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COUNTRY ANALYSIS REPORT

WORLD PATIENT SAFETY DAY 2026

WHY PAKISTAN MUST MAKE SAFE CARE A NATIONAL PRIORITY

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Executive Summary

Pakistan entered September 2026 with a mixed national outlook: signs of macroeconomic stabilization and more active regional diplomacy are being offset by political polarization, persistent security threats, growing climate pressures, and deep structural weaknesses in public service delivery. Across sectors, the central challenge remains less the absence of policies than the gap between policy commitments, institutional coordination, implementation, and accountability.

Politically, debate over the structure of the federation has intensified, with proposals for stronger local governments or the creation of additional provinces gaining attention. These discussions have reopened longstanding questions about devolution, provincial autonomy, and implementing the 18th Amendment. Resistance from Sindh and opposition parties illustrates the political sensitivity of territorial and constitutional reform. More broadly, the debate reflects an unresolved governance problem: authority has been devolved from the federal government to the provinces, but comparable fiscal and administrative empowerment has often not reached local governments. In the current polarized environment, major constitutional reforms pursued without broad political consensus could deepen rather than resolve existing tensions.

Economically, Pakistan is benefiting from stronger remittance inflows, improved foreign-exchange reserves, and short-term fiscal stabilization. However, these gains remain fragile. Inflation rose to 11.2% in August, while higher global oil prices pose renewed external-sector risks. Revenue collection remains heavily dependent on indirect taxation and documented sectors, while low investment, weak exports, policy uncertainty, and high debt-servicing costs continue to constrain sustainable growth. The government's efforts to attract investment and expand the digital and AI economy are positive. Still, their longer-term impact will depend on regulatory predictability, domestic technological capacity, data protection, and deeper structural reforms.

Climate-related risks are also becoming more complex. Flooding, glacier instability, declining groundwater, urban vulnerability, and high-altitude hazards increasingly threaten infrastructure, livelihoods, food security, and fiscal stability. The emerging pattern suggests that Pakistan's climate response remains too reactive and disaster-focused. Greater emphasis is needed on anticipatory risk management, resilient infrastructure, groundwater governance, early-warning systems, urban drainage, and locally financed adaptation. Climate change can no longer be treated solely as an environmental issue; it is now a core governance and development challenge.

These developments point to a common national challenge: Pakistan has a narrow window in which to convert short-term stability into longer-term resilience. Doing so will depend on strengthening institutions, improving implementation, rebuilding political consensus, and addressing governance, economic, social, climate, and security challenges as interconnected rather than separate policy domains.

World Patient Safety Day 2026

WHY PAKISTAN MUST MAKE SAFE CARE A NATIONAL PRIORITY

Every patient enters a health facility expecting to get better, not to acquire an infection, receive the wrong medicine, experience a preventable diagnostic delay, or suffer harm from poorly coordinated care. Yet patient harm remains one of the most persistent and under-recognized public health challenges worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that around one in every ten patients is harmed while receiving health care, more than three million deaths occur annually because of unsafe care, and more than half of this harm is preventable. For Pakistan, these are not distant global statistics; local evidence shows that patient safety is already a significant health-system challenge.

This year's World Patient Safety Day, observed on 17 September 2026, carries the theme "Safe care for noncommunicable diseases" and the slogan "Safe care for life!" The theme is particularly relevant to Pakistan. According to the WHO's latest noncommunicable disease (NCD) progress monitoring data, noncommunicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory disease, accounted for approximately 52% of deaths in Pakistan in 2021, representing an estimated 871,600 deaths. The probability of premature death from a major NCD was approximately 26%. Unlike an acute illness treated during a single encounter, an individual with diabetes, hypertension, cancer, or cardiovascular disease may interact with doctors, laboratories, pharmacies, and hospitals for decades. Every additional prescription, diagnostic test, referral, and hospital admission creates another point at which something can go wrong.

Pakistan's own hospitals illustrate the problem. A multicentre study covering 1,553 patients in 13 hospitals in Punjab found that 8.4% had healthcare-associated infections. Among intensive-care patients, the prevalence reached 33.3%, while among newborns it was 23.8%. Surgical-site infections accounted for 40% of the infections identified. These numbers translate patient safety from an abstract concept into a practical reality: a person can successfully undergo surgery but acquire a preventable infection during recovery; a critically ill patient can become sicker because of an infection acquired inside the facility meant to treat them.

Medication safety presents another warning. A study of 1,249 hospitalized patients receiving antibiotics in four tertiary public hospitals in Lahore identified 486 adverse drug events. Importantly, 58.4% were considered preventable. Wrong-drug errors and inadequate monitoring were prominent causes, while non-adherence to policies and inadequate information about antibiotics were important contributing factors. For people living with multiple chronic conditions, who may simultaneously use medicines for diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, or other illnesses, the risks of interactions, incorrect dosage, and inadequate follow-up become even greater.

Unsafe care imposes costs far beyond the hospital ward. Preventable infections extend hospital stays and increase antibiotic use, contributing to antimicrobial resistance. Medication and diagnostic errors can produce disability, repeat hospitalization, and additional expenditure for already financially vulnerable households. Most importantly, repeated experiences of unsafe care undermine public confidence in health institutions. For a country simultaneously confronting infectious diseases and a rapidly growing NCD burden, Pakistan cannot afford a health system in which treatment itself becomes an additional source of risk.

The response should therefore move patient safety from an individual clinical responsibility to a national health-system priority. Pakistan needs functioning patient-safety incident reporting and learning systems; enforceable infection-control standards; stronger medication reconciliation and clinical pharmacy services; standardized referral and discharge procedures; safer NCD care pathways from primary care to tertiary hospitals; and meaningful involvement of patients and families in treatment decisions. Health workers must also be able to report mistakes and near-misses within a learning-oriented rather than purely punitive culture.

World Patient Safety Day should ultimately remind us of a simple principle: access to health care is not enough if the care itself is unsafe. As Pakistan expands services for millions of people living with chronic diseases, patient safety must become a measurable indicator of health-system performance. Safe care is not an optional improvement in quality, it is a prerequisite for saving lives, protecting families, and maintaining trust in Pakistan's health system.

Political Updates

Pakistan's political debate in September 2026 has increasingly centred on the structure of the federation, devolution, and the effectiveness of the existing governance model. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has continued to advocate the creation of new provinces or administrative units, arguing that Pakistan's present structure is too centralised to deliver basic services effectively. He has maintained that any restructuring should be constitutional and based on public consent, while Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has presented two possible alternatives: empowering local governments across roughly 160 districts or creating 12 to 15 smaller provinces through consensus. Both arguments reflect growing acknowledgement within government that the existing administrative system has struggled to translate authority and resources into improved education, health, and other social outcomes.

The proposal has, however, quickly evolved from a governance discussion into a politically sensitive dispute over federalism and provincial autonomy. The Sindh Assembly has rejected any division of the province, while the PPP has warned against attempts to dilute the 18th Amendment or alter Sindh's territorial status. Political resistance has extended beyond formal party structures, with nationalist groups, lawyers, and activists mobilising publicly in defence of Sindh's unity. This has also exposed tensions within the governing coalition, as several federal ministers continue to support restructuring while the PPP remains firmly opposed. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's comparatively limited public intervention has left the government without a clearly articulated collective position.

Source: The Express Tribune

The opposition has similarly urged caution. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has argued that creating new provinces is not the only route to better governance and warned that any restructuring undertaken without political consensus could weaken the federation. JUI-F has also opposed pursuing such changes under current conditions, while the joint opposition has increasingly linked the issue with wider questions of constitutional legitimacy. These tensions coincide with PTI's planned September 27 protest, which the party says will proceed despite calls for reducing political confrontation. The protest reflects the continuing dispute over electoral legitimacy, restrictions on opposition leadership, and dissatisfaction with parliamentary and judicial avenues for redress, meaning that any major constitutional reform is likely to be interpreted through the wider struggle over political authority.

At the same time, another dimension of the devolution debate has emerged around the implementation of the 18th Amendment itself. A Senate subcommittee has challenged the federal government's continued operation of 17 ministries dealing with subjects that were devolved to the provinces, including health, education, agriculture, climate, and industry. The government argues that some federal structures remain necessary for international obligations and coordination, while the committee views their continued existence as federal encroachment on provincial jurisdiction.

At the same time, delays in appointing leadership and members to national and provincial human-rights institutions, including the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), and commissions dealing with children and minorities, have raised concerns about the strength of independent oversight and Pakistan's capacity to monitor and report effectively on its international human-rights commitments.

On 14 September 2026, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi's visit to Lahore developed into a politically charged confrontation involving PTI supporters and Punjab authorities. The visit took place amid the enforcement of Section 144, road restrictions, police deployment and the detention of several PTI workers. According to Dawn, during the confrontation, Afridi allegedly entered a Punjab Police vehicle, which subsequently moved away from the protest area before he later emerged at another location without his usual security detail. The precise circumstances remain contested. Afridi and the KP government described the episode as an attempted "abduction", while the Punjab government maintained that he had entered the vehicle voluntarily and that no arrest had taken place.

Source: CMKP.GOV

The episode is politically significant because it demonstrates how Pakistan's continuing government-opposition confrontation is increasingly intersecting with federal and inter-provincial relations. The involvement of a serving provincial chief minister in a disputed police episode in another province risks turning an already intense partisan conflict into a question of provincial authority, institutional respect and the functioning of the federation. Regardless of responsibility for the confrontation, the use of police restrictions, arrests and street mobilisation as instruments of political contestation reflects the shrinking space for negotiated political engagement. The incident is also likely to reinforce competing narratives of political victimisation and state obstruction, potentially intensifying PTI mobilisation and hardening the Punjab government's security response. If similar episodes continue, they could further erode trust between provincial governments, weaken mechanisms for intergovernmental coordination and increase the risk that political disputes are managed through administrative coercion and street confrontation rather than parliamentary and institutional processes.

These developments reveal a deeper problem than how many provinces Pakistan should have. The real issue is the incomplete distribution of authority across federal, provincial, and local levels. The 18th Amendment devolved substantial powers from Islamabad to the provinces, but provincial governments have often failed to transfer comparable authority and resources to local governments. Pakistan is therefore confronting both federal-provincial tensions and excessive centralisation within provinces themselves. Creating new provinces may address administrative scale, but without stronger local governments, predictable fiscal transfers, institutional accountability, and political consensus, it could simply reproduce existing governance weaknesses in smaller units. The wider political implication is that administrative reform cannot be separated from legitimacy: in a highly polarised environment, structural changes imposed without broad agreement risk intensifying provincial grievances and political instability rather than improving governance.

Economic Updates

Pakistan's economy entered September 2026 with several indicators pointing to improved short-term stability, but these gains remain vulnerable to inflation, external shocks, and longstanding structural weaknesses. Workers' remittances reached approximately $7.3 billion in the first two months of FY27, up nearly 15% year-on-year, putting annual inflows on course for around $44 billion after a record $41.6 billion in FY26. Foreign-exchange reserves have also recovered substantially from the crisis levels of 2022-23, providing more than three months of import cover and considerably better protection against upcoming debt repayments. Yet the pace of reserve accumulation is slowing, while Pakistan remains dependent on remittances, external financing, and bilateral rollovers rather than sufficiently strong exports. Rising global oil prices, with Brent again reaching around $100.52 and 107.82 per barrel amid escalating Middle Eastern conflict present an immediate risk to this fragile external-sector improvement.

Source: Arab News

Inflation has simultaneously re-emerged as a significant pressure. Consumer inflation rose to 11.2% in August, driven particularly by fuel, wheat, transport, and food prices, against the government's FY27 target of 8.2%. The composition of inflation is important: much of the recent pressure originates from administered energy prices, imported commodities, agricultural supply problems, and food-market disruptions rather than excessive domestic demand. This complicates monetary policy. Higher interest rates may help contain expectations and exchange-rate pressures, but Pakistan's large stock of floating-rate government debt means monetary tightening also rapidly increases debt-servicing costs. Around 70% of domestic sovereign debt is reportedly floating-rate, while debt servicing already absorbs roughly 40% of federal expenditure. Consequently, rate hikes intended to control inflation can simultaneously squeeze development expenditure and deepen fiscal pressures, reinforcing the case for shifting towards longer-term and fixed-rate government borrowing.

Fiscal performance presents a similarly mixed picture. The Federal Board of Revenue marginally exceeded its July-August target, collecting about Rs1.72 trillion, but collections grew by only 3.3% against the approximately 17.4% growth required to achieve the annual Rs15.263 trillion target agreed with the IMF. Revenue performance also remains heavily dependent on sales taxes and taxation at the import stage, while income-tax receipts underperformed. The government is attempting to broaden documentation through a simplified scheme for smaller traders, offering eligible businesses a 1% turnover tax and exemptions from some routine compliance requirements. The scheme recognises an enduring weakness in Pakistan's fiscal model: the state has historically relied disproportionately on already documented businesses, salaried workers, and indirect taxation while struggling to bring politically influential and informal economic activity into the tax base.

Source: Ministry of Information

The government is also trying to restore private-sector confidence and attract investment. Recent consultations between the prime minister and businesses have produced measures including withdrawal of the super tax and stronger tax enforcement, but business groups continue to demand predictable energy pricing, regulatory stability, affordable financing, and clearer implementation of government commitments. These concerns are especially visible in the petroleum sector, where refiners and oil marketing companies have warned that repeated intervention in fuel-pricing formulas could damage commercial viability, refinery investment, and eventually energy security.

The tension illustrates a wider policy dilemma: the government is attempting simultaneously to protect consumers from high international energy costs, meet IMF fiscal commitments, and persuade investors to commit long-term capital. Frequent changes to commercial rules may provide short-term political relief while weakening the investment needed to reduce Pakistan's import dependence over the longer term.

A potentially more transformative development is Pakistan's expanding engagement with the digital and AI economy. Google has established a local office, entered into cooperation with the government, expanded AI and professional training initiatives, and supported local Chromebook assembly. Plans also envisage applications of AI in taxation, agriculture, digital payments, and public services, while policymakers increasingly emphasise the need to develop AI-enabled skills across occupations rather than limiting digital training to technology professionals. These initiatives could strengthen productivity and human capital, but they also raise unresolved questions around technology transfer, taxation, data sovereignty, cybersecurity, and privacy. Without a stronger domestic digital infrastructure, local research capabilities, and comprehensive personal-data protections, Pakistan risks becoming primarily a consumer of foreign technology rather than developing technological capacity of its own.

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The latest figures suggest that the deeper constraint remains an economic system characterised by low investment, weak exports, narrow taxation, policy uncertainty, and incentives that often reward protection, informality, and political access more than productivity. Pakistan's recurring economic difficulties resemble a coordination problem in which individually rational decisions, businesses avoiding investment because policies are unpredictable, taxpayers resisting compliance because others remain exempt, bureaucrats avoiding decisions because initiative carries risk, and governments postponing reforms because their political costs are immediate, collectively produce weak national outcomes. The present period of relative stability, therefore, creates an important but limited reform window. Whether Pakistan can convert higher remittances, improved reserves, and fiscal consolidation into sustained growth will depend less on short-term macroeconomic management than on reforms that improve exports, investment, energy resilience, human capital, tax fairness, and institutional credibility.

Diplomatic Landscape

Pakistan's diplomatic landscape in September 2026 reflects a diversified foreign-policy posture, shaped by heightened regional insecurity, strategic partnerships, and economic diplomacy. Islamabad is simultaneously managing a confrontational relationship with India, deepening security cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, expanding engagement with Central Asia, and dealing with continuing tensions with Afghanistan. The broader pattern is one of Pakistan seeking greater strategic relevance while relying increasingly on international law, regional alliances, and connectivity initiatives.

The most significant development with India has been the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The court held that India could not unilaterally place the treaty in abeyance and reaffirmed that it remains fully in force, while also restricting certain work on the Ratle hydropower project pending further technical review. India has rejected the court's jurisdiction, meaning that Pakistan's legal success does not automatically guarantee compliance. Nevertheless, the ruling strengthens Islamabad's position by validating its use of treaty mechanisms and international adjudication to manage disputes with India, particularly at a time when bilateral political relations remain deeply strained.

Source: Tribune

Pakistan is also moving towards more institutionalised regional security cooperation. Following Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif stated that the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Türkiye Makkah Defence Alliance would treat aggression against one member as a threat to all three. As discussed in the past two editions of this report, the arrangement enhances Pakistan's strategic importance in the Gulf and wider Muslim world, but it also creates greater exposure to Middle Eastern conflicts. Islamabad will therefore need to support its defence commitments without undermining relations with Iran or becoming drawn into regional confrontation.

At the same time, Pakistan is placing greater emphasis on geo-economic diplomacy. Agreements with Kyrgyzstan on transit trade, energy, investment, technology, and connectivity, alongside a target to increase bilateral trade, reflect efforts to position Pakistan as a bridge between Central and South Asia. Yet relations with Afghanistan remain a major constraint. The controversy over the repatriation of Afghan students illustrates how security tensions are increasingly affecting humanitarian and people-to-people ties. Overall, Pakistan's diplomatic posture is becoming more ambitious and multi-directional, but its effectiveness will depend on whether legal victories, security partnerships, and connectivity agreements can be translated into durable gains without narrowing Islamabad's strategic flexibility.

Source: Tribune

Social and Humanitarian Updates

Pakistan's social and humanitarian landscape in September 2026 is marked by persistent weaknesses in health, education, gender equality, and rights protection, even as some policy reforms are moving forward. These pressures are increasingly relevant to Pakistan's international standing as well. The EU has made clear that future GSP+ access will depend not merely on ratification of international conventions but on demonstrable implementation, with particular scrutiny of enforced disappearances, freedom of expression, minority rights, labour protections, and broader rule-of-law commitments. This places domestic social and rights conditions more directly at the intersection of humanitarian policy, governance, and economic competitiveness.

Source: Tribune

Health indicators remain particularly concerning. In Tharparkar, 480 newborns reportedly died at Mithi Civil Hospital during the first eight months of 2026, reflecting the combined impact of maternal malnutrition, low birth weight, infectious disease, and weak health-system capacity. Nationally, more than 40% of children under five are estimated to be stunted, underscoring that malnutrition is not simply a health issue but a wider failure involving food security, maternal care, water and sanitation, poverty, and social protection.

Pakistan is also facing recurring paediatric HIV outbreaks linked to unsafe medical practices, including syringe reuse, weak infection-control standards, and inadequate oversight of public and private healthcare facilities. Recent outbreaks in Karachi and Punjab suggest that previous crackdowns have not addressed underlying systemic deficiencies in medical safety and disease surveillance.

Gender inequality remains another structural concern. Recent research indicates that only around 2% of ever-married women own land, despite women constituting a major share of the agricultural workforce. Large gaps also persist in access to formal financial accounts, digital services, and productive assets, leaving women particularly exposed to economic and climate shocks. At the same time, reported increases in rape and gang-rape cases in Lahore, alongside continued femicide and sexual violence, illustrate that formal legal protections have not translated into sufficient prevention or accountability. The challenge, therefore, extends beyond policing to entrenched social norms, unequal access to property and finance, weak institutional enforcement, and limited economic autonomy.

Source: Bol News

Humanitarian pressures are also visible in conflict-affected areas. In Lower South Waziristan, students and teachers have protested recurring curfew restrictions that impede access to schools, highlighting the difficult balance between legitimate security measures and the continuity of basic services. Prolonged disruption to education in already vulnerable areas risks deepening regional inequalities and weakening long-term human-capital development. The government's move to formulate a new national occupational safety and health policy is institutionally significant, but its value will depend almost entirely on implementation. Pakistan has historically struggled to extend labour protections beyond the formal economy, where inspection capacity, enforcement, and worker access to remedies remain uneven. Expanding coverage to informal, domestic, agricultural, migrant, and platform workers is therefore ambitious, but without clear provincial ownership, adequate labour inspection, budgeted enforcement mechanisms, and measurable compliance targets, the policy risks becoming another framework whose protections remain stronger on paper than in workplaces.

Overall, Pakistan's social challenges are increasingly interconnected. These challenges point to a common implementation gap: policies and legal frameworks often exist, but institutional capacity, accountability, and local delivery remain uneven. The broader implication is that social development can no longer be treated as separate from economic and governance reform. Improvements in public health, education, gender equality, labour protection, and rights implementation will be central not only to human development, but also to Pakistan's trade relationships, international credibility, and longer-term social stability.

Security Updates

Pakistan's security environment remains highly volatile, with Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continuing to account for the most serious militant activity. In Balochistan, security forces intensified intelligence-based operations in Kharan, Washuk, Kalat, Mastung, Quetta, Sibi, Chagai, and Pishin following a rise in attacks and road blockades. Eleven militants were killed in operations in Kharan and Washuk on September 6-7, while 2.9 tonnes of explosives were recovered from a hideout in Washuk. These operations followed several other engagements in late August and early September, as the number of terrorist attacks in Balochistan reportedly rose from 83 in July to 89 in August.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is facing a parallel escalation, particularly along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Between September 3 and 5, security forces reported killing 21 militants in North Waziristan, Kohat, and Dera Ismail Khan, including groups allegedly attempting to infiltrate from Afghanistan. Earlier engagements had already resulted in additional militant casualties along the border. The military has linked these incidents to the continued presence and movement of the TTP and has accused the Afghan Taliban authorities of failing to prevent Afghan territory from being used for cross-border attacks.

Source: Dawn News

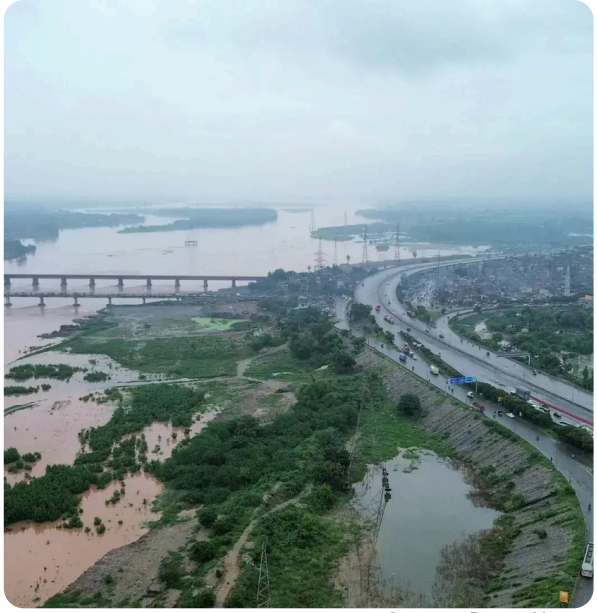
Source: Tribune

The state's response remains heavily security-led under the Azm-e-Istehkam counterterrorism framework, with an emphasis on intelligence-based operations, border control, and coordination among security and law-enforcement institutions. Senior military leadership has also increasingly linked security in Balochistan with development and economic opportunity, arguing that stability is necessary for investment and improved livelihoods. However, this framing highlights a deeper challenge: while intensified operations can disrupt militant networks, sustainable security in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will depend on whether military pressure is accompanied by stronger civilian governance, political engagement, service delivery, and credible grievance-resolution mechanisms.

The broader trend remains concerning. Terrorist violence has increased substantially since 2022, with militant activity becoming more geographically concentrated but operationally persistent in the western border regions. The immediate priority for the state is to contain cross-border infiltration and dismantle armed networks, but the longer-term security outlook will depend on improved Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, stronger border management, and a more balanced strategy that addresses both militant capability and the political and socio-economic conditions that allow insecurity to persist.

Climate Change Related Updates

Pakistan's climate risk profile is becoming more complex, with recent events showing that the country is facing not only more frequent floods and heat extremes, but also a widening range of high-altitude, urban, and water-security threats. In September 2026, authorities warned of urban flooding across several Punjab cities, increased river flows in the Indus basin, and flash-flood risks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. At the same time, Gilgit-Baltistan experienced repeated cloudburst-induced floods, landslides, and infrastructure damage, with the GB Disaster Management Authority reporting 120 flood events triggered by cloudbursts and glacier melt between June and August. These incidents underline that climate impacts are increasingly affecting both densely populated lowlands and fragile mountain ecosystems.



Source: Dawn News

A particularly important emerging risk is the rise of high-altitude disasters that do not follow conventional monsoon patterns. The August 2026 disaster in Nepal, triggered by a rock-and-glacier collapse rather than rainfall, highlighted how warming temperatures, thawing permafrost, and retreating glaciers can destabilise mountain slopes and generate sudden debris flows and barrier-lake floods. Pakistan faces similar exposure in the Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalaya region, where events such as the Attabad landslide and Shisper Glacier outburst have already disrupted communities and major transport infrastructure. This suggests that Pakistan's disaster-management system remains too heavily oriented towards monsoon forecasting and needs to incorporate real-time monitoring of glacier instability, slope movement, and transboundary hazards.

Source: DW

Water insecurity is simultaneously emerging as a slower but equally serious climate challenge. Groundwater levels are declining across parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Balochistan, driven by over-extraction, rapid population growth, urbanisation, and changing rainfall patterns. In Mazdoor Abad, Mardan, local accounts indicate a sharp fall in groundwater availability, while similar stresses have been documented across several KP districts. Nationally, water availability per person has fallen substantially over the past decades, while groundwater extraction continues to exceed recharge in many areas. Climate change is worsening this imbalance by concentrating rainfall into shorter, more intense episodes that generate flooding rather than allowing steady aquifer recharge.

These developments point to a broader structural problem: Pakistan's climate institutions are still more reactive than anticipatory. Flood response, emergency relief, and post-disaster reconstruction remain necessary, but they are insufficient for a climate environment in which extreme heat, glacier instability, water scarcity, urban flooding, and food-system pressures increasingly overlap. Infrastructure such as roads, hydropower facilities, settlements, and drainage systems, therefore, needs to be designed for more extreme and unpredictable conditions, while agriculture, water management, and urban planning require adaptation measures that anticipate long-term shifts rather than historical weather patterns.

The wider implication is that climate change is no longer a stand-alone environmental issue but a core development and governance challenge. It affects food security, public health, energy, migration, infrastructure, fiscal stability, and regional cooperation. Pakistan, therefore, needs to shift from disaster-centred climate policy towards integrated resilience planning: stronger transboundary early-warning systems, improved groundwater governance, climate-resilient infrastructure, better urban drainage, local adaptation financing, and enhanced community-level preparedness. Without such a shift, climate shocks are likely to become increasingly frequent constraints on development rather than exceptional emergencies.

Reading Recommendations

- Reviving the Role of Youth in Pakistan's Social and Political Life (Click Here)
- From Digital Ambition to Democratic Trust: Charting Pakistan's Path Toward Inclusive Digital Governance (Click Here)
- Why Are Sexual Violence Cases Rising While Convictions Remain So Low in Pakistan? (Click Here)
- Pakistan's Rising Poverty: What Is Driving the Recent Increase in Poverty and Household Vulnerability? (Minimum Wage versus Actual Living Costs) (Click Here)
- Protecting Pakistan's Children: Why Are Children Still Vulnerable to Abuse and What Happens When They Report It? (Click Here)
- Beyond Hunger: Tackling Nutritional Deficiencies Among Pakistani Children (Click Here)
- When the Weather Becomes a Workplace Hazard: Climate Change and Labour Rights in Pakistan (Click Here)
- Battleground Algorithms: How Artificial Intelligence is Shaping Modern Conflict Narratives (Click Here)
- Reimagining Civil Society Action in Pakistan (Click Here)
- Building Digital Resilience of Civil Society (Click Here)
- Why Pakistan's Entrepreneurial Landscape Has Struggled to Deliver for Its Youth: A Critical South Asian Comparison (Click Here)
- Mental Health Access for Women: Cultural Stigma and Systemic Barriers (Click Here)
- Concrete Over Canopy: The Unmaking of Islamabad's Green Capital Dream (Click Here)
- Menstrual Health Management: Policy Gaps, Access to Hygiene Products and Cultural Taboos (Click Here)
- Climate Change and Food Security in Pakistan: A Crisis on Our Plate (Click Here)
- Environmental Health Risks: Gendered impacts of air pollution, water contamination, and climate change on women (Click Here)
- Imagination as the Blueprint of Reality (Click Here)
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- Rethinking Reforms Process in Balochistan: Innovation and Leadership at BCSA (Click Here)
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- Groundwater Recharge: Reviving the Hidden Lifeline (Click Here)
- Selling Misinformation (Click Here)
- Data-Driven Cities: Lessons from World for Pakistan (Click Here)
- The FY 2025–26 Budget and Its Impact on Pakistan's IT & ITeS Sector (Click Here)
- Planting for Survival: Pakistan's Path Out of the Heat (Click Here)
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- From Reports to Reality: Why Pakistan Ranks Last in Global Gender Gap Index (Click Here)
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