

DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

27 May 2026

Security

- ◆ **Pakistan Calls for Binding Global Water Safeguards** — At the 4th High-Level International Conference in Dushanbe, Minister for Climate Change **Dr Musadik Malik** warned that unilateral actions on shared water systems risk undermining treaties and threatening downstream states. Citing the **Indus Waters Treaty**, he stressed that climate change should drive transparency, compliance and data sharing, not unilateral reinterpretation. Malik urged binding covenants, compulsory dispute resolution and enforceable consequences for violations, noting water insecurity now affects **food security, economic stability and intergenerational equity**. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Tourist Entry Curbed in Ziarat, Harnai** — Authorities in Balochistan imposed restrictions on tourist and picnic spots in Ziarat and Harnai during Eidul Azha amid security concerns. The deputy commissioner confirmed **Section 144 is in force**, prohibiting gatherings and crowds. An official notification stated that picnic activities and entry of non-local tourists would remain banned at major destinations, with warnings of legal action against violators. These measures follow directives from the Balochistan Home and Tribal Affairs Department. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Balochistan Bars Banned Groups from Collecting Hides** — The provincial government has prohibited giving sacrificial animal hides to banned outfits during Eidul Azha. At a meeting chaired by **Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti**, officials reviewed security, cleanliness and offal disposal arrangements. **Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, IGP Balochistan and divisional commissioners** joined via video link. Authorities reported 15 collection centres set up in five zones of Quetta, with 4,294 tonnes of offal expected and 9,500 machines arranged for disposal. (*Business Recorder*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan's Inflation Now a Geopolitical Crisis** — Dr **Raania Ahsan**, former Executive Director General at the Board of Investment, argues that inflation in Pakistan is no longer merely economic but **“the local expression of global instability interacting with economic fragility.”** From COVID-19 supply chain shocks to the Russia-Ukraine war and Middle East tensions, imported inflation drives spiralling costs. Rising petroleum prices fuel closures, weak investment and unemployment. She stresses that **energy security is now inflation policy** and calls for structural reforms to build resilience against external shocks. (*Business Recorder*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Continuation of ‘Urumqi Process’ Raises Hopes for Pak-Afghan Rapprochement** — China's mediation between Pakistan and Taliban-ruled Afghanistan has revived optimism for improved ties after April's informal talks in Urumqi. Beijing plans a second round, with envoy **Yue Xiaoyong** laying groundwork in Kabul. Afghan FM **Amir Khan Muttaqi** spoke of “progress” but **avoided calling the TTP “terrorists.”** Guns have fallen silent in some border areas due to tribal elders' local deals. Analysts like **Mushahid Hussain Sayed** and **Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad**

Khan see Chinese involvement as stabilising, fostering dialogue, security and connectivity. (*Dawn*, [27 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pressure Politics and the Abraham Accords** — This Editorial warns that US President **Donald Trump's renewed push** for Muslim countries to join the Abraham Accords is a “**dangerous and deeply dishonest move**” that sidelines the Palestinian issue. The editorial stresses that linking the Iran conflict to the Accords ignores the core problem: denial of Palestinian rights and statehood. Pakistan's stance remains consistent, **no recognition of Israel without a fair settlement for Palestinians**. The piece cautions that ignoring public sentiment across the Muslim world may yield temporary diplomatic wins but cannot deliver lasting legitimacy or stability. (*Dawn*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **The Peace Dividend of Deterrence**— Dr Zahir Kazmi, former brigadier and expert in deterrence, arms control and disarmament affairs, recalls Pakistan's nuclear tests of May 28, 1998 as a sovereign assertion that restored strategic balance in South Asia. He stresses that “**in a nuclearised dyad, there is simply no safe space for war**” and highlights Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence as stabilising and disciplined. Beyond defence, Pakistan's nuclear enterprise powers homes, advances agriculture, treats cancer patients, and supports climate goals. “Restraint by design, deterrence by maturity.” (*The News*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Summary of TTP Operations – 25 May 2026 (8 Dhu al-Hijjah 1447 AH)**: On 25 May 2026, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed **10 operations** across **six provinces**. Attacks included **sniper fire, mortar shelling, ambushes, and targeted killings**, resulting in reported casualties, destruction of vehicles, and damage to surveillance equipment. In **Tank Province**, two Frontier Corps members pledged to abandon service, while elsewhere multiple ambushes destroyed military convoys and killed personnel. **South and North Waziristan** saw mortar and sniper strikes on camps and posts, while **Zhob Province** reported five killed in an ambush. In **Bannu**, a Frontier Corps member was assassinated.

Table of Attacks

District	Area	Attack Type	Reported Impact
Tank	Jandola	Sniper attack	1 killed, 1 injured, camera destroyed
Tank	Gomal	Defection pledge	FC member vowed to leave service
Dera Ismail Khan	Kulachi	Ambush	2 vehicles destroyed, all personnel killed
South Waziristan	Sarwekai	Mortar attack	Casualties and material losses
South Waziristan	Azam Warsak	Sniper attack	Camera destroyed, drone shot down
North Waziristan	Boya	Mortar attack	Casualties and material damage
Zhob	Kakar Khurasan	Ambush	5 killed, 3 injured
Bannu	Bakakhel	Targeted killing	FC member killed

Economy

- ◆ **Pakistan's Freelance Earnings Near USD1bn Milestone** — With receipts of **USD959 million in July–April**, Pakistan's freelance industry is set to cross the **USD1 billion mark** this fiscal year,

according to the SBP. Export earnings grew **49% year-on-year**, outperforming regional competitors. Dr **Imran Batada**, President of Pakistan Freelancers Association, credited rising participation on platforms like Upwork and Fiverr, alongside government and NGO-led training. He urged freelancers to upgrade skills, especially in **AI and soft skills**, as Pakistan's 3 million-strong digital workforce continues to expand. (*Business Recorder*, [27 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Mutual Funds' Equity Exposure Remains Weak** — Despite assets under management crossing **Rs4 trillion by late 2025**, only **14% of Pakistan's mutual funds are invested in equities**, with nearly half parked in money market instruments. Analysts like **Sana Tawfiq (Arif Habib Limited)** and **Muhammad Shahroz (Insight Securities)** note investor risk-aversion and panic-driven withdrawals, which amplify PSX volatility. To address redemption costs, the SECP has proposed **swing pricing**, ensuring exiting investors bear liquidation expenses. Success will depend on clear implementation, investor awareness and calibrated thresholds. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **The Lender That Governs** — Former IMF adviser **Saeed Ahmed** critiques Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility, noting the IMF has imposed **75 structural conditions plus 30 standing commitments**, touching nearly every sphere of governance. He warns this erodes Pakistan's policy autonomy, with parliament reduced to a "rubber stamp." High fuel taxes and tariff hikes have worsened inflation, while circular debt remains unresolved. Ahmed argues IMF conditionality has drifted far beyond its mandate, becoming geopolitical, as seen in Ukraine and Egypt. He calls for **parsimonious, country-specific reforms** and urges Pakistan to end dependency on external prescriptions through visionary leadership. (*Dawn*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pension Reform and Salary Proposals for Armed Forces** — The government, despite being under an IMF programme, is set to introduce the **Defined Contributory Pension (DCP) for armed forces personnel** in the 2026-27 budget, with the finance minister expected to announce it. The scheme was already applied to new civilian entrants last year. The Ministry of Finance has prepared **three proposals for salary and pension raises of 5%, 7.5% and 10% as ad hoc allowances**, linked to CPI-based inflation averaging 7.5%. The **Pakistan People's Party has demanded a 20% raise** for government servants. (*The News*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Echoes of Sovereignty and Economic Resolve** — Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, reflects on *Youm-e-Takbeer* (May 28, 1998), when Pakistan achieved nuclear deterrence under Nawaz Sharif's leadership. He stresses that **"Pakistan's sovereignty was non-negotiable"** and urges applying the same *Atomic Model of Success* to economic transformation. Through *URAAN Pakistan* and its 5Es, he envisions **economic sovereignty as the new national mission**, aiming for a trillion-dollar economy by 2035 and global competitiveness by 2047. He argues "The echo of Chagai must now become the echo of economic resurgence." (*The News*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Phasing Out an Emergency Levy**— Ehsan Malik, former CEO of Unilever Pakistan and of the Pakistan Business Council, critiques the Super Tax introduced in 2015 as an emergency measure that has since become entrenched. He argues that **"a tax proclaimed as temporary but allowed to linger for years corrodes trust in the state"** and undermines investment, exports and confidence. Malik calls for a phased withdrawal by 2029, with relief beginning for exporters, alongside broader reforms to widen the tax net. "Predictability matters. It allows businesses to plan." (*The News*, [27 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **From Protectionism to Export Power**—Atteq Ur Rehman, research associate at SDPI Islamabad, argues Pakistan must shift from protectionism to an **export-led trade regime**. He highlights tariffs, SROs and weak coordination as barriers to competitiveness and diversification. He frames trade policy as **economic governance**, not just import control. It calls for **export diversification** in textiles, agriculture, IT, pharmaceuticals and engineering goods, plus lower energy and technology costs. It urges **gocioeconomic regional trade**, improved border systems and connectivity to cut costs, expand markets and support a transparent reform roadmap. (*The News*, [27 May 2026](#))

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **China, Pakistan oppose unilateral action on Kashmir**— China and Pakistan reaffirmed **opposition to unilateral actions in Jammu and Kashmir, urging resolution through dialogue, diplomacy and relevant UN resolutions**. A joint statement after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Beijing visit also stressed regional peace, trans-boundary water cooperation, accelerated CPEC 2.0 projects and stronger defence ties. Beijing supported Pakistan's sovereignty, while Islamabad reiterated adherence to the One-China policy. **Both countries opposed "double standards" in counterterrorism and pledged deeper cooperation in artificial intelligence, energy, agriculture and space exploration, amid shifting regional geopolitics dynamics**. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dar Urges UNSC to Prevent Escalation in Middle East** — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Ishaq Dar** warned the UN Security Council that **"another prolonged conflict would endanger regional peace, disrupt global energy flows, deepen humanitarian suffering and strain an already fragile international order."** Speaking in New York, he stressed restraint, diplomacy, and UN-led resolution, reaffirming Pakistan's support for Palestine and Kashmir. Dar emphasised that **"diplomacy is not weakness; dialogue is not concession"** and called for reforms to make the UNSC more representative and accountable. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pak-China Friendship Broader Than the Karakoram Highway** — Prof **Tang Ming Shung**, former professor of Beijing University, reflects on the 75th anniversary of China-Pakistan ties, describing their **"ironclad friendship" as higher than mountains, deeper than seas, sweeter than honey, and stronger than steel**. He recalls Xi Jinping's 2015 declaration that ties would **"grow broader like the Karakoram Highway,"** symbolising resilience and shared destiny. From CPEC projects to cultural exchanges, Tang stresses that this enduring partnership will continue to shine with renewed vitality in the new era. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 May 2026](#))

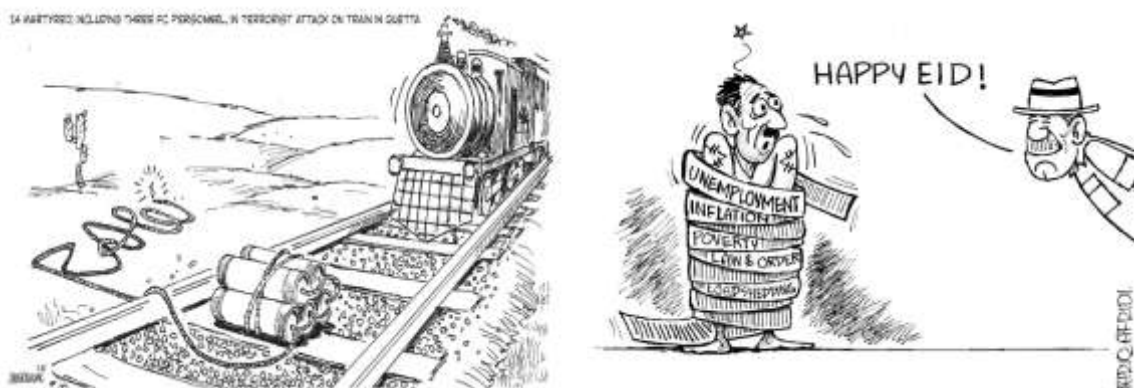
Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Pak Pilgrims Protest Hajj Mismanagement**—Pakistani pilgrims performing Hajj 2026 criticised **arrangements made by the authorities**, complaining of poor accommodation, delayed transport, substandard food and inadequate administrative support **despite paying nearly Rs1.2 million each**. Some pilgrims threatened legal action, alleging they were served burnt meals and left without assistance. "We have no one here to look after us," pilgrims said, claiming repeated complaints were ignored. **Religious Affairs Minister Sardar Yousaf assured action over the shortcomings after visiting camps in Mina and Arafat, while Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also reviewed facilities**. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 May 2026](#))

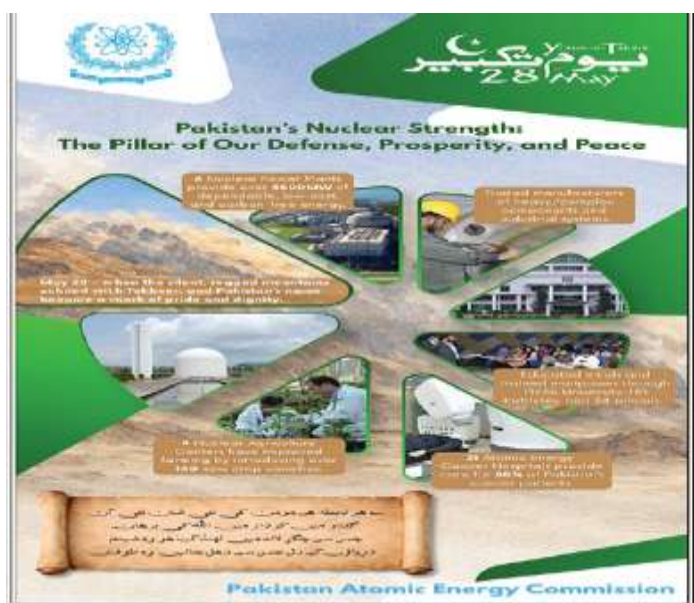
- ◆ **Glacier Melting Sparks Disaster Concerns in Northern Pakistan** — Rising temperatures and an intense heatwave have accelerated glacier melting, prompting the NDMA to warn of **floods, landslides and possible closure of key highways** including the Karakoram Highway, Skardu Road and Deosai Road. The NEOC alert (May 26–31) highlights risks in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Kashmir, with Hunza, Nagar and Chitral among high-risk zones. Authorities have deployed emergency teams, cooling centres and medical facilities as **glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs)** threaten vulnerable communities. (*The Express Tribune*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **The Structural Malaise Behind PTI's Crisis** — Dr M Zeb Khan, University of Plymouth, argues that PTI's collapse stems not only from repression but from **“the structural and cultural incapacity of our political parties... to build enduring institutions out of popular movements.”** He notes Imran Khan's charisma failed to institutionalise PTI, leaving it reliant on personality over process. Pakistan's political culture, he stresses, prizes loyalty to individuals over systems. Without internal democracy and resilience, movements falter, slogans fade, and **“Pakistan will never come out of the quagmire!”** (*The Express Tribune*, [26 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **South Air Launches Trial Flight to Gwadar** — Private airline **South Air** successfully operated its first Karachi–Gwadar trial flight, landing at the **New Gwadar International Airport** under the CPEC framework. Flight Z8-905 departed Karachi at noon and arrived at 3:40pm, marking a milestone in boosting Gwadar's connectivity. **The service is expected to reduce travel time between Gwadar, Karachi and Quetta, while enhancing trade, tourism and development.** A spokesperson said improved air-sea links could help transform Gwadar into a modern commercial hub. (*Dawn*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Jamaat, TTAP Alliance Reject Abraham Accords Demand** — Jamaat-i-Islami chief **Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman** denounced US President **Donald Trump's** call for Pakistan to join the Abraham Accords, labelling it a **“document of surrender”** legitimising Israel's occupation of Palestine. He urged PM Shehbaz Sharif to reject the demand, reaffirming that **“the entire Palestine belongs to Palestinian people and Jerusalem remains its rightful capital.”** The PTI-led TTAP alliance also opposed the proposal, calling it a **“deceptive attempt to provide cover to Israeli aggression and expansionism.”** (*Dawn*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **PAC Chairman Warns Against Divisive Narratives in 'AJK'** — Abdul Majid Khan, Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly, condemned **“anti-state and divisive narratives”** being spread in the region. Speaking at a Pathan Welfare Association ceremony in Muzaffarabad, he cautioned against attempts to create rifts between locals and migrants, or Kashmiris and Pakistanis. Khan criticised social media **rumours about terrorist entry into 'AJK' and Punjab**, saying such propaganda weakens Pakistan's position and **fuels Indian media.** He praised Pashtuns' sacrifices in 1947, asserting that 'AJK' residents are proud Pakistanis. (*Dawn*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Tamil Traditions Flourish in Karachi's Madrasi Para** — In Madrasi Para near Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, Karachi's **tiny Tamil community continues to preserve South Indian customs** despite decades of migration. Families, descendants of colonial-era workers, uphold their heritage through **language, cuisine, festivals and rituals.** Residents gather at the Shree Mariamman Temple to celebrate Mariamman, Murugan, Diwali and Pongal. Dana Kori highlights traditional dishes like idli, dosa and vada. Yet, younger generations struggle with Tamil fluency, as

English education dominates. Community elders stress their survival as a distinct cultural group is “remarkable.” (*The News*, [27 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Wheat Policy** —The National Assembly was informed that the National Wheat Policy 2026–30 has been finalised, but confidence is already shaken by weak execution and procurement lapses. Punjab’s demand for trader stock declarations reflects anxiety over reserves and flour prices. With yields down, fertiliser costs up, and farmers exposed to distress sales, “**the Minimum Support Price was meant to protect growers during price crashes, not suppress prices once the market recovered.**” Analysts warn of a 20% national shortfall, underscoring urgent need for a competent framework. (*Daily Times*, [27 May 2026](#))



From Centre for Peace Studies (CPS), New Delhi



On the occasion of *Youm-e-Takbeer* (Day of Allah's Greatness), on 28 May, every year, which is observed as a holiday in Pakistan to mark the anniversary of nuclear tests in response to India's Pokhran-II tests earlier that month in 1998, the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission released this advertisement to showcase Pakistan's nuclear strength and strategic deterrence capability

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