

# DAILY PAKISTAN WATCH

28-29 May 2026

## Security

- ◆ **Russia and Afghanistan Forge Military Partnership** — Russia and Afghanistan signed a military-technical cooperation agreement during the International Security Forum in Moscow, signalling deeper engagement between Moscow and Taliban-led authorities. The accord was formalised by Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu and Afghan Defence Minister Mohammad Yaqoob, who emphasised that **“interaction with Russia is important for us”** and highlighted Afghanistan’s intent to expand ties. Shoigu declared that **Western countries must unfreeze Afghan assets and bear responsibility for post-conflict reconstruction**. The deal reflects Moscow’s growing contacts with Kabul. (*The Express Tribune*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Eid Resolve in Zhob** — Chief of Defence Forces and Army Chief **Field Marshal Asim Munir** spent Eid ul Azha with troops in Zhob, Balochistan, offering prayers for peace and prosperity. He praised soldiers’ **“exceptional grit, unwavering resolve, operational preparedness, and steadfast vigilance amid foreign-sponsored terrorism.”** Paying tribute at Yadgar-e-Shuhada, he honoured martyrs’ sacrifices. Referring to the Quetta attack, he declared: **“Such inhuman and brutal acts cannot weaken the resolve of Pakistan Armed Forces or the nation.”** He vowed to pursue all facilitators and abettors of terrorism with full force. (*The Express Tribune*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pak- Saudi Security Cooperation Strengthened**— Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi** met Saudi Interior Minister **Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud**, agreeing that **200 personnel from Pakistan’s Federal Constabulary Special Diplomatic Protection Unit will receive training in Saudi Arabia**. Both exchanged Eid ul Azha greetings, with Prince Abdulaziz congratulating Naqvi on Hajj. The meeting covered bilateral relations, internal security, and regional developments. A Saudi delegation will soon visit Pakistan to enhance cooperation. Naqvi praised Saudi Hajj arrangements, while Prince Abdulaziz appreciated Pakistan’s constructive role in easing tensions. (*The Express Tribune*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **China-Pakistan Military Ties Strengthened**— China and Pakistan have reaffirmed their enduring **“iron-clad friendship”**, pledging deeper military cooperation and strategic coordination during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s visit to Beijing. At a press briefing, **Chinese Defence Ministry Spokesman Colonel Jiang Bin** highlighted fruitful collaboration in strategic communication, joint exercises such as Warriors, Ocean Guards, and Eagles, personnel exchanges, and defence technology. He emphasised that both nations would continue to elevate military-to-military relations, jointly promoting peace and security, while carrying forward their traditional friendship. (*Dawn*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Armed Baloch Groups Rally Public Support During Eid Gatherings**— In Kharaan district, armed Baloch separatists addressed Eid congregations in Tazeenah and Ulmark, urging residents

to play an active role in the “national liberation struggle” and protect future generations. **Speakers stressed that (“slavery is a curse”) and claimed Baloch dignity and survival depended upon independence.** Reports said locals listened attentively and later mingled with the fighters. The Baloch groups had expanded control across parts of Balochistan, targeting vehicles transporting mineral resources and attacking police stations. The BLA and BLF reportedly claimed responsibility for these operations. (*Daily Sangar*, [28 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Trump Says Pakistan Asked US to Halt Iran Action**— In a television interview, **US President Donald Trump** claimed that Pakistan requested Washington to pause military action against Iran amid ongoing tensions. He said the US could have treated Iran like Venezuela under strict pressure measures but halted operations after Islamabad’s appeal. Trump rejected easing sanctions in exchange for Iran abandoning enriched uranium and warned the US would “complete the job” if talks failed. He praised **Asim Munir and Shehbaz Sharif** as “outstanding personalities” while stressing regional diplomacy and security. (*Daily Times*, [28 May 2026](#))

## Economy

- ◆ **Oil Prices Spike Amid Escalation**— Oil surged over 3% after **Iran’s Revolutionary Guards claimed they targeted a US airbase in retaliation for a strike near Bandar Abbas airport.** Brent crude futures rose \$3.51 (3.72%) to \$97.8 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate climbed \$3.31 (3.73%) to \$91.99. Both benchmarks had slipped over 5% earlier on hopes of a US-Iran deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Iran warned of a “more decisive” response to further aggression. Analysts noted supply constraints, while US crude stockpiles fell for the sixth straight week. (*The Express Tribune*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **PM Shehbaz Seeks Chinese Role in Agri Transformation**— During his visit to Beijing, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged the **Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)** to lead efforts in revitalising Pakistan’s agricultural research institutions and modernising farming practices. He described agriculture as the backbone of Pakistan’s economy and pledged to send **1,000 fresh graduates annually to Chinese universities** for advanced training. Shehbaz emphasised that CPEC Phase II places agriculture at the top of priorities, calling the partnership an “iron-clad brotherhood entering a new era of economic transformation.” (*Daily Times*, [27 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Pakistan’s Cotton Crisis Threatens Textile Backbone** —Pakistan’s textile industry faces severe strain as **cotton shortfalls force heavy imports**, with Rahim Yar Khan’s fields shrinking under sugarcane expansion and climate challenges. The Federal Committee on Agriculture set a target of 9.64 million bales for 2026–27, but last season’s output was only 5.6 million. The **USDA projects 6.94 million bales against domestic demand of 14 million**, meaning imports could exceed 7 million bales, crossing \$1 billion. Farmers and industry leaders warn that taxation, weak research investment, and rising energy costs are eroding competitiveness. (*Daily Pakistan*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Budget Sessions Set for 5th June** —President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned **separate sessions of the National Assembly and Senate on 5<sup>th</sup> June** to discuss Pakistan’s federal budget for FY2026-27. The NA will meet at 5pm, followed by the Senate at 6pm. Meetings of the APCC and NEC in early June will review economic performance and set new targets. The government plans a **Rs3.5**

trillion development programme with growth projected at **4.1pc** and inflation at **8.5pc**. The IMF recently concluded talks on Pakistan's "budget strategy." (*Dawn*, [29 May 2026](#))

## Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Zardari Reaffirms Pakistan-Azerbaijan Brotherhood on Independence Day**— President Asif Ali Zardari extended warm felicitations to President Ilham Aliyev, the government and the people of Azerbaijan on their Independence Day. He stressed that **Pakistan and Azerbaijan are bound by a deep-rooted fraternal relationship** rooted in shared faith, culture and values. Zardari noted that ties have grown into a partnership of **mutual trust, understanding and steadfast support on core national interests**. Praising Azerbaijan's socio-economic progress under Aliyev's leadership, he reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to deepen cooperation in trade, energy, defence and exchanges. (*The Express Tribune*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dar Highlights Balanced Diplomacy with US and China**— Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, during a dinner in New York hosted by **Asim Iftikhar Ahmad**, stressed that Pakistan seeks "**balanced engagement with major powers**" as the essence of effective diplomacy. He outlined a five-point agenda for regional peace, noting China's open support. Dar also met **UN Secretary-General António Guterres**, who appreciated Pakistan's contribution to global peace, and is scheduled to meet **Marco Rubio** in Washington to discuss Palestine and Middle East stability. Dar reaffirmed Pakistan-China friendship while emphasising ties with the US. (*The Nation*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dar Meets Wang Yi, Reaffirms Cooperation**— In New York, **China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi** praised Pakistan's constructive role amid US-Iran talks during a meeting with **Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar**. Both sides reaffirmed commitment to cooperation at multilateral fora, including the UN, and recalled Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China marking 75 years of ties. Dar also met **Turkmenistan FM Rashid Meredov**, agreeing to boost cooperation in trade, agriculture, energy, and connectivity. Addressing the UNSC debate, Dar warned that "**another prolonged conflict would endanger regional peace and strain the fragile international order.**" (*The Indian Express*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Three Presidents and the Shifting Global Order** — In his analysis, **Aamir Zulfiqar Khan** argues that the triangular relationship between Presidents Trump, Xi, and Putin will define the immediate trajectory of great power politics. He describes US–China ties as a "bad marriage" of interdependence and mistrust, while Russia–China relations are a "marriage of convenience" driven by necessity but shadowed by rivalry. Xi's hosting of both Trump and Putin in May 2026 underscored Beijing's role as a stabilising pole in a multipolar world. Khan concludes that whether the 21st century witnesses "managed co-existence or catastrophic confrontation" depends on their restraint and ambitions. (*Friday Times*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Russia to Build Nuclear Plant in Kazakhstan**— During his visit to Astana, **Russian President Vladimir Putin** signed an agreement with **Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev** to construct a nuclear power plant in Central Asia's largest country. The deal includes a **Russian**

**export credit to finance construction**, marking a significant step in bilateral cooperation on energy infrastructure. (*Business Recorder*, [28 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **Pakistan, Colombia to Expand Bilateral Cooperation**— In New York, **Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar** met **Colombian Foreign Minister Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio**, with both sides agreeing to deepen cooperation in **trade, investment, education, defence, and culture**. The talks emphasised stronger coordination at the **United Nations Security Council**, where both countries currently serve as members. Dar praised Colombia's principled stance on global issues, while both ministers reaffirmed support for dialogue, diplomacy, and adherence to international law. They agreed to maintain regular high-level contacts and institutional engagement to strengthen ties further. (*Business Recorder*, [27 May 2026](#))

## Politics, Culture, Etc.

- ◆ **Cyber Crime Crackdown in Punjab** —The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Punjab has arrested **11 social media activists** across Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, and Gujranwala for allegedly spreading anti-state propaganda and inciting unrest online. The spokesperson confirmed that **digital evidence and social media records are being collected** to trace networks. The suspects face charges under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016. NCCIA Punjab Director Muhammad Ali Waseem stressed, “No leniency will be shown... the crackdown will continue.” Earlier this month, 13 similar arrests were made. (*Dawn*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Dar Urges Diaspora to Invest in Pakistan's Future**— Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, addressing Pakistani-American leaders in New York, declared that **“Pakistan's best days lie ahead”** and urged overseas Pakistanis to “honour their roots” by investing in the country. He highlighted declining inflation, improved credit ratings, and rising investor confidence as signs of stability under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Dar recalled **Youn-i-Takbeer (1998 nuclear tests)** and last year's Marka-i-Haq victory over India as moments of national pride. He emphasised Pakistan's constructive role in global peace efforts. (*Dawn*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Youn-e-Takbeer PM Shehbaz's Message of Resolve** —Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hailed **Youn-e-Takbeer as a defining moment**, marking Pakistan's emergence as a nuclear power on 28 May 1998. He said the tests restored South Asia's strategic balance and sent a clear message that Pakistan would never compromise on sovereignty. Paying tribute to leaders including **Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, and Dr Samar Mubarakmand**, he praised the armed forces' role in Maarka-e-Haq under **Field Marshal Asim Munir**. He vowed Pakistan will eliminate hostile networks through Operation Ghazab lil-Haq. (*The News*, [28 May 2026](#))
- ◆ **Why Chaghai Was Chosen for Pakistan's Nuclear Tests**— Pakistan selected **Chaghai in Balochistan** for its 1998 nuclear detonations due to the region's **remoteness, sparse population, and rugged geology**. The Ras Koh mountain range, with its solid granite rock, provided ideal conditions to contain underground blasts and minimise radioactive spread. Engineers built a 3,000-foot fishhook-shaped tunnel near Chattar and Dostan Wadh, sealed with sandbags and cement before the tests. On **28 May 1998, five devices were detonated**, followed by a sixth on 30

May. The isolation and stability of Chaghai made it the strategic choice for Pakistan's historic nuclear achievement. (*Daily Pakistan*, [28 May 2026](#))

- ◆ **'AJK' Premier Praises Military While Reaffirming Kashmir Support**—'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore celebrated Eid ul Azha with Pakistani troops in the Chirikot sector, commending their "sacrifices and services" in defending the country. **Rathore said Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos had sent a "clear message" to adversaries and described Pakistan's defence as "invincible"**. He reaffirmed support for Kashmiris in 'Indian-administered Kashmir', declaring their struggle for self-determination would continue "at every cost and under all circumstances". Rathore further claimed that ("the sun of freedom" would eventually rise in Kashmir) while expressing solidarity with frontline soldiers and Kashmiri civilians. (*Dunya News*, [28 May 2026](#))

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*[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.]*