory, the pattern itself becomes evidence.*” Whatever remains undone, the government's stabilisation effort has produced results increasingly difficult to dismiss. (*The Nation*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan's Next Economic Challenge: Sustained Growth, not Dollars** — In his analysis, **Ahmad Mukhtar** argues that Pakistan has emerged from repeated cycles of fiscal and foreign-exchange crises, but now faces a tougher test: **achieving high-quality, investment-led growth**. Stabilisation has rebuilt reserves and contained inflation, yet the country still relies heavily on **remittances and external support**. Mukhtar warns that growth of 3–4% is insufficient and that Pakistan must shift from “managing scarcity to building competitiveness.” He stresses that **exports, savings and investment** must finance expansion, not short-term inflows. The next phase of reform, he writes,

should focus on **education, regulatory efficiency and trade liberalisation**, enabling Pakistan to grow without triggering another balance-of-payments crisis. *“Pakistan has already shown that it can survive. The next test, however, is much harder.”* (*The Express Tribune*, [25 August 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Tehran Urges US to Take First Step Towards De-escalation** — During a one-day visit to Tehran, Pakistan’s Chief of Defence Forces **Field Marshal Asim Munir** met Iranian President **Masoud Pezeshkian**, Parliament Speaker **Bagher Ghalibaf**, and Gen **Mohsen Rezaei**. Iranian leaders stressed that the **United States must fulfil its commitments under the Islamabad MoU** before talks can resume. Ghalibaf warned Washington’s approach was *“hindering regional stability and further eroding trust”*, while Rezaei declared, *“We distrust America and it must change its behaviour.”* Discussions centred on preventing escalation, reopening the **Strait of Hormuz**, and ending hostilities. Iran appreciated Pakistan’s constructive role, but insisted US compliance was essential for progress. (*Dawn*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **India’s Security Chief in Beijing for Border Talks** — India’s **National Security Adviser Ajit Doval** arrived in Beijing for discussions with Chinese Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** and Vice President **Han Zheng** on the disputed Himalayan border. The talks, ahead of the **September BRICS summit in New Delhi**, aim to uphold the consensus between leaders and *“jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the border areas,”* according to China’s foreign ministry. The visit comes amid lingering distrust following the deadly 2020 clash and recent reports of patrol stand-offs in **Arunachal Pradesh**, which India rejected. Despite tensions, ties have gradually improved with resumed flights and border trade. (*Dawn*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dar Strengthens Bilateral Ties with Kuwait** — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** held talks with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister **Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah**, reaffirming the importance of deepening the **close, brotherly relations between Pakistan and Kuwait**. The discussion covered bilateral relations and regional developments. Dar emphasised that *“dialogue and diplomacy, and the implementation of the Islamabad MoU in letter and spirit, remain the only way forward for lasting peace and stability.”* The exchange highlights Pakistan’s continued diplomatic outreach in the Gulf region, with a focus on cooperation and regional security. (*The Nation*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Uzbekistan’s Freight Surge Strengthens SCO Connectivity** — Freight traffic between **Uzbekistan and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** member states rose **40% to 33.5 million tonnes in 2025**, accounting for 80% of the country’s total international freight. The **Ministry of Transport** attributed the growth to expanding regional cooperation and new transport corridors. Russia, Kazakhstan, China and Kyrgyzstan together handled over 90% of the volume. The SCO’s focus on **transport and logistics connectivity** aims to counter global supply-chain disruptions through alternative land routes. Key projects include the **China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway**, expected to carry 8 million tonnes annually by 2030, and the **Uzbekistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan railway**, projected to handle up to 22 million tonnes by 2030 and 34 million tonnes by 2040 — both vital for linking **Central Asia with South Asia and beyond**. (*The Express Tribune*, [25 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Reimagining Pakistan's Republic for its 80th Anniversary** — Former Unilever Pakistan and Pakistan Business Council CEO **Ehsan Malik** argue that Pakistan must seize its renewed geostrategic relevance to build enduring institutional capability rather than rely on temporary strategic rents. He calls for a **ten-year constitutional reform programme** with milestones including credible elections, civilian supremacy, faster justice, universal foundational learning, a broader tax base and empowered local governments. Malik insists “*rule of law should be treated as economic infrastructure*”, and that education must be redefined as national security. Economic restructuring, energy reform, devolution and accountability through systems are essential. By its 90th anniversary, Pakistan should measure power by literacy, productivity, exports and poverty reduction. (*The News*, [25 August 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Grand Opposition Alliance Rejects New Provinces Proposal** — In its maiden joint parliamentary party meeting, the newly formed **Grand Opposition Alliance** unanimously opposed the creation of additional provinces or administrative units, citing Pakistan’s “critical circumstances.” At a press conference, **Maulana Fazlur Rehman**, **JUI-F** chief, declared: “*Neither is the environment conducive to such a move, nor is there any prior preparation for it. Such an initiative would only increase political mistrust.*” He alleged that efforts to weaken provinces stem from attempts to abolish the **18th Amendment** and the **NFC Award**, enabling greater control over provincial resources. The alliance also demanded the release of political prisoners to stabilise the political environment. (*The Nation*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **PTI Chief Rejects Deal Speculation** — Barrister **Gohar Ali Khan**, Chairman of **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)**, categorically dismissed rumours of a deal with the government, insisting that party founder **Imran Khan** would not have endured “*three years in jail if he had intended to make a deal.*” Speaking outside the Supreme Court alongside **Sardar Latif Khosa**, Gohar emphasised that Imran’s health should not be politicised and clarified the party’s sole demand: medical tests at a private hospital with his sister **Uzma Khan** and physician **Dr Faisal Sultan** on the board. He confirmed meetings with Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi** but refused to disclose details, reiterating respect for the Supreme Court’s authority. (*The News*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Political Consultations Signal Opposition Engagement** — Former prime minister **Shahid Khaqan Abbasi** and ex-finance minister **Miftah Ismail**, leading the **Awaam Pakistan Party**, met **Maulana Fazlur Rehman**, chief of **JUI-F**, to discuss Pakistan’s prevailing political situation and national challenges. According to a **JUI-F** statement, the meeting focused on the **supremacy of the Constitution**, strengthening the role of **Parliament**, and protecting **democratic values**. The leaders emphasised the importance of effective political contacts and consultations among parties to promote stability. While no formal alliance was announced, the talks reflect growing coordination among opposition forces, with Fazlur Rehman continuing wider consultations on constitutional governance and parliamentary democracy. (*The Nation*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **PML-N Strengthens Grip in AJK Assembly** — Forty-six newly elected members of the ‘**Azad**’ **Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly** were sworn in, marking the start of the new parliamentary term. The **Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)** emerged as the dominant force, with **31 MLAs** plus support from the lone **Awami Dast-o-Bazu** member, compared to **14**

PPP lawmakers. The PML-N consolidated its majority by winning **six of eight reserved seats**, including three for women, and those for **Ulema and Mashaikh, overseas Kashmiris, and a technocrat**. The PPP secured two women's seats, one through a dramatic draw. With this majority, PML-N is set to elect the new prime minister, with **Shah Ghulam Qadir** tipped as a strong contender. (*The Express Tribune*, [25 August 2026](#))

- ◆ **Fixing Agriculture Requires More Than Intentions** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif's** renewed push to strengthen agricultural research, provide quality seeds and improve crop estimate systems could address long-standing weaknesses in farm productivity. Yet, as the editorial notes, "*good intentions alone are not enough.*" Structural reforms are essential: policies must prioritise **small and medium farmers** over powerful lobbies, such as sugar millers, who have historically shaped policy to their advantage. Cotton farmers too often lose value to middlemen, reducing yields. Real reform means access to **affordable credit, reliable inputs, certified seeds, and effective extension services**. Market reforms — storage, grading, transport, digital information and transparent pricing — are equally vital. Without political will to confront entrenched interests, no intervention will deliver the productivity gains Pakistan urgently needs. (*Dawn*, [25 August 2026](#))
- ◆ **Entrenched Patriarchy Fuels Women's Trauma** — The editorial condemns successive governments for failing to build protective structures and pro-women narratives, noting three recent cases of deadly abuse: **Hina Javed** in Rawalpindi, found tortured and strangled; **Hina Zareef** in Islamabad, allegedly shot by her father for ending an abusive marriage; and **Jannat Khatoon** in Sukkur, burnt during a quarrel. All faced violence within supposed 'safe' spaces. Despite laws mandating prison terms for 'honour' killings, conviction rates remain dismal — **0.5% for honour killings, 1.3% for domestic violence** — due to a chauvinistic justice system. Victims are often doubted, blamed, or pressured into settlements. The editorial insists reforms are urgent: more women in police, fast-track courts, legal aid, and identity protection. "*Violence — the daily truth of Pakistan's women — has placed the country among the most dangerous places for females. Justice alone can keep the social contract between citizens and the state from fraying.*" (*Dawn*, [25 August 2026](#))



From Centre for Peace Studies (CPS), New Delhi



*[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**].*