

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

09 October 2026

Security

- ◆ **Pakistan Rejects Reports of PAF Role in Yemen Conflict as Regional Tensions Escalate** — Pakistan's **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** dismissed as "fake and fabricated" media reports claiming that **Pakistan Air Force (PAF)** aircraft were being used in operations against Yemen's Houthis, urging international media to avoid speculative reporting regarding military deployments under the **Makkah Joint Defence Agreement**. Meanwhile, **Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan** said Türkiye was assessing possible defensive contributions to Saudi Arabia, including air-defence and technical support, while stressing that the alliance was not intended for offensive operations. **In a separate development, US President Donald Trump stated that Washington would not attack Iran before the November midterm elections, citing "productive discussions" with Tehran.** The report also highlighted continuing Houthi attacks on Saudi targets, heightened regional security concerns and ongoing diplomatic efforts related to the Strait of Hormuz and the wider Middle East conflict. (*The News*, [9 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Security Forces Eliminate Nine Militants in North Waziristan Operations** — According to **security sources**, security forces killed **nine militants**, including four alleged senior commanders of **Fitna al-Khawarij**, during intelligence-based operations conducted in the **Palangzai, Nadeem Kot and Kot Khazri areas of North Waziristan**. The sources identified the slain commanders as **Khalid Raza, Kamran, Musa and Maftooh**. **A large cache of weapons and ammunition was reportedly recovered during the operations, while several militant hideouts were also destroyed.** The operations were carried out as part of the ongoing **Azm-e-Istehkam** counterterrorism campaign. **Security sources stated that clearance operations were continuing in the area as part of efforts to dismantle militant networks and strengthen security in the region.** (*The Nation*, [9 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Seeks Stronger Defence Ties with African and Central Asian States** — Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif met separately with Ethiopian Ambassador Dr Oumer Hussein Oba, Rwanda's High Commissioner Harerimana Fatou and Tajikistan's Ambassador Yusuf Sharifzoda in Islamabad to discuss expanding cooperation. The talks focused on **defence and aviation collaboration**, with Asif emphasising Pakistan's desire to **strengthen bilateral relations and enhance mutually beneficial partnerships**. The visiting diplomats acknowledged existing cooperation and expressed their willingness to broaden ties. The meetings provided an opportunity to explore new avenues in defence and aviation while reinforcing broader bilateral relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tajikistan. (*The Nation*, [09 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Makkah Defence Pact Allows Direct Action if Threatened** — Defence Minister Khawaja Asif clarified that **no stipulation of the Makkah Defence Alliance prevents member states from direct involvement** should one face a threat. Speaking on ARY News, he explained, *"To defend one of the member countries, the remaining two would get involved as if they are defending themselves."* The pact, signed on 7 August by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, commits members to collective deterrence. Amid renewed fighting between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, the alliance agreed rapid deployment of forces. Asif reaffirmed Pakistan's readiness to stand by Riyadh both



“practically and diplomatically,” while officials stressed the alliance remains defensive in nature. (*The Nation*, [09 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Inquiry Commission Criticises Security Failures in Mangi Attack** — The judicial inquiry commission into the Mangi Dam terrorist attack, headed by Justice Aamir Nawaz Rana, heard testimony from political figures, officials and victims’ families. Former Balochistan Assembly member **Nasrullah Khan Zayrai** stated he had warned senior authorities of terrorist activity as early as 6 July, but no immediate action was taken. The commission expressed displeasure at the **Pakistan Telecommunication Authority’s failure to provide details on action against fake news** and ordered a comprehensive report. Officials confirmed proposals to increase the **Martyrs’ Compensation Package**, with payments exempt from tax. The commission also took notice of a widow’s complaint of intimidation and extortion attempts over her compensation. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Fresh Security Audit Ordered for Foreign Nationals in Faisalabad** — Regional Police Officer **Inamur Rehman Malik** has directed police to conduct a **comprehensive security audit of foreigners and key installations** at the Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC). Chairing a meeting on the security of Chinese nationals, attended by FIEDMC CEO **Qurratul Ain Memon**, CPO Tanveer Hussain and senior officers, Malik emphasised that **ensuring the safety of foreigners working in the industrial zone is a top responsibility**. The CEO briefed the RPO on administrative and security matters, while police officials reviewed measures to strengthen protection at the estate. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 October 2026](#))

Economy

- ◆ **Bahrain Reaffirms Commitment to GCC-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement** — During the **third session of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission** in Islamabad, **Bahrain’s Foreign Minister Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani** reaffirmed his country’s commitment to finalising the **GCC-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement** and expanding bilateral cooperation with Pakistan. Co-chaired by **Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar**, the session agreed to establish a **Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment**, convene a Joint Working Group on Energy, and deepen collaboration in food security, information technology, labour mobility, health, education, culture and sport. **Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif** described Bahrain as a longstanding partner and stressed the importance of strengthening ties in trade, investment, energy and human resource development. **Both sides also discussed regional developments and emphasised dialogue, de-escalation and economic cooperation as key pillars of bilateral relations.** (*The Nation*, [9 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan Reaches IMF Staff-Level Agreement, Unlocking New Financing** — Pakistan and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** have reached a **staff-level agreement** on the fourth review of the US\$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the third review of the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). Subject to IMF Executive Board approval, Pakistan will receive approximately **US\$1.0 billion under the EFF and US\$210 million under the RSF**, bringing total disbursements under both programmes to about **US\$5.7 billion**. The IMF urged the government to **phase out the fuel subsidy scheme** because of its high fiscal cost and broad coverage, while increasing targeted support through social protection programmes. The IMF also called for higher spending on health and education, timely energy tariff adjustments and reforms to strengthen long-term economic growth and climate resilience. (*The News*, [9 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **WTO Raises Trade Growth Forecast, Pakistan Among Beneficiaries** — The World Trade Organisation has sharply revised its global trade growth outlook, projecting **3.9pc merchandise trade growth in 2026 and 4.1pc in 2027**, driven by AI-related investment. Despite disruptions from the Middle East conflict, the WTO noted that some countries, including Pakistan, are gaining. **Pakistan's sea freight transport exports rose 73pc year-on-year in the first half of 2026**, while vessel calls at Karachi terminals were **14pc higher in July**. Pakistan also recorded a **23pc rise in computer services exports**. However, the WTO cautioned that rerouted shipping has increased congestion and costs, with surcharges imposed on South Asian ports. The forecast remains subject to risks, including oil price volatility and potential slowdown in AI investment. (*Dawn*, [08 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Govt Rejects World Bank Poverty Findings, WTO Notes Trade Gains** — Economic adviser **Khurram Schehzad** criticised the World Bank's claim that **Pakistan accounts for 48% of the extremely poor population in the MENAAP region**, calling it misleading and part of a global trend. He argued that countries like Lebanon, Argentina and Syria had seen poverty increases "far greater and more severe" than Pakistan's. Meanwhile, the **World Trade Organisation upgraded global trade growth forecasts to 3.9pc for 2026 and 4.1pc for 2027**, noting Pakistan's gains from Middle East disruptions. **Sea freight exports rose 73pc year-on-year**, with vessel calls at Karachi terminals up 14pc in July, while computer services exports grew 23pc. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Reserves Inch Higher Amid Market Uncertainty** — Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves rose modestly, with **State Bank holdings increasing by \$15 million to \$21.454 billion**, bringing total liquid reserves to **\$26.797 billion**. Commercial banks' reserves fell by \$17 million to \$5.344 billion. The rupee gained slightly, closing at 277.01 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, **gold prices rebounded by Rs600 per tola to Rs435,036**, after a sharp decline the previous day, tracking international bullion's recovery. Analyst **Adnan Agar, Director at Interactive Commodities**, described the market as "completely sluggish," noting gold was struggling to establish direction, though a fall below \$4,000 per ounce appeared unlikely without major shocks. Silver prices slipped by Rs120 per tola to Rs6,368. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 October 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Pakistan Flags Afghan Militancy in UN Talks** — During a meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi warned that **25 militant organisations are operating in Afghanistan, posing a major threat to global peace**. He emphasised Pakistan's frontline role in the *global war against terrorism* and urged collective international action. Naqvi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to UN peacekeeping, noting that **181 Pakistani personnel have sacrificed their lives** in such missions, with police officers also serving in UN operations. Guterres praised Pakistan's contribution, stating, "*The role played by Pakistan in maintaining world peace is commendable.*" Naqvi expressed gratitude for UN assistance during natural disasters. (*The Nation*, [09 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **UN Warns of Taliban Crackdown on Women Amid Returnee Crisis** — The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that **at least 52 women and one girl were arrested or detained in Herat and Kabul between July and September** for alleged dress code violations, including not wearing a chador, showing hair, or appearing in public without a mahram. UNAMA warned that such acts, involving **verbal abuse, beatings and threats**, violate women's rights to freedom of movement and expression. The Mission urged the Taliban to end discriminatory

enforcement. Meanwhile, the International Organisation for Migration highlighted the plight of **6.5 million Afghans returning from Iran and Pakistan since 2023**, stressing urgent needs for livelihoods, shelter, documentation and services. (*The Nation*, [09 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **Direct Europe Shipping Link Restored for Pakistan Exporters** — Federal Maritime Affairs Minister Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry announced that the **Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) has reinstated its PREMIUM IPAK service**, restoring direct connectivity between Karachi and major European ports. Weekly calls at Karachi Gateway Terminal International will now link Pakistan to destinations including **Felixstowe, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Bremerhaven, Antwerp, Le Havre and London Gateway**. The minister said this development is crucial for **export-oriented industries, especially textiles**, which had faced longer transit times and higher freight costs due to disruptions in global shipping routes, particularly in the Red Sea. He cautioned, however, that wider challenges in international trade remain, while efforts continue to strengthen Pakistan's role as a regional transshipment hub. (*Dawn*, [09 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Sindh and Türkiye Strengthen Ties in Public Services** — Sindh Chief Minister **Syed Murad Ali Shah** reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to expanding cooperation with Türkiye in **education, healthcare, culture, disaster management and community development**. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TiKA), led by Vice President **Dr Ali Erjan**. The delegation briefed him on ongoing projects, including **solar-powered water filtration plants in Umerkot and Pano Aqil**, providing thousands with clean drinking water, and a **rickshaw livelihood programme in Karachi** supporting low-income families. The meeting also reviewed disaster response training for Sindh rescue personnel. Shah emphasised that **international partnerships are essential for reforms and socio-economic development**. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 October 2026](#))

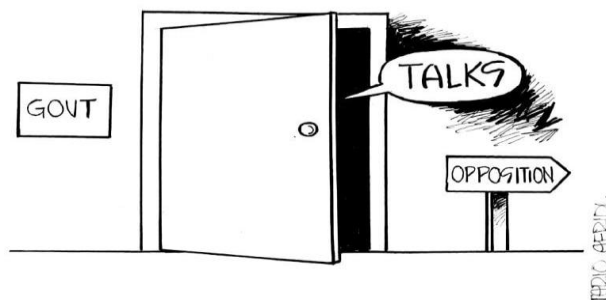
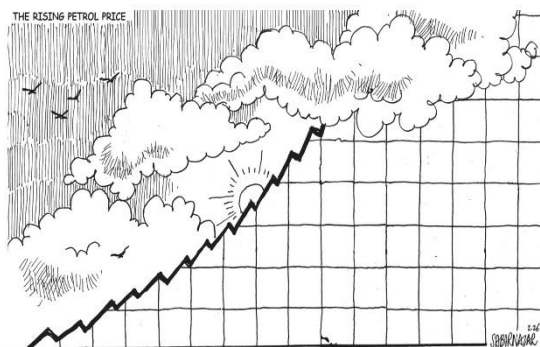
Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Backchannel Efforts Continue as PTI March Advances Towards Islamabad** — Reports indicate that **JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman** has been involved in efforts to ease tensions between the government and **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)** after formal negotiations over the party's march towards Islamabad broke down. According to media reports, he conveyed a government proposal to PTI following meetings with senior government figures, although PTI Chairman **Barrister Gohar Ali Khan** later denied having any direct contact with him. **Despite the collapse of formal talks, communication channels remain active, including continued contacts between Barrister Gohar and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, reflecting efforts to avoid further escalation.** Meanwhile, the PTI long march, led by **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi**, continued towards Islamabad. (*The News*, [9 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **IHC Questions Reliance on Intelligence Reports for Overseas Postings** — The **Islamabad High Court (IHC)**, hearing an intra-court appeal by the federal government, questioned the legal status of intelligence reports used to deny overseas postings to government officials selected for diplomatic and trade missions. A division bench comprising **Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro** and **Justice Umair Majid Malik** asked whether such reports could be subjected to judicial scrutiny and whether officials deemed unfit for foreign assignments could still serve domestically. **The affected officers argued that they had passed competitive tests, interviews and training, and had even received diplomatic passports before being rejected on security-clearance grounds.** The government maintained that overseas appointments required mandatory security clearance and fell within

service-law provisions. **The court adjourned the case for further arguments.** (*The News*, [9 October 2026](#))

- ◆ **JCP to Consider Extension of Sindh High Court Constitutional Benches** — The **Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP)** is scheduled to meet at the **Supreme Court of Pakistan** at 1:30 pm on **13 October 2026** under the chairmanship of **Chief Justice Yahya Afridi**. According to an official order issued by the commission's secretary, **Niaz Muhammad Khan**, the meeting will consider the extension of the term of the **Constitutional Benches of the Sindh High Court**, which is due to expire on **25 October 2026**. **The deliberations will determine whether the tenure of the existing constitutional benches should be continued beyond the current expiry date.** (*The News*, [9 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **PTI Chief Decries Lawmaker's Alleged Abduction** — Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan condemned the alleged abduction of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly member Abdul Salam Afridi, calling it **"a serious and alarming development."** Speaking at Afridi's residence, Gohar warned that elected representatives could not fulfil their responsibilities if they and their families lacked security. He alleged that **"forces operating beyond public scrutiny"** were influencing events, creating a **"state within a state"** that risked worsening instability. Gohar stressed that MNAs and MPAs were vital to maintaining law and order, yet even ministers were not adequately protected. He urged the continuation of democratic institutions, lamenting that **"the traffic of democracy has come to a standstill. It needs to be allowed to move again."** (*The Nation*, [09 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Orders Ministries to Share Data for Digital Nation** — Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed all federal ministries to provide relevant data to the **Digital Nation Pakistan programme**, stressing that the central data centre would be vital for delivering government services and public facilities. He said digitisation would align governance with modern requirements and help **curb corruption and mismanagement**. Citing the fuel subsidy scheme, he noted that **data sharing among institutions had ensured efficient targeting of deserving citizens**. The premier welcomed QR codes for medicine supply and prioritised digitisation in health and agriculture. Officials briefed him on measures to promote digital governance, economy and public facilitation, including making national laws accessible on a single platform. (*Dawn*, [09 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **ILO Chief Reviews Gadani Shipbreaking Modernisation** — International Labour Organisation Director-General Gilbert F. Hounqbo, accompanied by Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain, visited Gadani to assess progress on modernising the shipbreaking industry. The ILO chief inspected plots and reviewed **fire-fighting equipment, health and safety measures, and waste management protocols**. Provincial Minister Zahoor Buledi highlighted Pakistan's move towards **green yards under the Hong Kong Convention**, while Hussain noted a **Rs12 billion modernisation project** is underway. Hounqbo observed that adherence to SOPs and worker training has already reduced accidents, stressing the importance of implementing **health, safety and environmental standards** in the industry. (*Dawn*, [09 October 2026](#))
- ◆ **Communications Minister Invites Sikh Diaspora to Invest in Expressway** — Federal Minister for Communications **Abdul Aleem Khan** announced that the **Guru Nanak Expressway Project should move to the international tendering stage**, encouraging Sikh communities in the UK, Canada and the US to invest. He directed the National Highway Authority to prepare a feasibility study for developing the **123-kilometre Mansehra-Naran highway as a model project**. A detailed presentation was given on the progress of the Mansehra-Naran-Jalkhand-Chilas highway scheme, highlighting its potential to improve connectivity and regional development. Khan emphasised that

international participation would strengthen the project's viability and expand opportunities for investment in Pakistan's infrastructure. (*The Express Tribune*, [09 October 2026](#))



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