

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

08 October 2026

Security

- ◆ **DG ISPR Confirms Longstanding Presence of Pakistani Troops in Saudi Arabia** — Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), has confirmed that **Pakistani military personnel are stationed in Saudi Arabia** and have been deployed there for decades. In an interview with CNN, he said Pakistani contingents from multiple military domains are already in the Kingdom and emphasised that the Makkah Defence Alliance did not emerge in isolation but is rooted in longstanding diplomatic, political, military, and people-to-people ties among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye. **He described the alliance as part of broader efforts to strengthen collective security and defence coordination, while clarifying that the Pakistani forces currently in Saudi Arabia operate across different functional domains.** The remarks constitute one of the clearest official confirmations of Pakistan's military presence within the framework of evolving regional defence cooperation. (*The Nation*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Security Forces Kill 18 Militants in KP and Balochistan Operations** — According to **security sources**, security forces killed **18 militants** in separate intelligence-based operations conducted in **North Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Mastung, Balochistan**. The sources stated that **13 militants** were killed during an operation in North Waziristan following surveillance of their movements and hideouts, while **five militants** were killed in separate actions in the **Siyah Pasht and Killi Gashtari areas of Mastung**. **A large quantity of weapons and ammunition was reportedly recovered during the operations.** Security forces have continued clearance and search operations in the affected areas and reiterated their commitment to counterterrorism efforts under the **Azm-e-Istehkam** campaign and **Operation Radd-ul-Fitna 3**. **The operations were presented as part of ongoing efforts to eliminate militant networks and enhance security in the region.** (*The Nation*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Defence Minister Criticises KP Government Amid Political and Security Tensions** — Khawaja Asif, Pakistan's Defence Minister, criticised the **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government**, arguing that the province could no longer be left in the hands of what he described as “incompetent, insensitive rulers” and alleged Taliban sympathisers. He stated that **“The time has come to make crucial decisions”** and maintained that national unity and security could not be jeopardised. **Asif also warned that the federal government would defend Islamabad if any attempt were made to seize or attack the capital, stressing that protecting the Federal Capital was both a right and a responsibility of the state.** While reaffirming support for political dialogue and negotiations, he said any resolution must safeguard Pakistan's security, integrity and broader national interests. **He emphasised that political instability and actions perceived as threatening national security would not be tolerated.** (*The Nation*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **KP Cabinet Approves Rs5.33b for CTD Infrastructure** — The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet has sanctioned **Rs5.33 billion** for strengthening the **Counter Terrorism Department (CTD)**, including construction of the **Peshawar Regional CTD Headquarters**. Information Minister **Shafi Jan** said the funds will enhance CTD's intelligence and operational capacity. The cabinet also extended the



Village Councils Cleanliness Programme at a cost of **Rs7.66 billion**, approved a resolution condemning the alleged mistreatment of **CM Sohail Afridi** by Punjab Police, and finalised policies for **reserved medical seats** in South Waziristan. Additional measures included **financial aid for 81 patients**, land transfers for a **drug rehabilitation centre in Swabi** and a **child protection unit in D.I. Khan**, and concurrence to secure **\$250 million World Bank financing** for the READY-KP Project. (*The Nation*, [08 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Three More Pakistani Sailors Return from Somalia** — Three crew members released from **Somali pirates' custody** arrived in Karachi on an Ethiopian Airlines flight, where they were received by **Sindh Governor Nehal Hashmi** and **Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab**. The rescued sailors — **Second Engineer Hussain Yousuf, Imran Ali Junejo and Muhammad Yasin** — endured a **five-month ordeal** after their ship was hijacked on **21 April**. Yousuf said an operation to retake the vessel on **29 September** involved intense firing, during which **three Pakistanis were killed**. Yasin described being tied to the ship's railing and subjected to severe treatment, calling survival "**miraculous**." Junejo added that captivity brought **daily ordeals** that were "difficult to describe in words." (*The Express Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Russia's Taliban Outreach Driven by US Concerns** — Moscow's recent recognition of the **Taliban regime as Afghanistan's national government** has sparked speculation of a policy shift, but Pakistani and diplomatic sources insist Russia's softer tone is aimed at **blocking a US return to Afghanistan**, not endorsing Taliban policies. At the **Moscow Format meeting**, Russia's foreign minister praised the Taliban, downplaying their links to terrorism, which raised eyebrows in diplomatic circles. Sources said Russia is pursuing a "**soft approach**" to **prevent Kabul from leaning towards Washington**, describing its strategy as **engagement rather than confrontation**. Importantly, there has been **no change in Russia's policy towards Pakistan**, with joint military exercises concluded and a visit by PM **Shehbaz Sharif** to Moscow being planned. The absence of a joint statement at the meeting was attributed to **differences with the Taliban**, not Russia-Pakistan ties. Pakistan continues to press Kabul to act against groups like the **TTP**, while Russia's outreach remains a **strategic calculation** rather than full endorsement of Taliban governance. (*The Express Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **PM Nominates Finance Official as Senior Adviser to IMF Executive Director** — Prime Minister **Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif** has nominated **Mariam Kayani**, a **BS-20 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service** and currently **Joint Secretary at the Finance Division**, for appointment as **Senior Adviser to the Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)** in Washington, D.C., for a three-year term. According to official notifications, her name was selected from a shortlist that also included **Nadeem Ahsan** and **Moazzam Raza**. **The appointment remains subject to IMF approval**. Reports indicate that Kayani has played a central role in coordinating Pakistan's engagement under the **US\$7 billion IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF)**. If endorsed by the Fund, she would succeed **Saifullah Dogar** and serve in a position representing a constituency of regional member countries at the IMF. (*The News*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan, IMF Resolve Key Issues Ahead of Fourth Programme Review** — Pakistan and the visiting **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** mission have reportedly concluded discussions on the **fourth review of the US\$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF)**, with most major issues said to have been settled and a formal IMF statement awaited. **While the IMF reportedly expressed reservations regarding the newly created Pakistan Virtual Asset Regulatory Authority**

(PVARA) and a few remaining matters, officials indicated that progress towards a Staff-Level Agreement was expected. Both sides agreed on a revised mechanism for the declaration of assets by civil servants, under which the total value of assets would be disclosed rather than detailed holdings. The discussions also covered fiscal, monetary and energy-sector reforms, including the continuation of the **FBR's Rs15.264 trillion tax target**, gradual foreign-exchange liberalisation and the replacement of electricity cross-subsidies with targeted support through the **Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)**. The BISP stipend is reportedly set to increase from Rs14,500 to Rs19,500 from January 2027. (*The News*, [8 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Questions Raised Over Transparency International Pakistan's Governance and Accountability** — In an investigative report, **Fakhar Durrani** examines the governance, funding, oversight and research practices of **Transparency International Pakistan (TIP)**, arguing that the anti-corruption watchdog itself faces questions about transparency and independent scrutiny. The report notes that TIP reported approximately **Rs832.7 million in grants and other income between 2010 and 2025** and has not undergone an independent organisational, governance or forensic audit beyond regular financial audits. **It also highlights concerns regarding donor disclosures, conflict-of-interest safeguards, complaint-verification procedures and the methodology used in national corruption perception surveys.** The article cites criticism from academics and former judges, including questions about the reliability of perception-based measures and survey sampling. **TIP rejected suggestions of donor influence, maintaining that its research is independent and subject to board oversight and internal and external review.** (*The News*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **TAPI Pipeline Progress Boosts Pakistan's Hopes for Central Asian Gas Supplies** — Renewed progress on the **Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline** has strengthened prospects for Pakistan to access a new source of natural gas from Central Asia. Construction is advancing on the **153-kilometre Serhetabat-Herat section in Afghanistan**, with hundreds of Turkmen specialists and heavy equipment deployed on the project. The planned **1,814-kilometre pipeline** is designed to transport **33 billion cubic metres of gas annually** from Turkmenistan's Galkynysh field to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. **Experts cited in the report argue that TAPI could enhance Pakistan's energy security by reducing dependence on imported LNG and strengthening its position as a regional energy transit corridor.** However, they emphasise that the project's long-term success will depend on competitive pricing, security arrangements, commercial viability and sustained demand from gas-consuming sectors. (*The Nation*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Oman Minister Praises Punjab's Interest-Free Housing Scheme** — Oman's Housing and Urban Planning Minister **Dr Khalfan bin Said Al Shueili** lauded Punjab's **Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar** initiative as superior to Oman's loan-based housing model, citing the absence of interest on loans for low-income families. Meeting **Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif** in Muscat, he congratulated her on Punjab receiving the **UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour** and expressed keen interest in the scheme. Maryam Nawaz said over **200,000 people had received interest-free loans, with 125,000 families already settled in new homes**, and Rs260 billion disbursed. She highlighted a **99% recovery rate** due to affordable instalments. Dr Al Shueili noted Oman's housing grants and loans but called Punjab's scheme "a better initiative." (*The Nation*, [08 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **German Companies Invited to Explore Investment in Pakistan** — Federal Commerce Minister **Jam Kamal Khan** has urged German firms to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan and join the upcoming **FoodAg exhibition in Karachi**. Meeting German Ambassador **Ina Lepel**, he praised Germany's role in the **EU's GSP Plus scheme** and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to reforms. Ambassador Lepel acknowledged Pakistan's legislative progress but stressed the need for

effective implementation and measurable results. She highlighted opportunities in **agriculture, food processing, technology, manufacturing and renewable energy**, encouraging stronger private-sector cooperation. Pakistan also raised the issue of **Basmati rice GI protection**, with **Rana Isaan Afzal** emphasising the need to safeguard growers' interests. Lepel welcomed Pakistan's structured approach and invited Khan to the **Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business in Seoul** later this month. (*The Nation*, [08 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Meeting to Tackle Iran Trade Hurdles** — The **Gwadar Port Authority (GPA)** and **Customs Transit Trade** have decided to convene a **multi-stakeholder meeting next Thursday** to finalise an action plan for streamlining **cargo movement to Iran via Gwadar Port**. GPA Chairman **Noorul Haq Baloch** and Customs Transit Trade DG **Irfan Javed** agreed the meeting was necessary to address persistent **operational bottlenecks** at the **Gabd/Rimdhani 250 border crossing**, despite directives from the Ministry of Commerce and FBR. Separately, Baloch met **Karachi Port Trust Chairman Shahid Ahmed** to discuss enhancing connectivity and boosting **maritime economic growth**. (*Dawn*, [08 October 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Pakistan, Belarus Discuss Expanding Defence and Security Cooperation** — A high-level delegation from the **Republic of Belarus**, led by **Lieutenant General Aleksandr Volfovich**, **State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus**, met **Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir**, **Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces**, at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. The discussions focused on **regional and global security developments, matters of mutual interest and opportunities to enhance bilateral defence cooperation**. Field Marshal Asim Munir reaffirmed **Pakistan's desire to further deepen defence and security ties with Belarus**, while the visiting dignitary expressed support for **strengthening cooperation between the two countries**. The Belarusian delegation also appreciated Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace and stability. The meeting underscored the **growing engagement between Islamabad and Minsk in the fields of defence, security and strategic cooperation**. (*The Nation*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Reiterates Call for Kashmir Resolution in Meeting with UN Chief** — During a meeting with **United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres** in Islamabad, **Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif** reaffirmed Pakistan's position that the **Jammu and Kashmir dispute must be resolved peacefully in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people**. He also called for a more effective, inclusive and representative United Nations, while supporting the Secretary-General's **UN80 Initiative**. **Shehbaz Sharif maintained that India's unilateral decision to place the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance had no legal basis and stressed that the treaty remained a binding international agreement**. The prime minister also voiced concern over terrorist groups operating from Afghan territory, emphasising the need for verifiable action against them. **He further highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, including mediation between the United States and Iran, and reaffirmed support for Palestinian statehood and the Gaza Peace Plan**. (*The Nation*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Bahrain Foreign Minister Visits Pakistan to Advance Bilateral Cooperation** — **Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani**, **Foreign Minister of Bahrain**, is visiting Pakistan from **7 to 8 October 2026** at the invitation of **Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar**. During the visit, the two sides are co-chairing the **third session of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission**, which will review bilateral relations and explore opportunities for enhanced cooperation. **Discussions are expected to cover trade, investment, economic collaboration,**

defence and security, labour and manpower, and cultural exchanges, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest. The visit reflects the close and longstanding ties between Pakistan and Bahrain, founded on shared values and strong people-to-people connections. **Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral engagement and expanding mutually beneficial cooperation.** (*The Nation*, [8 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Gilani Calls for Enhanced Pakistan–Tanzania Cooperation in Trade and Technology** — Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, during a meeting with Mussa Azzan Zungu, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, on the sidelines of the 153rd Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Arusha, proposed a range of measures to strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and Tanzania. He advocated the establishment of a **resident Tanzanian diplomatic mission in Islamabad** to facilitate visas, business travel, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. **Gilani also called for greater cooperation in trade, investment, information technology, digital innovation, agriculture, education and skills development, alongside stronger links between the business communities and ports of both countries.** He further urged the activation of parliamentary friendship groups and expanded academic exchanges, stressing that the next phase of bilateral ties should be driven by **trade, technology, parliamentary diplomacy and stronger public connectivity.** (*The Nation*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Afghan Envoy Calls for Dialogue to Reopen Pakistan-Afghanistan Border** — Syed Abdul Jabbar Takhari, Afghanistan’s Consul General in Karachi, urged the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce to help facilitate dialogue aimed at resolving the prolonged closure of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Speaking at the **Islamic Economic Summit Diplomats** event in Karachi, he said the border had remained closed for a year, causing substantial losses to bilateral trade and leaving thousands of small traders unemployed on both sides. **Takhari argued that there was no alternative to dialogue and maintained that the majority of people in both countries wanted the issue resolved.** He called for the restoration of trade and cooperation based on mutual understanding, stressing that reopening the border would benefit traders, industrialists and transporters while boosting economic activity in both countries. (*The News*, [8 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Vatican Envoy to Visit Pakistan 8-10 Oct** — The Foreign Office announced that Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States and International Organisations of the Holy See, will make an **official visit to Pakistan from 8–10 October** at the invitation of Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. The visit coincides with the **75th anniversary of Pakistan-Vatican diplomatic ties** and marks the **first-ever visit** by a Vatican secretary for relations with states. Gallagher will meet **PM Shehbaz Sharif** and other officials to discuss **interfaith harmony, dialogue, peace and regional developments**, and is also expected to interact with Pakistan’s **Catholic community**. The FO described the visit as an **important milestone** in strengthening cooperation and promoting **mutual understanding and trust.** (*Dawn*, [08 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **France Holds Talks with Taliban on Deportations** — France has opened a **technical dialogue with the Taliban government** to facilitate the deportation of Afghan nationals, particularly those **convicted in European courts**. Paris, which has no formal diplomatic ties with the Taliban since their 2021 takeover, joined around **20 EU countries** seeking faster removals. A diplomatic source said the talks aim to prevent individuals “**posing a threat to public order**” from remaining in Europe, but stressed this does not signal a shift in France’s stance on Afghanistan. Human rights groups have criticised EU engagement with the Taliban, who continue to enforce **strict Islamic law**, banning women from most jobs, public spaces, and education beyond age 12. (*Dawn*, [08 October 2026](#))

Politics, Culture, Etc.

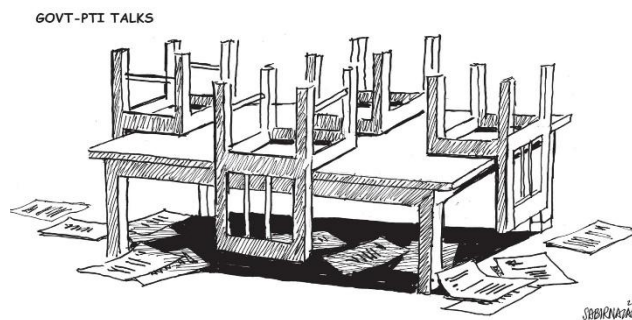
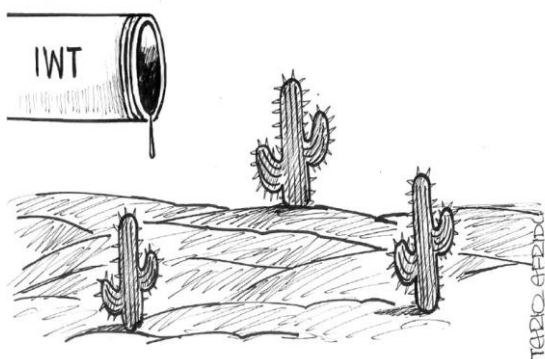
- ◆ **Supreme Court Upholds Death Sentence in Social Media Blasphemy Case** — The **Supreme Court of Pakistan**, through a bench headed by **Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar**, dismissed the appeal of **Qaiser Ayub**, thereby upholding his death sentence in a case involving the alleged uploading of blasphemous content on social media. The case originated from a complaint filed by **Muhammad Saeed** in Talagang against two individuals accused of sharing such material online. **While co-accused Amoon was acquitted due to insufficient evidence, Qaiser Ayub's conviction and death sentence were maintained following the Supreme Court's decision.** The ruling represents the final outcome of Ayub's appeal against the sentence imposed by the lower courts in the case. (*The News*, [8 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Backchannel Contacts Continue Despite PTI March and Collapse of Formal Talks** — According to a report by **Ansar Abbasi**, formal negotiations between the government and **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)** over the party's march towards Islamabad may have failed, but communication channels remain open through continued contacts between **PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan** and **Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi**. The report states that the two leaders met again after the breakdown of talks and the commencement of the march led by **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi**. **According to informed sources cited by the writer, both sides remain interested in preventing further escalation and preserving a political route to resolving tensions.** The report notes that disagreements over counterterrorism measures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa contributed to the collapse of formal talks, while PTI continued to press demands relating to **Imran Khan's legal, prison and family-access issues**. **The writer suggests that continuing backchannel diplomacy reflects a mutual recognition that dialogue remains preferable to a prolonged confrontation in Islamabad.** (*The News*, [8 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **ATC Indicts Imaan Mazari and Hadi Chattha in Security Barriers Case** — The **Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC)**, presided over by **Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra**, formally indicted **Imaan Mazari** and **Hadi Ali Chattha** in a case related to the alleged removal of security barriers. Defence counsel, including **Advocate Zainab Janjua**, objected to the framing of charges, arguing that the accused had not been provided copies of the case documents and had been denied access to their lawyers despite court orders. **Both accused appeared before the court via video link and maintained that they had not received the required documents.** Despite these objections, the court proceeded with the indictment, noting that the accused could challenge the order through legal channels. **The court also directed that Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha be produced in person at the next hearing and summoned prosecution witnesses.** (*The News*, [8 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Achakzai Links Talks to Imran Meeting** — Opposition Leader and **PkMAP Chairman Mahmood Khan Achakzai** has said that meaningful dialogue between the government and opposition requires **direct consultation with PTI founder Imran Khan**. Addressing a public gathering in Zhob, he declared he would not join formal negotiations until such a meeting was held. Achakzai urged all political parties to develop a **common national agenda** to tackle Pakistan's economic and political challenges, stressing the need to rise above partisan interests. He also called for **fresh appointments to the Election Commission**, including the Chief Election Commissioner, as current terms near expiry. On regional issues, he welcomed **international diplomatic efforts on Afghanistan**, emphasising the global responsibility to support peace and stability. (*The Express Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Bilawal May Replace Naek as JCP Member** — Two parliamentary members of the **Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP)** — PPP Senator **Farooq H. Naek** and PML-N MNA **Sheikh Aftab** — have resigned, opening the way for a reshuffle. Sources say **PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari** is interested in joining the commission, giving his party greater influence in **judicial appointments**. The PPP leadership has expressed dissatisfaction over failing to secure its preferred nominees, particularly for the **Sindh High Court**. Legal experts warn Bilawal's inclusion could heighten **political influence in judicial appointments**, with **Barrister Salahuddin Ahmed** noting that parties no longer pretend to assess candidates on merit. Advocate **Rida Hosain** argued that constitutional amendments have weakened judicial independence, leaving appointments vulnerable to **political interference**. (*The Express Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Directs Faster ML-1 Upgrade** — Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** has ordered authorities to **expedite the Main Line-1 (ML-1) railway upgrade** and introduce **corporate-style reforms** to make Pakistan Railways economically self-sufficient. Chairing a review meeting, he stressed using **encroached railway land worth billions** for commercial projects to fund ML-1, which spans **1,726 km** across four sections from Karachi to Peshawar. Shehbaz praised NAB and Railways for retrieving encroached land and emphasised better passenger facilities and freight transport. He also directed the removal of obstacles in financing for **housing, agriculture and SMEs**, with the **SME Portal** to be operational by November for real-time loan monitoring. Separately, he tasked **Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal** to engage **JI Deputy Emir Liaquat Baloch**, leading to the party postponing its protest call. (*The Express Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Afridi Hits Back at Kundi Over Security Meeting** — Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister **Sohail Afridi** has condemned Governor **Faisal Karim Kundi's** decision to chair a security meeting, calling it “**an attack on the Constitution and democracy**.” Afridi told the provincial cabinet that the governor lacked authority to summon officials while an elected government was in place, insisting that only a **vote of no-confidence** could remove a chief minister. He accused the PPP of attempting to create “**another East Pakistan**” and warned against conspiracies to destabilise the province. Afridi defended his government's record on **policing and counter-terrorism**, highlighting investments in the **CTD and Special Branch**, and criticised the federal government for treating K-P as a “**stepchild**” by withholding promised funds for tribal districts. He said displaced families had yet to receive full compensation, with **Rs100 billion outstanding**, and rejected claims that provincial non-cooperation was behind the security crisis. (*The Express Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#))



[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**].