

September 2025

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

*A Selected Summary of News, Views and Trends
from Pakistani Media*



Prepared by

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Tirah controversy, Editorial, *Dawn*, 24 September¹

The civilian deaths have resulted in protests in the region, with local tribesmen, as well as the HRCF, calling for an inquiry into the matter. *It is the state's responsibility to clear the confusion and shed light on the facts. Experience has shown that 'collateral damage' can result in increased restiveness in the areas affected by terrorism, and when there is radio silence from the state in situations where civilian lives are lost, hostile narratives and conspiracy theories begin to dominate.* That is why the facts must be told. Having said that, it is unwise for the PTI-led provincial government to politicize the incident. Such sensitive issues should not be used to get back at political opponents, and both the center and provincial government need to work together to uncover the facts behind the Tirah deaths, and prevent further loss of innocent lives during CT operations. *The unfortunate truth is that KP, particularly its tribal districts, has been in the grip of terrorism for over two decades. That is why along with thorough probes into incidents like the one in Tirah, SOPs need to be developed that can ensure minimum or no collateral damage during CT operations.* When there is lack of credible information from the state, especially if civilians are caught in the crossfire, anger and resentment in local communities will only grow. Therefore, along with transparency, the residents of the affected areas must be on board in the battle against militancy. With a cooperative approach terrorism can be defeated, and the people of the tribal districts can live in peace.

Poverty trap, Editorial, *Dawn*, 28 September²

The new World Bank report, Reclaiming Momentum towards Prosperity, is a sobering reminder that Pakistan's current growth and development model is no longer fit to sustain reduction in poverty and inequality. The model, which supported initial gains in poverty alleviation before running aground, has already eroded two decades of progress as poverty

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1944290/tirah-controversy>

² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1944677/poverty-trap>

trends reversed over the past three years. A new development trajectory is needed, one which prioritizes inclusive growth, equity and sustained investment in human capital, the WB said. *The bank also called for the overhaul of the present development model at the report's launch in Islamabad recently. "Reforms that expand access to quality services, protect households from shocks and create better jobs especially for the bottom 40pc are essential to break cycles of poverty and deliver durable, inclusive growth," it said. Structural imbalances — from elite capture and regressive fiscal policies to weak public service delivery and labour market constraints will keep most Pakistanis trapped in poverty. Abysmal human development indicators make the picture even bleaker.* Nearly 40pc of children are stunted. One in four primary school-age children is out of school, and three out of four who attend cannot write or read after five years of education. Half the population lack safe drinking water; nearly a third lack safe sanitation. Over 85pc of jobs are informal, offering little security or upward mobility. Women and youth remain largely excluded from the workforce. How can a country expect to build a prosperous future on such shaky foundations?

Petty politics, Editorial, Dawn, 30 September³

Having clinched the Asia Cup after a thrilling contest with Pakistan, the side ought to have basked in its triumph. Instead, it spoiled the moment by refusing to accept the trophy from the Asian Cricket Council chief, because he is a Pakistani national. That act of arrogance was not isolated. *From its captain's refusal to shake hands in the opening match to his overtly political comments in the post-match awards ceremony, the Indian cricket team's behaviour seemed scripted to turn the game into another stage for New Delhi's nationalist posturing. Their prime minister wasted no time in reinforcing this narrative, describing India's victory as "Operation Sindoor on the games field". Equally troubling is the general political climate that feeds this behaviour.* India insists on Pakistan's culpability in the Pahalgam terrorist attack, but has yet to provide any compelling evidence. Its leaders repeat the allegation endlessly, as if that can substitute for proof. It was this unyielding stance that brought both countries to the brink of nuclear catastrophe earlier this year. To now see the same rhetoric spilling into cricket is extremely dangerous. It narrows the space for peace, deepens mistrust, and denies the region any room for optimism. The Indian cricket team had a chance to show

³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1945580/petty-politics>

grace in victory; to remind millions that the sport can offer relief when politics fails. Instead, it left behind not only the trophy it refused to receive, but also a lasting impression of the country's insecurities. The people of the two countries deserve better. Their shared love of the game should not be exploited in so crass a manner.

SECURITY SITUATION

Terrorism upswing, Editorial, *Dawn*, 03 September⁴

The latest figures regarding the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan indicate that rather than abating, militant insurgencies in KP and Balochistan continue to take a heavy toll. As per data compiled by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict Studies think tank, the country witnessed the highest number of militant attacks in a decade last month; at least 194 people were killed in 143 attacks, most of them security personnel and civilians, while over 230 were injured. KP saw the highest number of attacks, where banned groups such as the TTP have again become active, while Balochistan saw the second highest total, where separatist outfits like BLA have been waging a war against the state. It appears that if we continue on this troubling trajectory, last year's terrorism-related numbers may be surpassed; according to the PIPS think tank, there were over 520 terrorist attacks in 2024, claiming over 850 lives. Efforts to check infiltration from Afghanistan must be paired with internal operations to permanently secure territory. Moreover, in Balochistan, along with countering separatist violence, the political process needs to be promoted to help defeat the insurgency. The numbers are very unsettling, and if terrorist groups are not stopped now, they will start looking to expand their areas of operation. The civilian wing of the ruling set-up must clearly enunciate what concrete CT steps it has in mind.

Terror uptick, Editorial, *The News*, 23 September⁵

From the killing of an Awami National Party (ANP) worker in Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to the recent martyrdom of a police constable in Karachi, terrorism is

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1939340/terrorism-upswing>

⁵ <https://e.thenews.com.pk/detail/?id=433855>

spreading across the length and breadth of the country. This nationwide uptick in violence cannot be dismissed as a coincidence. *The fall of Kabul and the subsequent resurgence of terrorism in Pakistan are closely linked. After the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, hopes were high that support for anti-Pakistan terror groups, particularly the TTP, would end. However, the opposite has happened. Instead of losing support, the TTP seems to have found a renewed lifeline across the border.* Pakistan has formally asked the Afghan government to sever ties with the TTP and fulfill its commitment to eliminate these groups from Afghan soil. Islamabad has made it clear that any failure to act would be considered a hostile move. The data supports the urgency of this request: terrorist incidents surged by 74 per cent in August compared to July, according to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS). Amid the rising attacks, our security forces continue to fight back. In Dera Ismail Khan, seven terrorists were neutralized during an intelligence-based operation. More sanitization efforts are underway, targeting foreign-sponsored militants, including those backed by India. In a recent significant development, the mastermind of the Jaffar Express attack and an operational commander of the Indian-backed Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) was reportedly eliminated in Afghanistan.

URDU MEDIA

Quetta: 10 killed, several injured in suicide blast on Akhtar Mengal's car, Daily Sangar, 2 September⁶

A suicide bombing in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, has reportedly killed 10 people and injured several others. The attack targeted the vehicle of Sardar Akhtar Mengal, the central president of the Balochistan National Party (BNP) and former Chief Minister of Balochistan. However, Akhtar Mengal remained unharmed in the explosion. The blast occurred in the parking area of Shahwani Stadium in Quetta, just after a BNP public gathering had concluded. The explosion took place as a commemorative event marking the death anniversary of Baloch nationalist leader Sardar Ataullah Mengal ended in the Saryab area of Quetta. The event was attended by several prominent leaders, including Sardar Akhtar

⁶ <https://dailysangar.online/?p=64997>

Mengal and Mahmood Khan Achakzai. According to eyewitnesses, the blast occurred just as participants were heading toward their vehicles after the gathering, spreading panic and fear in the area. It is being reported that the explosion was a targeted attack on Akhtar Mengal's vehicle, but he escaped unharmed. Initial reports suggest 10 people were killed and dozens were injured. The vehicle of Mir Kabir Ahmed Muhammad Shahi, the central secretary general of the National Party, was completely destroyed in the blast, but he and his security guards remained safe. Similarly, Nawabzada Mir Niaz Zehri's vehicle was severely damaged; two of his gunmen were killed, and one was injured. According to security sources, the blast was a suicide attack. Party sources confirmed the bombing, stating that as Sardar Akhtar Mengal's vehicle was departing the venue, a targeted explosion was carried out. According to the party, the bomb exploded immediately after his vehicle had passed, which is why Akhtar Mengal was fortunate to escape unharmed. Rescue teams have reached the site, and the injured are being shifted to hospitals. Some of the injured are reported to be in critical condition

Meeting of Balochistan's opposition parties: Demand for the repeal of the Mines and Minerals Act 2025, *Daily Sangar*, 23 September⁷

A joint meeting of all parties, civil society, and the Mines Owners Association was held in the committee room of the Balochistan Assembly, chaired by Opposition Leader Younis Aziz Zehri. The meeting included a detailed discussion on the Mines and Minerals Act 2025, and participants declared the contents of the bill to be against the Constitution, a violation of Balochistan's autonomy, and contrary to the 18th Amendment and the right to ownership. They demanded its complete cancellation. The meeting affirmed that the opposition parties of Balochistan have always acted as guardians of the interests of the people and will strongly oppose any action that goes against public interest at every platform. A parliamentary committee was formed under the leadership of Younis Aziz Zehri. Members of this committee include: Engineer Zamarak Khan Achakzai (ANP's Balochistan Parliamentary Leader), Rehmat Saleh Baloch (Deputy Parliamentary Leader of National Party Balochistan), Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman (Parliamentary Leader of Jamaat-e-Islami),

⁷ <https://dailysangar.online/?p=65813>

Jehanzaib Mengal (Parliamentary Leader of Balochistan National Party). This committee will present the demands regarding the Mines and Minerals Act 2025 to the Chief Minister. Later, the committee will inform the leadership of the political parties about the progress made with the government.

Border traders demand lifting of ban on trade with Iran, *Daily Sangar*, 23 September⁸

Businessmen associated with border trade with Iran from Balochistan, Zia Abdul Karim, Sardar Wali Yalanzai, Haji Nasir Baloch, Haji Akbar Baloch and others, while holding a press conference at the Turbat Press Club, have demanded that the Balochistan government, FC and district administration lift the restrictions imposed on border trade with Iran. They said that otherwise, people associated with border trade will be forced to take strict steps. *The businessmen said that the Kech district is a border area, where people have been earning their living through border trade for centuries. But government restrictions and policies have badly affected this business, due to which people are facing severe economic difficulties and are not able to meet their basic daily needs, including food. According to them, most families in the Kech district meet their daily needs, children's education and medical expenses through this trade, but the people are suffering greatly due to repeated obstacles and closures.* The speakers said that the Iranian border has been a major support for the local economy, even before the formation of Pakistan. We do not support any incident that is against the integrity of the country, but closing the border after attacks on the forces is a complete injustice to the people. They said that closing the border will not solve the security problem, but rather will make the people more hostile, and various crimes may arise. *They warned that if the government does not take practical steps soon, thousands of people in the Kech district will become unemployed and suffer from hunger and poverty. He further said that the government has no alternative source of employment for the youth.* In such a situation, where should the people go? Therefore, the Balochistan government, civil administration and security agencies should reconsider the decision to close the border and immediately lift the restrictions, keeping in mind the economic difficulties of the people.

⁸ <https://dailysangar.online/?p=65842>

PM Shehbaz reaffirmed the desire to continue working closely with China at SCO Aiteraz Hai with Aniq Nisar, *ARY News*, 02 September⁹

The host talked about the SCO Summit has showed the changing colour of India, it use to criticize China but now is in China to take part in the SCO Summit. India has banned made in China products in the past, Modi has criticized China and said that we should not buy made in China product and also Chinese aggression in Ladakh. Now taking a U-turn India has congratulated China to host SCO successfully. She asked why India is trying to go close to China. **Guests:** Hafiz Niam Ul Rehman- Chairman Jamiat Islami. **Hafiz Niam Ul Rehman** pointed out that Pakistan has won and India has lost in the last conflict, we have killed the myth of India that it is dominant in in South Asia and forward in technology. Pakistan's geostrategic position is perfect right now, it has good relations with all the neighbours including Iran. Pakistan and China share a longstanding strategic partnership with ties ranging across different sectors including trade, energy, defence, and infrastructure. The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping at SCO. "During the meeting, the two leaders agreed that the relationship between their countries was unique and unparalleled, which should be reflected in their enhanced bilateral cooperation". "Both leaders also discussed important regional and global developments and agreed to continue close cooperation between Pakistan and China in this regard." He also appreciated China's unflinching support for Pakistan's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and socio-economic development, as well as the significance of CPEC as a flagship project of President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to help both countries build an even stronger Pakistan-China community with a shared future. Pakistan should work on strengthen the regional cooperation and we are talking with Iran on the security level. Pakistan stood with Iran and India with Israel in the recent Iran-Israel clash. Even the relations with Bangladesh has been improving, we are trying to reach Jamiat Islami and India has fixed Hasina and she was using forces against the Jamiat in Bangladesh. There

⁹ <https://videos.arynews.tv/video/x9prkgw/>

is no pro-Indians now in Bangladesh now, 80% of the people hate India now according to surveys. Talking about Palestine he added that the Muslim countries are not doing anything for Gaza for their gain and politics, in this also Pakistan is leader of the Muslim World we need to led the new world order of the Muslim World.