

CLAWS Newsletter



Pakistan Unveiled | Volume I | No. 10

by Akashika Mate

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Pakistan Moves to Expand Water Storage as PM Shehbaz Warns of India's 'Water Weaponisation' Plans (Dawn, July 01)

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced the government's decision to significantly enhance Pakistan's water storage capacity, citing growing concerns over 'India's actions to weaponise water' in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). Speaking during a visit to the National Emergencies Operations Centre, he criticised India's unilateral suspension of the IWT in April following the Pahalgam attack, highlighting the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ruling that prevents India from holding the IWT in abeyance, calling any attempt to block Pakistan's water share an "act of war". Sharif outlined plans to accelerate the construction of large dams, including the Diamer Bhasha Dam, along with other water infrastructure projects under the 1991 water accord, which allows for capacity expansion. He asserted that Pakistan would self-finance these projects.

2. Pakistan Records Slight Dip in June 2025 Militancy, But Six-Month Trend Remains Worrying (Dawn, July 01; PICSS, July 03)

According to the latest monthly report by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), an Islamabad-based think tank, Pakistan witnessed a slight overall decline in militant violence in June 2025, despite several high-profile attacks.

Table 1: Statistical Synthesis from the PICSS Monthly Report for June 2025

Category	Figures
Militant Attacks	78
Fatalities (Total)	100
Fatalities (Security Personnel)	53
Fatalities (Civilians)	39
Fatalities (Militants)	6
Injuries (Total)	189
Injuries (Security Personnel)	126
Injuries (Civilians)	63

Militants Killed in Operations	71
Militants Arrested	52
Militant Attacks	502

PICSS expressed concern over the rising trend of violence in the first six months of 2025, documenting 502 attacks that killed 737 people and injured 991. This included the deaths of 284 security personnel, 267 civilians, and 180 militants. Compared to the first half of 2024, militant attacks increased by 5%, while fatalities surged by a staggering 121%, and injuries rose by 84%. The escalation is even sharper against the last six months of 2024, marking a 17% rise in attacks, a 33% rise in deaths, and a 30% rise in injuries. From January to June 2025, security forces killed 688 militants and arrested 225 suspects, reflecting a significant uptick in state-led counterterrorism activity. Despite a marginal month-on-month decline in June, the overall security situation remains volatile, with high casualty rates and persistent militant activity, underlining the complex security challenges facing Pakistan in 2025.

3. Officials Discuss Revival of Jirga System in KP Tribal Areas (Dawn, July 02; Dawn, July 07)

A political row has erupted over the proposed revival of the *jirga* system in the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). A high-level federal meeting, chaired by Minister Amir Muqam, recently agreed to move forward with reinstating the traditional dispute resolution system to strengthen grassroots justice. The move, backed by tribal elders and top officials, aims to align *jirgas* with Pakistan's legal framework, reduce reliance on police, and promote community-based justice mechanisms. A subcommittee will be formed with further consultations planned in Peshawar.

However, the proposal has been firmly rejected by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership, who argue the federal government has no jurisdiction post-merger. Speaking in Islamabad, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said decisions regarding the merged districts fall solely under KP's provincial government following the 18th and 25th Amendments. Accompanied by senior PTI leaders, Gohar claimed the *jirga* discussions bypassed provincial authorities and accused the federal government of "interfering" in provincial matters, particularly after PTI successfully resisted a controversial Mines and Minerals Bill. KP Finance Minister Aftab Alam

Afridi also criticised the Safron Ministry for overreach, highlighting that KP already operates a 2020 alternative dispute resolution act. He further alleged that the federal government failed to deliver promised funds under the National Finance Commission award, compounding provincial grievances.

The debate comes amid broader tensions over resource control and autonomy in KP, especially after multi-party opposition to mining legislation earlier this year. The *jirga* revival, meant to empower local communities, has instead spotlighted the centre-province friction over governance in Pakistan's tribal belt.

4. PTI Asserts Party Unity, Vows to Defend KP Government (Dawn, July 02; Arab News Pakistan, July 15)

The leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has publicly dismissed claims of internal divisions, reaffirming unity around jailed party founder Imran Khan, amid reports of conflicting protest announcements and rising pressure on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan stated the party was united in its goal of securing Khan's release, while warning the federal government against any moves to destabilise the PTI-led KP administration. Addressing concerns over factionalism, Gohar said all key decisions, including protest plans, were being shaped in line with Khan's instructions despite challenges in communicating with him in jail. KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur also issued a direct challenge, daring opponents to try and oust PTI in KP "without conspiracies or unconstitutional tactics." Senior PTI leaders, including Salman Akram Raja and Sheikh Waqqas Akram, reaffirmed the party's stance on peaceful protest, legal action, and public mobilisation, vowing to continue their political struggle under Imran Khan's leadership.

Confusion arose after KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur launched a 90-day protest campaign, while Khan's official account called for a separate nationwide protest culminating on August 05, marking the anniversary of Khan's imprisonment. Punjab PTI organiser Aliya Hamza Malik questioned the coordination of protest plans, but senior leaders, including PTI spokesperson Sheikh Waqqas Akram, insisted there were no rifts, only "minor differences" typical of large parties.

5. Government Announces Salary Hikes for Federal Employees, Lawmakers, and Ministers (Dawn, July 04)

The Finance Ministry has officially notified a 10% salary increase for federal government employees (Grades 1-22) and a 7% pension raise for retired civil servants, effective from the new fiscal year. The hike extends to armed forces, civil armed forces, and civil employees, as outlined in notifications dated July 04. In addition, employees already receiving the Disparity Reduction Allowance (DRA) will get an enhanced 30% of their basic pay as DRA. New recruits from July 1, 2022, will receive DRA based on the Basic Pay Scales of 2017. The government had earlier approved significant salary increases for lawmakers:

- Senate chairman and National Assembly speaker salaries jumped from Rs 2,05,000 to Rs 1.3 million, effective January 2025, along with a 50% sumptuary allowance.
- MNAs and senators now receive Rs 5,19,000 monthly, up from Rs 1,80,000.
- Federal ministers and ministers of state were granted salary parity with MNAs under a May presidential ordinance.

The government clarified that the pay raises are taxable, non-pensionable, and inadmissible during foreign postings.

6. Balochistan to Use AI for Road Maintenance, Says CM Bugti (Dawn, July 05; The Express Tribune Pakistan, July 06)

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti announced that the provincial government will deploy artificial intelligence (AI) to improve the monitoring and maintenance of road infrastructure, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas. Chairing a meeting of the Communications and Works Department, Bugti described road maintenance as a “major challenge” and said traditional oversight methods were no longer sufficient. He emphasised that modern technology would help ensure transparency, prevent financial wastage, and enable the timely identification of road damage. Bugti stressed that public funds must be used effectively, stating, “Every project must align with the needs of the people, meet proper quality standards, and be sustainable in the long run.” He directed officials to expedite consultations and submit proposals to make the AI monitoring system operational as soon as possible.

7. Pakistan Launches First AI-Powered Cybersecurity Tool Amid Rising Threats (Dawn, July 07)

In a significant step towards strengthening national cybersecurity, Pakistani tech firm SOCByte has launched the country's first indigenous AI-powered cybersecurity programme named 'Dexter'. The launch comes amid a sharp rise in cyberattacks, with Pakistan recording 34 million cyber intrusions between 2023 and 2024, according to SOCByte. Dexter functions as a Security Operations Centre (SOC) analyst, using artificial intelligence to assist human cybersecurity teams by delivering faster threat detection, analysis, and response capabilities. The tool aims to augment cybersecurity professionals rather than replace them, providing real-time intelligence on digital threats.

SOCByte, which serves clients in Pakistan, the United States, and Nigeria, described the launch as a milestone for Pakistan's digital sovereignty in the face of growing global cyber warfare. Founder Sulaiman Asif highlighted the broader significance, stating, "Dexter demonstrates what Pakistani innovation can achieve in addressing global cybersecurity challenges. Our mission is to empower local talent and strengthen Pakistan's digital defence ecosystem." The initiative not only targets national security concerns but also promises to build domestic expertise, promote local innovation, and create jobs in high-value tech sectors. SOCByte stressed that indigenous cybersecurity solutions offer key advantages, including localised threat intelligence, reduced dependency on foreign technologies, and a stronger, self-reliant digital infrastructure.

8. Detention of Mahrang Baloch Extended; Families Decry Legal Violations (Dawn, July 08; Awaz the Voice, July 15)

A Quetta anti-terrorism court has extended the detention of Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) leader Dr Mahrang Baloch and five other activists for 10 more days, following their three-month custody under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) laws. The latest extension came after four FIRs accusing them of violent protests and incitement were filed following the expiry of their previous detention. The BYC, which has been campaigning against enforced disappearances since 2018, is not banned by NACTA, though Mahrang appears on the proscribed persons list. Her legal team alleges misuse of anti-terror laws to prolong detention without fair trial rights.

Human rights groups and family members have raised alarm over forced transfers to distant police stations, denial of family access, and legal representation, despite court orders mandating these rights. Mahrang's sister accused authorities of deliberate legal delays, incommunicado detention, and psychological harassment, describing the crackdown as a targeted attempt to silence voices against enforced disappearances.

Constitutional petitions seeking the activists' release have been rejected by the Balochistan High Court, with appeals now pending in the Supreme Court. BYC supporters continue hunger strikes and protests, demanding the detainees' immediate release and respect for due process and human rights.

9. Pakistan Central Bank to Launch Digital Currency Pilot, Moves Forward with Crypto Regulation (Reuters, July 09)

Pakistan is set to launch a pilot programme for a central bank digital currency (CBDC) while introducing legislation to formally regulate virtual assets, announced State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad at the Reuters NEXT Asia summit in Singapore. Ahmad said Pakistan was “building up capacity” for a digital currency pilot, following the example of China, India, Nigeria, and Gulf states, which have already started experimenting with blockchain-based payments and state-backed digital currencies.

A draft Virtual Assets Act 2025 has been finalised, creating an independent regulatory authority to oversee the cryptocurrency sector. Pakistan's crypto ecosystem has been gaining momentum through the Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC), which was established earlier this year to explore crypto adoption, bitcoin mining using surplus energy, and even the creation of a state-managed bitcoin reserve. The central bank, while cautious, clarified in May that virtual assets are not illegal, though formal engagement is restricted pending licensing rules.

Pakistan's \$7 billion IMF programme remains on track, with Ahmad crediting it for advancing reforms in fiscal management, energy pricing, and currency markets. He added that external debt exposure is manageable, with limited Eurobond and commercial loan components.

10. New Political Parties Launched in Pakistan Amid Rising Anti-Establishment Sentiment

a. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Jr. Steps into Politics (Geo TV, July 12; The Express Tribune Pakistan, July 12)

In a major political development, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Junior, grandson of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, formally announced plans to launch his own political party, promising a “new political vision” grounded in social justice and grassroots empowerment. Speaking at a press conference at the Lahore Press Club, Bhutto Jr stated the time had come to go beyond the slogans of the past. In a rare public rebuke of his extended family, Bhutto Jr slammed President Asif Ali Zardari, accusing him of abusing the Bhutto legacy. He said the famous slogan “Jeay Bhutto” had been reduced to a tool for corruption rather than public service.

A key highlight of Bhutto Jr’s address was his staunch defence of Punjab’s farmers, who, according to him, are being forcibly displaced under corporate farming schemes. Calling corporate farming nothing more than “land grabs”, he accused authorities of systematically dispossessing rural communities, endangering the livelihoods of those who “feed the country.” “Taking land away from the farmers is unacceptable,” he said, framing the issue as a battle between agrarian communities and corporate interests. He also questioned the silence of mainstream parties that once championed farmers’ rights, calling out PML-Q and other factions for abandoning the rural poor. He portrayed himself as a defender of the “backbone of Pakistan’s economy” and warned of mass mobilisation, including the possibility of a long march on Islamabad, if the injustices persist.

While no formal launch date for his party has been announced, Bhutto Jr. confirmed that consultations with grassroots movements and progressive groups are underway. His tone reflected a desire to reclaim the Bhutto legacy through direct engagement with the people, bypassing feudalistic and dynastic corruption. Bhutto Jr, son of the slain Mir Murtaza Bhutto, positioned his movement as a revival of the original Bhutto vision, adjusted to contemporary socio-economic realities.

b. Reham Khan Launches ‘Pakistan Republic Party’ (Dunya News, July 15; Wion News, July 15)

In a similar development on the political landscape of Pakistan, journalist and former Pakistani PM Imran Khan's ex-wife, Reham Khan, announced the launch of her own political party, the 'Pakistan Republic Party', positioning it as a platform for the common people and a direct challenge to the entrenched dynastic politics dominating the country. Making the announcement at a press conference at the Karachi Press Club, Reham Khan declared her party would serve as a "voice for the deprived and the neglected", pledging to bring long-overdue accountability to the ruling elite. She framed the initiative as a response to the growing disillusionment among ordinary citizens who feel left out of Pakistan's political process.

Reham underscored the symbolic importance of launching her political journey from Karachi, a city often referred to as Pakistan's economic engine but frequently neglected in governance debates. She described public discourse as reduced to TV arguments, disconnected from the struggles of common citizens, and alleged that feudal and commercial interests have captured the state apparatus. Reham also attacked government institutions like the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for failing to curb corruption and safeguard the rights of taxpayers. Reham Khan said her party would prioritise structural reforms, aiming to clean up a system plagued by nepotism, elite capture, and corruption. She promised a new model of politics focused on public service rather than personal gain, vowing to mobilise youth, women, and ordinary citizens to participate in governance. Her goal, she stated, was to end the monopoly of elite families over Pakistan's political system and create space for fresh, honest leadership.

11. Pakistan Forms New National Paramilitary Force, Opposition and Rights Groups Raise Alarm (Reuters, July 14)

The Pakistani government announced the creation of a new national paramilitary force, sparking immediate concern from opposition parties and human rights organisations about its potential use for political repression. The new force, named the Federal Constabulary, is an expansion and transformation of the existing Frontier Constabulary (FC), which was previously limited to the northwestern border regions of the country, mainly operating along the Afghanistan border. According to State Minister for Interior Talal Chaudhry, the revamped force will now operate nationwide, with an expanded mandate including internal security, riot control, and counter-terrorism. He added that President Asif Ali Zardari had already signed off

on the legal amendments enabling the change, which will align the training and operational standards of the Federal Constabulary with other national law enforcement agencies.

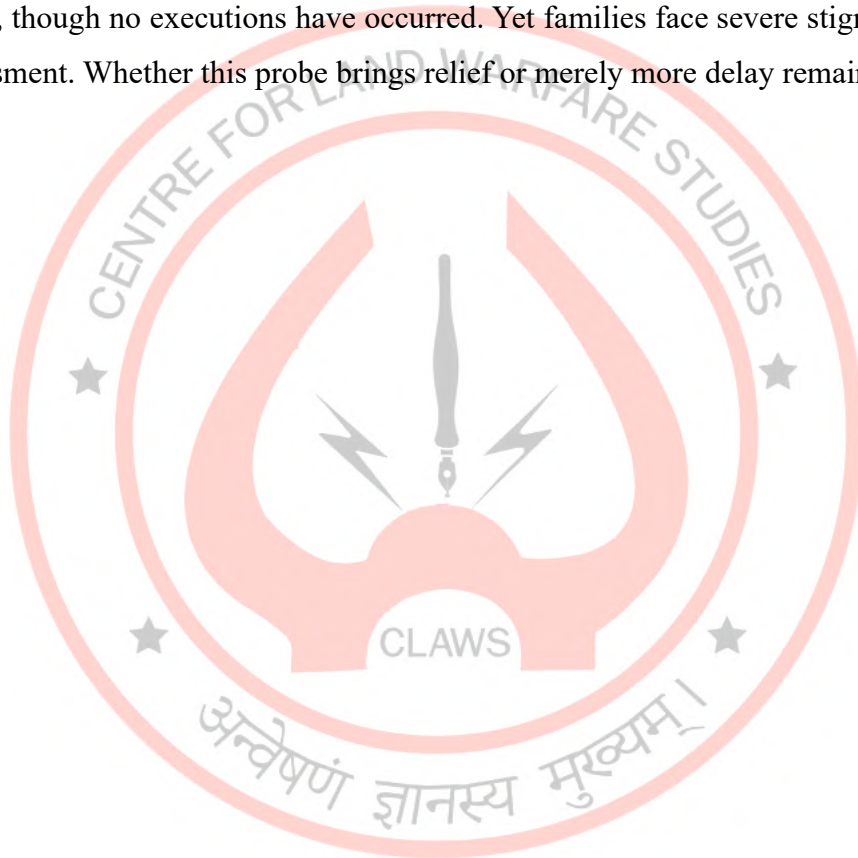
The announcement comes at a politically sensitive time, with the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of jailed ex-premier Imran Khan gearing up for a nationwide protest campaign starting August 05, marking two years since Khan's arrest. Previous PTI protests have seen widespread unrest, with large-scale demonstrations turning violent and leading to days-long lockdowns in major cities, including Islamabad. Critics fear the Federal Constabulary could be deployed to suppress political dissent, particularly in the wake of escalating protests, while government officials claim the move is driven by internal security needs in a country facing rising militant violence and political unrest. The government has yet to clarify operational details, oversight mechanisms, and deployment protocols for the new force, adding to the unease among political observers and rights activists.

12. Business Community Warns of Economic Paralysis (Arab News Pakistan, July 15)

The Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) and leading goods transport associations have called for a nationwide shutdown on July 19, protesting against key provisions in the Finance Act 2025 that they claim will cripple trade and paralyse economic activity. KCCI President Muhammad Jawed Bilwani said over 50 trade bodies had pledged support, with transporters committing to a complete wheel-jam strike, halting goods movement nationwide. Demands include the withdrawal of FBR arrest powers, rollback of penalties on cash transactions, removal of mandatory digital invoicing and e-bilty rules, and restoration of the Final Tax Regime for exporters. Bilwani warned the strike would proceed “with full force” unless the government suspends the controversial provisions. Business leaders described the strike as a last resort amid limited government engagement, raising fears of major supply chain disruptions.

13. Pakistan Court Orders Probe into Online Blasphemy Trap Allegations (Arab News, July 15)

The Islamabad High Court has ordered a government probe into the rising number of young men arrested for blasphemy, especially over WhatsApp activity. This follows appeals from hundreds of families and mounting concerns from rights groups. Since 2022, cases have surged, often driven by private law firms and volunteer groups scouring social media for alleged blasphemy. A leaked Punjab Police report even suggested a “suspicious gang” was entrapping youth, allegedly for financial gain. Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan directed that a commission be formed within 30 days, with findings due in four months. Rights lawyer Imaan Mazari said it was the first time families felt “heard” on the issue. A government report from 2024 counted 767 people awaiting trial, mostly young men. Blasphemy is punishable by death in Pakistan, though no executions have occurred. Yet families face severe stigma, threats, and legal harassment. Whether this probe brings relief or merely more delay remains to be seen.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Developments with India

a. Bilawal Repeats Offer to India for Joint Fight Against Terrorism (Dawn, July 02)

Former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has reiterated Pakistan's offer to India to join forces in combating terrorism, urging a shift from hostility to cooperation. Speaking at an international conference in Islamabad, Bilawal said Pakistan was ready for a "historic, phenomenal partnership" with India, calling for both countries to abandon adversarial postures and pursue peace. He pressed India to resolve the Kashmir dispute in line with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and to end the weaponisation of water, proposing a reset based on shared history and regional stability. Bilawal highlighted Pakistan's sacrifices in the war on terror, noting 685 security personnel were killed in 444 attacks in 2024, making it the deadliest year in a decade. He accused Afghanistan's Taliban regime of allowing a surge in cross-border militant activity and hosting groups like TTP and BLA. He also called on the international community for equitable support, demanding structured investments in Pakistan's counter-terrorism capacity, including technology, modern equipment, and development projects.

b. Bilawal Bhutto Says Pakistan Open to Extraditing Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar, Sparking Political Backlash (Al Jazeera [Video], July 04; Dawn, July 06; India Today, July 06)

Former Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that Pakistan would be open to extraditing top terror suspects Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar to India as a "confidence-building measure," provided India cooperates in the legal process. The remarks, made during an interview with Al Jazeera, have stirred sharp reactions at home, particularly from hardliners.

Bilawal, who heads the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), suggested that extradition of wanted terrorists could be on the table as part of a broader dialogue on counterterrorism with India. He maintained that Pakistan had no objections to handing over such individuals "if India demonstrates willingness" to facilitate legal proceedings, including presenting evidence and allowing court testimonies in Pakistan.

Currently, Hafiz Saeed, the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) founder and 26/11 Mumbai attacks mastermind, is serving a sentence in Pakistan on terror financing charges. Meanwhile, Masood Azhar, head of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), is believed to be hiding in Afghanistan,

according to Bilawal. He argued Pakistan had been unable to prosecute them for cross-border terrorism due to India's alleged lack of cooperation in providing admissible evidence.

Bilawal's comments triggered fierce domestic backlash, notably from Talha Saeed, son of Hafiz Saeed, who condemned the remarks as "disgraceful" and "irresponsible," accusing Bhutto of damaging Pakistan's global reputation. Talha, himself designated a global terrorist, claimed that extraditing Hafiz Saeed to India was "unacceptable". Further criticism came from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which accused Bilawal of undermining national security and appeasing a hostile neighbour. In a sharp statement, PTI's Central Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram called Bilawal an "immature political child," alleging that his remarks humiliated Pakistan on global platforms and compromised its sovereignty and integrity.

c. Bilawal Bhutto Accuses India of Misleading Public Over Pahalgam Attack in Indian Interview (Dawn, July 09; The Wire India [Video], July 09)

PPP Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has accused the Indian government of misleading its own public regarding Pakistan's alleged involvement in the recent Pahalgam attack in occupied Kashmir. In a rare interview for The Wire with Indian journalist Karan Thapar, Bilawal stated that New Delhi failed to produce any credible evidence linking Pakistan to the incident. Bilawal reiterated that Pakistan had offered to cooperate with an impartial international investigation, but this proposal was rejected by India. "If there was any Pakistani involvement, it would have been internationally recognised and exposed," Bilawal said, adding that the Indian media and government engaged in a campaign of disinformation to deceive their public.

He highlighted that despite strong rhetoric, India had not provided any names, evidence, or proof to Pakistan or to the international community. Bilawal argued this was part of a broader pattern where India prefers to avoid transparent dialogue. He also addressed Pakistan's stance on extradition, referencing his recent Al Jazeera interview where he expressed willingness to extradite individuals like Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar to India, provided New Delhi demonstrated sincerity and cooperation. Bilawal concluded by urging a return to constructive engagement between Pakistan and India, emphasising the need for dialogue, judicial cooperation, and efforts to prevent disinformation-driven hostilities.

d. Naqvi Slams India for Rejecting Trump's Mediation Offer on Kashmir (The Tribune Express Pakistan, July 14)

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has sharply criticised India for rejecting US President Donald Trump's mediation offer on the Kashmir dispute, calling it proof of New Delhi's "warlike mindset". In a statement on Kashmir Martyrs' Day, Naqvi said the refusal was a missed opportunity for peaceful dialogue, highlighting India's unwillingness to resolve issues diplomatically. He paid tribute to the 22 Kashmiris killed on July 13, 1931, by the Dogra regime, describing their sacrifice as a lasting symbol of unyielding resistance.

2. Pakistan, Azerbaijan Sign \$2 Billion Investment Deal at ECO Summit **(The Express Tribune Pakistan, July 05)**

Pakistan and Azerbaijan have signed a landmark agreement for \$2 billion Azerbaijani investment in Pakistan's economy, marking a significant expansion in bilateral ties. The agreement was finalised on the sidelines of the 17th Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) summit, in the presence of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy PM Ishaq Dar, and Azerbaijan's Economy Minister Mikayil Jabbarov. The deal follows recent talks between PM Shehbaz and President Ilham Aliyev and will be followed by a more detailed memorandum during Aliyev's upcoming visit to Pakistan. PM Shehbaz termed the agreement a "historic milestone", highlighting plans to expand cooperation in trade, investment, water resource management, and glacier conservation. PM Shehbaz also held bilateral meetings with leaders from Iran, Turkey, and Uzbekistan, underlining Pakistan's commitment to regional connectivity and economic cooperation.

3. Developments with Turkey

a. Deepen Economic Ties with Special Economic Zone, Trade Expansion Plans **(Caliber Azerbaijan, July 09; Dawn, July 09)**

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar announced that Pakistan and Turkey are advancing plans to set up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) exclusively for Turkish entrepreneurs in Karachi. The development aims to further deepen economic ties between the two countries, which already enjoy close historical, cultural, and strategic relations. Dar made the remarks during a joint press conference in Islamabad with visiting Turkish Foreign Minister

Hakan Fidan, who is on an official trip to Pakistan along with Turkey's Defence Minister Yasar Guler. The visit is part of regular high-level exchanges between the two nations.

Dar said the SEZ would provide Turkish investors with dedicated space and facilitation to enhance business and industrial cooperation in Pakistan. This follows earlier commitments by both countries to raise bilateral trade to \$5 billion, a target reaffirmed during President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Islamabad earlier this year.

In addition, Dar highlighted ongoing discussions to revive the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) freight train corridor, with technical meetings scheduled in the coming weeks to finalise a revival roadmap aimed at enhancing regional connectivity. Dar also confirmed that Pakistan had allocated land in Muzaffarabad for a campus of the Turkish Maarif Foundation, which currently operates over 80 schools across Pakistan. A Maarif delegation was visiting the site for inspection.

He further mentioned that Turkish firms were being considered for key development projects in Islamabad, including the proposed Jinnah Medical Complex and Daanish University, signaling broader Turkish involvement in Pakistan's infrastructure and education sectors.

b. Deepen Cooperation in Defence Industry and Energy Sectors (Reuters, July 09; The Straits Times, July 10)

Turkey and Pakistan have agreed to expand bilateral cooperation in defence, energy, and mining, following high-level talks held in Islamabad, Turkey's government confirmed. The Turkish delegation, led by Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Defence Minister Yasar Guler, met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan Air Force chief Air Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu, and other senior officials during their visit. According to a statement from Turkey's defence ministry, discussions focused on regional security dynamics, enhanced collaboration in the defence industry, and joint ventures in aviation technology, drone production, and advanced military training operations. Air Chief Sidhu expressed Pakistan's interest in deepening ties in aviation and high-end defence capabilities.

At a joint press conference, FM Hakan Fidan also highlighted potential partnerships in energy exploration and resource development, noting that both countries are exploring joint ventures in mining, natural gas, oil, and rare elements. This follows an earlier April 2025 agreement to cooperate on offshore oil and gas exploration in Pakistan.

While Turkey maintains generally cordial relations with India, Ankara's recent support for Pakistan during the May military escalation with India strained ties with New Delhi. India reacted by cancelling certain Turkish commercial contracts and encouraging informal boycotts of Turkish products. Despite these tensions, Ankara and Islamabad appear determined to strengthen strategic ties, particularly in sectors that align with Pakistan's defence modernisation and energy security goals.

4. Pakistan Reaffirms Solidarity at Srebrenica Genocide Anniversary Ceremony (Geo TV, July 11)

Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis Aun Chaudhry represented Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the 30th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, attending the solemn commemoration in Potočari, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on July 11, observed globally as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration. Chaudhry delivered a letter from PM Shehbaz to Bosnian leaders, reaffirming Pakistan's solidarity with the Bosnian people and acknowledging the tragic events of 1995. He recalled Pakistan's diplomatic and peacekeeping contributions, including the deployment of 3,000 Pakistani troops during the Bosnian War. The minister also reiterated Pakistan's principled stance in support of human rights and international law, drawing parallels with Palestine and Jammu & Kashmir, and underscored Pakistan's commitment to peace, dignity, and justice globally.

5. Pakistan, Russia Ink Deal to Revive Pakistan Steel Mills (Dawn, July 11; Geo TV, July 11; Business Standard, July 12)

Pakistan and Russia have signed a landmark agreement to revive and expand the Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) in Karachi, marking a significant step forward in their decades-old industrial partnership. Built in 1973 with Soviet assistance, PSM halted production in 2015 after years of financial losses. The revival project aims to not only restart but also modernise and expand the facility's steel production capacity. The agreement was formalised at the Pakistan Embassy in Moscow, with Pakistan's Industries Secretary Saif Anjum and Vadim Velichko, General Director of Russia's Industries Engineering LLC, signing on behalf of their respective governments. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, along with

Ambassador Muhammad Khalid Jamali, also attended the ceremony. Officials said the revival project underscores Pakistan and Russia's shared commitment to industrial development and long-term cooperation. It follows a May agreement between the two governments to restore the plant and precedes other ongoing bilateral initiatives, including energy partnerships and rail connectivity projects. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk recently described Pakistan as a "natural ally," reflecting Moscow's growing interest in expanding strategic and economic ties with Islamabad.

6. Pakistan, Bahrain Agree to Boost Security Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Trafficking Efforts (Geo TV, July 12)

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met his Bahraini counterpart General Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa in Manama, with both sides agreeing to enhance security cooperation, particularly in counter-terrorism, anti-human trafficking, and narcotics control. The two leaders reviewed the performance of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Security Committee and discussed ways to make it more effective in tackling regional and global security threats. Naqvi called for deeper collaboration between the two interior ministries and extended an invitation to his Bahraini counterpart to visit Pakistan. The Bahraini minister welcomed the visit as a valuable opportunity to strengthen bilateral ties. The meeting was attended by senior Bahraini officials and Pakistan's Ambassador to Bahrain, Saqib Rauf, with Naqvi receiving a guard of honour during his official visit.

7. Pakistan, China Agree on Joint Skill Training Programmes Under CPEC Expansion (Dawn, July 14; Gwadar Pro, July 14)

Pakistan and China have agreed to initiate joint training programmes across several priority sectors, including construction engineering, artificial intelligence, agriculture, and hospitality management, as part of expanding cooperation under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Alongside this, Pakistan has commenced efforts to establish mutual recognition of skills and vocational certifications with Saudi Arabia and Oman, aiming to enhance overseas employment opportunities for its workforce.

The understanding was reached during the official visit of National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) Chairperson Gulmina Bilal Ahmad to China from July 06 to 12. The visit was undertaken on the instructions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and under the broader objectives of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the Ministry of Education and Professional Training. The engagement focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), particularly by aligning Pakistan's workforce with emerging industrial and technological trends.

Meetings were held under the framework of the China-Pakistan TVET-Industrial Centre of Excellence (CPTICE), the only formal platform for institutional collaboration in industry-focused skill development. Key discussions took place at the Pakistani Embassy in Beijing, focusing on the implementation of TVET commitments in the China-Pakistan Joint Statement. The Pakistani delegation also held working sessions with TANG International Education Group, which serves as the Chinese Secretariat of CPTICE, co-chaired by Li Jinsong, the Chinese Chairperson of the forum.

According to the NAVTTTC Chairperson, these initiatives are aimed at bridging the skills gap in Pakistan's youth, ensuring greater alignment with international labour markets, and supporting high-quality human resource development critical for the success of CPEC and Pakistan's broader economic growth.

8. Pakistani Taliban Reaches Bangladesh, Two Arrested (The Daily Star, July 14; News18, July 15)

Bangladesh Police have arrested two individuals with alleged ties to the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Pakistan-based militant group, amid rising concerns over Bangladeshi nationals joining foreign jihadist movements. The Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) confirmed the arrests of Ahmed Faisal (33) and Shamin Mahfuz (49) from Savar and Narayanganj, respectively, following intelligence leads. Faisal reportedly confessed to travelling to Afghanistan via Pakistan in October 2024, joining TTP camps alongside Ahmed Jubair, a Bangladeshi youth later killed in Pakistan's Waziristan strikes in April. Shamin Mahfuz, previously arrested on terrorism charges, has been accused of senior involvement in recruitment networks. Faisal is also alleged to have collaborated with Engineer Imran Haider and others to recruit Bangladeshi youth for the TTP's cause. The arrests come weeks after

Malaysia detained 36 Bangladeshis for militant links, highlighting a widening cross-border radicalisation threat. Authorities have filed charges under Bangladesh's Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009, with investigations into online radicalisation and foreign fighter recruitment underway. The developments follow the reported death of over 50 TTP fighters, including at least one Bangladeshi, in recent Pakistan Army operations. Officials suggest a growing nexus of South Asian militants tied to the TTP's expanding footprint.

9. Pakistan to Ban Solo Pilgrimage Travel to Iraq for Shia Muslims from 2026 (Ary News, July 14; India Today, July 15)

Starting January 01, 2026, Pakistan will ban solo travel by Shia pilgrims heading to Iraq, requiring all travel to be conducted under registered group organisers, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi announced after consultations with Iran and Iraq. The move comes amid growing concerns over visa overstays and illegal employment by Pakistani Shias visiting sacred sites in Najaf and Karbala. The new system, endorsed by Baghdad and Tehran, makes tour operators responsible for ensuring pilgrims return home on time. Only those with special visas from the Iraqi embassy will be exempt. Pakistani authorities cited a surge in overstays, with some pilgrims illegally settling and working in Iraq. The decision reflects broader concerns about illegal migration, as Pakistan faces international criticism over visa abuse, including begging rackets in Saudi Arabia and disappearances of airline crew in Canada. With 21.5 million annual visitors to Iraq's holy sites, this change will impact thousands of Pakistani *zairan*.

10. Pakistan Reaffirms Regional Ties at SCO (Arab News, July 15)

FM Ishaq Dar reaffirmed Islamabad's commitment to deepening ties with China, Russia, and Iran during key meetings at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Foreign Ministers' meeting in Beijing. In a high-profile interaction, Dar met Chinese President Xi Jinping, emphasising Pakistan's "iron-clad" strategic partnership and shared goals for regional peace. The meeting highlighted the enduring importance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Dar also held bilateral meetings with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, agreeing to expand cooperation in trade, energy,

and defence, with Lavrov invited to Pakistan. Talks with Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi focused on regional tensions post-Israel-Iran hostilities, with Dar stressing Pakistan's solidarity with Iran and a diplomatic path to peace. The SCO summit comes amid recent India-Pakistan military tensions, though no bilateral meetings are scheduled with Indian officials. With the SCO Leaders' Summit approaching, Pakistan seems to project itself as an active player in regional stability and multilateral cooperation.

11. Pakistan, Indonesia Reaffirm Defence, Strategic Cooperation (Geo TV, July 15)

Pakistan and Indonesia have reaffirmed their commitment to deepening strategic and defence cooperation, with both sides agreeing to accelerate joint defence production projects and expand multifaceted bilateral ties, according to official statements released after a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and visiting Indonesian Defence Minister Lt Gen Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin (Retd). Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stressed Pakistan's interest in enhancing strategic, economic, and defence cooperation, highlighting the historical and cultural bonds between the two nations. He pointed to the potential for expanding investment opportunities and fast-tracking the implementation of ongoing defence cooperation agreements.

Recalling his recent meeting with President Subianto at the G-8 Summit in Cairo, Shehbaz reaffirmed Pakistan's support for strengthening ties across trade, health, and strategic sectors. The two countries are also exploring cooperation beyond defence, including vaccine production in Pakistan, the establishment of medical institutions in Indonesia, and increased exchanges of healthcare professionals.

Separately, the Indonesian Defence Minister met Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, accompanied by a high-level delegation. Discussions centred on regional security, counter-terrorism cooperation, and expanding military-to-military ties. Field Marshal Munir underscored the importance of mutual cooperation for regional peace and stability, while Minister Sjamsoeddin appreciated the Pakistan Army's efforts in combating terrorism and reiterated Indonesia's commitment to enhanced defence ties.

12. Developments with the United States

a. PTI's Zulfikar Bukhari to Testify on Pakistan's Political Repression Before US Congress (Dawn, July 14; Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, US Congress, July 10)

PTI leader Sayed Zulfikar Bukhari, a former special assistant to ex-prime minister Imran Khan, is scheduled to testify before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the United States Congress, bringing international attention to the issue of political repression in Pakistan. The hearing, set to take place in Washington, DC, will focus on the treatment of political opposition, the suppression of journalists, and restrictions on fundamental freedoms in Pakistan. According to the hearing notice, the commission aims to examine the Pakistani government's actions to limit media communications, stifle opposition, and prevent free and fair elections, especially after the controversial February 2024 parliamentary elections. These elections, as noted by the US State Department, were marred by undue restrictions on freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, electoral violence, and curbs on democratic rights.

Bukhari confirmed his participation in the hearing via social media, stating he would highlight the arbitrary imprisonment of Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, and other political prisoners, along with the erosion of democracy and escalating crackdowns on civil liberties in Pakistan. He will be joined by other international human rights experts, including representatives from Amnesty International, legal advocacy groups, and regional rights networks. The bipartisan commission, established to promote global human rights, will listen to testimony on how the current Pakistani administration has allegedly weaponised legal frameworks to silence dissent.

Bukhari's appearance comes amidst growing criticism of Pakistan's use of laws such as the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act to target journalists, opposition members, and rights activists. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has also raised alarms over shrinking civic space, reporting continued harassment of civil society organisations. The hearing is expected to increase international scrutiny on Pakistan's internal political conduct and may lead to further discussions on conditioning international engagements on democratic standards.

b. Pakistan Eyes Global Markets and US Trade Access Amid Economic Stabilisation Push (Arab News Pakistan, July 15)

Pakistan is stepping up efforts to stabilise its economy and attract foreign investment, securing \$1 billion in commercial financing from the Middle East and eyeing international debt markets,

including a Panda bond and Eurobond, according to Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb. In a briefing with Moody's rating agency, Aurangzeb said macroeconomic reforms and fiscal discipline are paving the way for credit rating improvements and external sector stability. The government is also in "encouraging" talks with the US for preferential tariff access, alongside broader economic reforms under its IMF-backed stabilisation program. Key indicators include a drop in inflation, stable currency, current account surplus, and reserves crossing \$14 billion. Aurangzeb outlined a plan to raise tax-to-GDP to 13-13.5% via digitisation, enforcement, and tax administration reforms, while targeting export-led growth. Despite external pressures, Islamabad hopes improved credit ratings will lower borrowing costs and unlock long-term, inclusive, and export-driven growth.

13. UN, Green Climate Fund Launch \$9.8 Million Project to Protect Flood-Prone Communities in Pakistan (Arab News Pakistan, July 15)

The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have launched a \$9.8 million project aimed at protecting vulnerable communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province from extreme weather events. The "Integrated Climate Risk Management for Strengthened Resilience to Climate" project will target Buner and Shangla districts, two of KP's most flood-prone areas, and is expected to directly benefit 1.6 million people. The initiative focuses on:

- Installing early warning systems, including weather stations and river-level monitors;
- Training local communities to interpret and respond to weather alerts;
- Building capacity within government departments and emergency teams for faster, more coordinated disaster response;
- Safeguarding food systems by enabling proactive measures to protect livelihoods.

The project comes as Pakistan faces increasing climate volatility, with 240 million people exposed to frequent extreme weather. The 2022 floods, one of the worst in the country's history, claimed 1,700 lives and submerged a third of the country. Aligned with the GCF's Strategic Plan 2024-2027, the project aims to bridge critical capacity gaps, strengthen local adaptation efforts, and help Pakistan's most underserved communities withstand future climate shocks.

TERROR TALLY

1. Confrontations and Counter Terrorism Operations

- a. **Dawn, July 01** | **Domel:** In Bannu district's Domel tehsil, two suspected terrorists were killed in a joint operation by the police and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD). According to Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sajjad Khan, the operation resulted in a 20-minute firefight. Two terrorists—Hussain Ahmed and Inaam alias Tooru, linked to North Waziristan's Haider Khel village—were shot dead while their accomplices escaped. Recovered from the scene were AK-47 rifles, hand grenades, magazines, bullets, and mobile phones. Police identified Inaam as a key suspect in five terrorist cases, including targeted attacks on police, while Ahmed was wanted for three incidents of terrorism.
- b. **DG ISPR, July 04** | **Hassan Khel:** Thirty terrorists from the so-called “Indian proxy” group *Fitna al Khawarij* were killed in North Waziristan's Hassan Khel tehsil as they attempted to infiltrate across the Pak-Afghan border. The operation took place on the nights of July 02 and 03, when security forces detected and foiled the infiltration attempt, eliminating all attackers. A large cache of weapons and explosives was recovered. The army accused the group, a term used for the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), of being sponsored by India, and urged Afghanistan to prevent its soil from being used for cross-border terrorism.
- c. **Dawn, July 05** | **Taunsa Sharif:** The Punjab CTD killed five terrorists in a high-intensity operation in Taunsa Sharif, foiling a major terror plot. The Intelligence-Based Operation (IBO) near the Tri-Border Village followed credible reports of militant presence. Five others escaped injured, while security forces recovered weapons, IEDs, and explosives. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the group belonged to *Fitna al Hindustan*, allegedly linked to India-backed terror activity in Balochistan and Southern Punjab. Checkpoints have been set up, and search operations continue.
- d. **Dawn, July 05** | **Bathani Neh:** Three suspected terrorists from the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) Tipu Gul group were killed in a joint CTD and police operation in Bathani Neh, near Harama Tala village. According to Lakki Marwat police, the 25-minute encounter eliminated militants involved in the targeted killings of police personnel, including CTD officer Waheedullah and two constables. Those killed were identified as Waseemullah alias Umar Khattab,

Qudratullah alias Abu Bakr, and Hijratullah alias Hijrat, all wanted for IED attacks and assaults on security forces.

- e. **Geo TV, July 12 | Lakki Marwat:** A terror attack on Gambila police station was successfully thwarted after alert officers noticed suspicious movement and opened fire, forcing the attackers to flee, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police confirmed. No casualties were reported among the police personnel. Inspector General Zulfiqar Hameed praised the officers for their vigilance and swift response. A search operation has been launched in the surrounding areas to locate the attackers and identify potential hideouts linked to the foiled assault.

2. Targeted Militant Attacks

a. **Attack on Traffic Police in Lakki Marwat (Dawn, July 01)**

In the Lakki Marwat district, two traffic policemen were martyred when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them while they were travelling to their duty post at Tajazai Adda. According to police spokesperson Shahid Hameed, the incident took place on Longkhel Road near Gulbaz Dehqan village. The martyred officers were identified as Israel and Sanaullah, both residents of the Longkhel area. District Police Officer Mohammad Jawad Ishaq revealed that four attackers on two motorcycles ambushed the officers and also stole their submachine guns. The traffic personnel were in civilian clothes at the time of the attack. This incident follows a string of violent attacks in Lakki Marwat, including the assassination of a peace committee leader and his associates last week, and recent anti-terror operations in the Kurram-Gambila forest belt.

b. **Jirga Attacked in Bannu, One Killed, Three Injured (Dawn, July 05)**

Armed assailants attacked a jirga gathering in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), leaving one person dead and three injured, including a police constable, local police confirmed. According to Bannu police spokesperson Kashif Nawaz, the Sardi Khel community had organised a jirga in Mandi Khel when militants attempted to abduct jirga leader Malak Eid Nawaz Sardi Khel, sparking a firefight. The injured were transported to District Headquarters Hospital Bannu, and security forces launched a search operation in the area.

c. **Three Police Officers Injured in Roadside Blast in Balochistan's Nasirabad (Dawn, July 07)**

At least three highway police personnel were injured in a roadside bomb attack on their patrol vehicle in Nasirabad district of Balochistan, officials confirmed. According to Senior Superintendent of Police Khadim Husain, the blast occurred in the Rabbi area when officers were conducting a routine patrol. Initial investigations suggest the attack was carried out using a remote-controlled explosive device. The injured officers were transported to a hospital in Dera Murad Jamali, approximately 12 kilometres from the blast site.

d. Armed Men Hijack Oil Tankers, Abduct Seven Crew Members in Bannu (Business Standard, July 08)

In another incident highlighting deteriorating security in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, armed men hijacked three oil tankers and abducted seven crew members near the Tuchi bridge area of Bannu district, police confirmed. According to District Police Officer Saleem Khan Kulachi, the convoy was intercepted near Marwat Canal while travelling from North Waziristan. A first information report (FIR) has been filed at Baka Khel Police Station, and a search operation is underway. No group has claimed responsibility, and no ransom demands have been made so far.

e. Quadcopter Attacks Kill Woman, Injure Three Children in Bannu (Dawn, July 09; Daily Excelsior, July 10)

At least one woman was killed, and three children were injured after militants launched two quadcopter attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district, police confirmed. The attacks mark the latest in a string of quadcopter and drone assaults in KP and Balochistan in recent months. According to Bannu District Police Officer (DPO) Saleem Abbas Kulachi, the first attack targeted a civilian home, killing the woman and wounding her two children and another minor. All victims were shifted to the hospital for treatment. In a second strike, militants dropped explosives via quadcopter on the Maryan police station, damaging the rooftop's solar panels, though no police casualties were reported. DPO Kulachi noted this was the third quadcopter attack on the same police facility. Security forces have launched a search operation in the area to trace and apprehend those responsible.

f. Six Killed, Three Injured in Balochistan Violence; Multiple Shootings and Bomb Blast Reported (Dawn, July 09)

At least six people were killed and three others injured in a series of violent incidents across Balochistan. In Pir Koh, a powerful IED blast rocked the main *bazaar* after explosives planted

on a motorcycle detonated. Separately, two men, Abdul Hayee and Khair Muhammad, were shot dead by unknown assailants in Khuzdar's Zehri area. In Hub, gunmen killed a man and a teenage girl in another targeted attack. A police constable, Rubnawaz, was killed in Kalat's Azizabad after being ambushed by armed attackers. Meanwhile, in Quetta's Pashtunabad locality, a motorcyclist was shot dead by robbers after resisting a theft attempt. Authorities have launched investigations into all incidents amidst rising concerns over lawlessness in the province.

g. ANP Leader Khan Zeb Shot Dead in Bajaur, Party Blames State for 'Targeted Killing' (Dawn, July 10; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan/X, July 10)

Awami National Party (ANP) leader Maulana Khan Zeb and a policeman were shot dead in a targeted attack in Bajaur district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to police, unidentified attackers on motorcycles opened fire on Khan Zeb while he was campaigning for an upcoming peace parade. Three others were injured in the incident.

Khan Zeb, a senior ANP figure and secretary of *ulema* affairs, was mourned by the ANP leadership. ANP President Aimal Wali Khan accused state institutions of complicity, vowing to register a case against the state. The party announced three days of mourning, calling it not just an attack on ANP but on "Pashtun consciousness and peace." Condemnations poured in from political leaders, including KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, who promised swift justice. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan also demanded an impartial inquiry.

The killing comes amid a spate of violence targeting political figures in KP. Recent months have seen attacks on the homes of Bajaur MNA Mubarak Zeb Khan and the killing of former JI senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan's brother in Swabi.

h. Lakki Marwat IED Blast Targets Political Convoy, Leaves One Dead, Two Injured (Dawn, July 13)

One person was killed and two others injured after an improvised explosive device (IED) targeted a vehicle belonging to local political leader Inamullah Khan, Chairman of Betani Qaumi Tehreek, in Lakki Marwat district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The explosion occurred near the Bukhmal Ahmadzai checkpoint on Tejori Road as Khan was returning from a weekly protest in Pul Ahmadzai. Police confirmed Khan survived the attack while one civilian died and two were wounded, all of whom were transported to the DHQ Hospital Tajazai. District Police Officer Nazir Khan visited the site and initiated a forensic investigation, with a search

operation ongoing. In a video statement, Khan urged locals to mobilise against the attackers amid sounds of gunfire in the background.

3. Judiciary Launches Action Plan on Enforced Disappearances and Judicial Independence (Arab News, July 11; Dawn, July 11)

In a major development, the National Judicial Policy Making Committee (NJPMC) has announced the formation of a dedicated committee to craft an institutional response to the chronic issue of enforced disappearances in Pakistan. The decision, taken during the 53rd NJPMC meeting chaired by Chief Justice Yahya Afridi, reflects a unanimous resolve by top judicial figures to uphold fundamental rights and tackle the crisis that has persisted for decades.

The new committee, comprising senior officials from the Federal Judicial Academy and Law and Justice Commission, has been given 30 days to submit proposals, with government concerns to be relayed via the Attorney General's office. This comes as official data reveals 125 new cases of enforced disappearances were reported in just the first half of 2025, bringing the total to over 10,500 cases since 2011. Of these, nearly 4,800 missing persons have returned home while over 1,700 remain in custody or internment centres.

Alongside this initiative, the NJPMC also moved to curb external interference in the judiciary. High courts have been directed to establish formal reporting systems to protect judicial officers from executive overreach, following growing concerns about undue influence, including recent allegations by Islamabad High Court judges about interference by intelligence agencies.

The committee's latest moves follow growing public pressure on missing persons cases and judicial independence, with the Supreme Judicial Council also scheduled to convene this week on related matters. The judiciary's renewed activism signals a rare moment of institutional accountability and resistance to political expediency.

4. FIA Cracks Down on Human Trafficking & Smuggling in Balochistan (Dawn, July 13)

In a major action against human trafficking networks, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested three individuals from Quetta on Saturday. The suspects, Hamdullah alias Kashmir,

Gul Zaman, and Muhammad Aslam, were apprehended by the FIA's anti-human trafficking circle, which also recovered three mobile phones and a notepad from them, according to an official spokesperson. Separately, the Maritime Security Agency, in collaboration with the Pakistan Navy and excise and anti-narcotics officials, foiled a liquor smuggling attempt off the Gadani coast. Over 10,000 bottles of foreign and local liquor brands, valued at Rs350 million in the international market, were seized during the joint operation.



About the Author

Akashika Mate is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) with a focus on strategic and security issues concerning Afghanistan and Pakistan. She recently earned her master's in international relations from King's College London, where her research explored themes of conflict, diplomacy, and resistance. Her areas of interests include South Asian geopolitics, foreign policy analysis, and gender in conflict. She can be reached at akashika.claws@gmail.com



All Rights Reserved 2025 Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied, archived, retained or transmitted through print, speech or electronic media without prior written approval from C L A W S. The views expressed and suggestions made in the article are solely of the author in his personal capacity and do not have any official endorsement. Attributability of the contents lies purely with author.