

CLAWS Newsletter



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by Shreeya Shubhi Mohanty

Domestic Developments

24 April ([Qatar News Agency](#); [Anadolu Ajansi](#)): Pakistan Security Forces Kill 22 Militants in Khyber Operation.

Pakistan's military announced that security forces and law enforcement agencies killed 22 militants during a joint intelligence-based operation in Khyber district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation targeted militants linked to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), referred to by the state as "Fitna al-Khawarij." The military stated that militants opened indiscriminate fire during the operation, resulting in the death of a 10-year-old child. Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the militants, and additional sanitization operations were launched in the area. The operation reflected Pakistan's continuing counterterrorism campaign under the "Azm-e-Istehkam" framework amid rising militant activity near the Afghan border.

24 April ([The Week](#)): Pakistan Increases Counterterrorism Focus Along Afghan Border.

Following the Khyber operation, Pakistani security agencies intensified intelligence-based monitoring and military coordination across former tribal districts bordering Afghanistan. Officials warned of increased militant movement and cross-border infiltration risks linked to TTP networks operating near the frontier. Security analysts noted that Pakistan's western border remained one of the country's most volatile security zones due to the resurgence of militant attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan during early 2026.

27 April ([BBC](#)): Pakistan Accused of Attacking Afghan University in Kunar.

Taliban authorities accused Pakistan of launching cross-border attacks on Afghanistan's eastern Kunar province, including strikes that reportedly damaged Kunar University and surrounding residential areas. According to multiple sources cited by the BBC, at least seven people were killed and 75 injured, including students and a university professor. Taliban officials said mortars and rockets were used, while other local sources claimed jets and drones were involved. Pakistan's Information Ministry denied targeting the university or civilian areas and dismissed the reports as false. The incident marked a major escalation after weeks of fragile ceasefire efforts

brokered through Chinese mediation talks in Urumqi earlier in April. Taliban spokesperson Hamdullah Fitrat described the strikes as “grave and inexcusable war crimes,” while Pakistan maintained that its operations target militant hideouts linked to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The attack further deepened tensions between Islamabad and Kabul amid ongoing cross-border violence and security disputes.

30 April (Dawn): Finance Ministry Warns Pakistan’s Economy Vulnerable to Global Instability.

Pakistan’s Finance Ministry warned that the country’s economy remains vulnerable to external shocks caused by Middle East instability, rising global oil prices, and disruptions in maritime trade routes. In its monthly economic outlook, the ministry cautioned that prolonged tensions around the Strait of Hormuz could significantly affect Pakistan’s fuel imports, inflation levels, and foreign exchange reserves. Officials also expressed concern about pressure on the Pakistani rupee and increasing import costs at a time when the country continues to rely heavily on IMF-backed stabilization measures. Economists warned that higher shipping and insurance costs linked to regional conflict could worsen inflation and deepen fiscal stress for ordinary Pakistanis already facing high food and energy prices.

12 May (BBC): Pakistani Airstrike on Kabul Rehabilitation Centre Killed 269 People, UN Says.

A Pakistani airstrike on the Omid Drug Rehabilitation Hospital in Kabul killed at least 269 people, according to findings later confirmed by the United Nations and reported by the BBC on May 12, 2026. Pakistan stated that the strike targeted “military and terrorist infrastructure,” but families of victims, hospital employees, and recovering addicts rejected those claims, saying the facility housed civilians undergoing treatment. The UN, which was granted access to the site, confirmed that civilians were among those killed in the attack. The strike became one of the deadliest incidents in the escalating Afghanistan–Pakistan conflict and drew international concern over civilian casualties and cross-border military operations.

16 May (Dawn): Bilawal Inaugurates 11 Healthcare and Welfare Projects in Quetta.

Pakistan People’s Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari inaugurated 11 healthcare and welfare projects in Quetta aimed at improving access to medical facilities,

maternal healthcare, and community services. The initiatives are part of efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure in Balochistan, a province facing long-standing development and security challenges. Officials said the projects are expected to benefit underserved populations and improve healthcare delivery in remote districts.

19 May ([The Express Tribune](#); [Pakistan Today](#)): Over 164,000 Pakistanis Deported From Gulf States in Five Years, Pakistani National Assembly.

Pakistan's National Assembly, informed that more than 164,000 Pakistani nationals had been deported from Gulf countries over the past five years due to illegal residency, labor violations, criminal charges, and immigration-related offenses. The government stated that most deportations came from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, raising concerns about overseas employment standards and migrant welfare.

19 May ([Afghanistan International](#); [Pakistan Today](#)): Pakistan Says 'Operation Ghazab lil Haq' Continues.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed that "Operation Ghazab lil Haq" is continuing with full resolve as part of ongoing counterterrorism efforts. The government stated that the operation targets militant networks responsible for attacks on security forces and civilians in multiple regions. Officials emphasized that national security remains a top priority amid rising militant incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The statement came as Pakistan continues broader military and intelligence-led campaigns to dismantle extremist infrastructure and improve internal stability.

20 May ([Pakistan Today](#)): Pakistan Orders Security Corridor for Balochistan Mineral Belt.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered the deployment of Frontier Corps (FC) forces in Balochistan's Rakhshan Division to create a security corridor protecting key mining areas, including Saindak and Reko Diq projects. The move aims to secure mineral transport routes and foreign investments amid rising separatist attacks by groups such as the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). Officials said the initiative is part of broader counterterrorism and economic stabilization efforts in the province.

20 May ([The Express Tribune](#); [Pakistan Today](#)): Pakistan Signs over \$320m AIIB Loan for N-5 Highway Reconstruction.

Pakistan signed a \$320.16 million financing agreement with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for the reconstruction and upgrade of the N-5 highway, one of the country's most important national transport corridors. The project is expected to improve road safety standards, reduce congestion, and enhance connectivity between major industrial and trade hubs. Officials said the upgraded highway will also support regional trade flows under CPEC-linked infrastructure networks and strengthen logistics efficiency across Punjab and Sindh. The government described the project as part of broader efforts to modernize Pakistan's aging transport infrastructure and improve economic competitiveness.

25 May ([Reuters](#)): Pakistan Expands Chinese Investment Talks Under CPEC Phase II, XI seeks to deepen 'all-weather' friendship with Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited China for high-level meetings with President Xi Jinping focused on accelerating the second phase of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Pakistani officials announced investment agreements worth approximately \$1.22 billion covering infrastructure modernization, agriculture, renewable energy, industrial relocation, and technology cooperation. During the visit, Xi Jinping described China–Pakistan relations as an “unbreakable strategic partnership” and reaffirmed Beijing's commitment to supporting Pakistan's economic stability. Discussions also focused heavily on security concerns surrounding Chinese workers and projects in Pakistan, especially after repeated militant attacks in Balochistan

getting Chinese-linked infrastructure. The visit reinforced Pakistan's growing economic dependence on China amid continuing financial and geopolitical pressures.

External Affairs

28 April ([Khama Press](#) ; [Amu Tv](#)): Afghanistan - Pakistan Border Clashes Intensify Across Kandhar and Kunder Amid Rising Civilian Casualties.

Border tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan escalated significantly following reported clashes in Spin Boldak, Kandhar and missile strikes in Kunar Province. Fighting reportedly began after cross-border firing in Kandhar, while subsequent Pakistani strikers in Kunar targeted multiple areas, including residential neighbourhoods and Sayed Jamaluddin Afghan University, resulting in rising civilian casualties including women and children. Reports indicate at least seven fatalities and dozen injured, though claims from both sides remain difficult to independently verify. The violence reflects deepening instability along the Durand Line, driven by disputes over cross-border militancy, territorial sensitivities and unresolved security concerns. Despite ongoing diplomatic engagements and tribal mediation efforts, the absence of a sustainable security framework in the region continues to raise the risks of broader regional and national destabilisation.

28 April ([TASS](#); [Khama Press](#)): Russia Warns Afghanistan Remains Major Source of Regional Terrorist Threats.

Russian Defence Minister Andrey Belousov warned that Afghanistan remains a principal of regional terrorist threats, citing the presence of over 20 radical groups with approximately 15,000 fighters. Speaking at CSTO and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Security Meetings, Belousov highlighted the risk of extremist spillover, cross-border crime, and militant infiltration into Central Asia. Russia and regional partners have subsequently increased military coordination, border security measures and strategic engagement to address growing instability along Afghanistan's northern frontier.

30 April ([Khama Press](#); [Hashat e Subah Daily](#)): Pakistan Releases Over 500 Detained Afghan Migrants Amid Ongoing Deportation Crackdown.

Pakistan released 527 detained Afghan migrants over the past week through the Spin Boldak and Torkham border crossings, according to Taliban authorities. The release comes amid Pakistan's intensified crackdown on undocumented Afghan nationals,

with ongoing concerns over arrests, detention conditions and forced reparations affecting thousands of Afghan Refugees and migrants.

15 May ([The Diplomatic Insight](#); [The Express Tribune](#)): [Pakistan Meets Chinese Delegation on Digital Economy Cooperation.](#)

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met an 11-member Chinese business delegation led by IBI Beijing United Technology to discuss cooperation in the digital economy, investment promotion, and industrial collaboration. Both sides highlighted growing business-to-business engagement and Pakistan's push to develop a digital economic framework with Chinese support under broader economic partnership initiatives. China also expressed interest in helping build Pakistan's digital infrastructure, including SME market access and technology-driven transformation, while Pakistan welcomed increased Chinese investment in its economic modernization plans.

16 May ([Dawn](#) ; [Pakistan Today](#)): [Pakistan Welcomes Chinese Digital Economy Investment Push.](#)

Pakistan reaffirmed its strong strategic partnership with China, welcoming increased Chinese investment in the digital economy. Discussions focused on technology transfer, SME development, digital infrastructure, and innovation-led growth. The government said the initiative aligns with Pakistan's broader goal of economic modernization and diversification beyond traditional sectors. Officials highlighted that digital transformation would play a key role in improving productivity and attracting foreign investment under CPEC Phase II.

17 May ([Pakistan Today](#); [CPEC](#)): [Pakistan Expands Agricultural Cooperation With China.](#)

Pakistan and China expanded agricultural cooperation under CPEC Phase II through hybrid seeds, research projects, fisheries, and agricultural technology initiatives. Reports highlighted the growing use of Chinese hybrid rice seeds in Punjab and increasing collaboration in farm modernization, exports, and food security as both countries approach 75 years of diplomatic relations in 2026.

18 May ([Pakistan Today](#) ; [Constitution Net](#)): [Pakistan Government Rejects Reports of Raising Voting Age to 25.](#)

Pakistan Information Minister Attaullah Tarar rejected reports claiming the government planned to raise the minimum voting age from 18 to 25 amid speculation surrounding a possible 28th Constitutional Amendment. The debate emerged after adviser Rana Sanauallah suggested discussions on aligning the voting age with the minimum age required to contest elections. Opposition parties, including PTI, criticized the proposal and warned against limiting youth participation in the democratic process, while the government insisted no such amendment was under consideration.

19 May ([Tribune](#); [Pakistan Today](#)): [Pakistan Reaffirms Commitment to Stronger Iran Ties.](#)

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening ties with Iran during a meeting with Ambassador-designate Imran Ahmed Siddiqui ahead of his departure to Tehran. Dar emphasized expanding cooperation in trade, connectivity, people-to-people exchanges, and regional coordination while highlighting the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries. The statement came amid Pakistan's growing diplomatic role in regional affairs, including mediation efforts linked to US-Iran tensions and broader Middle East stability discussions.

19 May ([Pakistan Today](#)): [Australia-Pakistan Trade Crosses \\$2.6bn.](#)

Pakistan and Australia saw bilateral trade surpass \$2.6 billion, marking a steady expansion in economic cooperation. Trade growth has been driven by agricultural imports, education services, minerals, and professional workforce exchanges.

Both countries agreed to expand investment opportunities and diversify trade beyond traditional sectors. Analysts noted that Pakistan's demand for raw materials and Australia's interest in South Asian markets are driving deeper commercial engagement, with potential for future cooperation in mining, agriculture technology, and education.

20 May ([Gwadar Pro](#); [Business Recorder](#)): **Pakistan and China Reaffirm 'Iron-Clad' Strategic Partnerships.**

Pakistan and China reaffirmed their “iron-clad” strategic partnership during high-level talks between Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Chinese officials. Both sides emphasized continued cooperation in trade, infrastructure, regional connectivity, defense, and the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), while also discussing regional security and economic stability. Pakistan described China as its most reliable strategic partner and stressed that bilateral ties were expanding beyond traditional infrastructure projects into technology, agriculture, energy, and diplomatic coordination on regional and international issues.

21 May ([Dawn](#)): **Pakistan Accuses India of 'State Terrorism' at UN, Rejects Afghan Civilian Killing Claims.**

Pakistan accused India of supporting “state terrorism” during remarks at the United Nations while rejecting allegations that Pakistani forces deliberately targeted Afghan civilians during cross-border operations. Islamabad stated that its military actions were aimed at militant hideouts linked to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and blamed India for destabilizing activities in the region. The statement came amid rising tensions with Afghanistan following reports of civilian casualties in Pakistani strikes on Afghan territory.

21 May ([Pakistan Today](#)): **Pakistan Nominated to World Customs Organisation Policy Commission After Nearly 70 Years.**

Pakistan was nominated to the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Policy Commission for the 2026–28 term during the Asia-Pacific regional meeting in Hong Kong, marking the country’s first selection to the body in nearly seven decades. Pakistan secured one of five regional seats after competing against six candidates, with final approval expected at the WCO Council session in June. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said the nomination reflected Pakistan Customs’ recent modernization efforts, including digital reforms, the Pakistan Single Window project, and increased engagement with international customs institutions. The commission plays a key role in shaping global customs policy on trade facilitation, digital transformation, and enforcement cooperation.

23 May ([Xinhua](#) ; [Global Times](#)): Two Pakistan Astronauts Begin Training at China's Astronaut Centre.

Two Pakistani astronauts began mission training at China's Astronaut Centre as part of expanding space cooperation between Pakistan and China. The program includes technical, scientific, and spaceflight preparation under bilateral agreements linked to Pakistan's growing participation in China's space initiatives.

The development was described as a significant step in Pakistan's space and scientific collaboration with China, reflecting deeper strategic cooperation beyond infrastructure and defense under the broader Pakistan-China partnership.



About the Author

Shreeya Shubhi Mohanty 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 completed her B.A. (Hons.) in English from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi and has a M.A. in International Studies from Christ University, Bengaluru.

Experienced in event management for national and international events, with professional expertise as a Communication Consultant at Synodical Board of Social Services. She is also a Certified Youth Resource Trainer with Local Capacities for Peace, with a strong background in communication, training, and organizational coordination.

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