

July 2022

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



Prepared by
Dr. Zainab Akhter
Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir
Mr Afroz Khan
Dr. Ashok Behuria

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Why are Pakistan's 'friends' fed up? Kamran Yousif, *The Express Tribune*, 04 July 2022¹

The inflation figures for the month of June are out, and there are no surprises. The official data released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) shows the inflation rate rising to 21.3% – highest for 13 years. ... *One of the reasons that the inflation is breaking all previous records is the current government's efforts to revive the IMF loan programme, without which the country could potentially face a default. One of the conditions set by the international lender was to withdraw subsidy on oil products given by the government of former Prime Minister Imran Khan just weeks before being ousted from power through a vote of no-confidence. And in just 33 days, the petrol price increased from Rs149 to Rs249 per litre.* ... But despite these unpopular measures, the IMF has not yet been convinced and handed another list of demands to Pakistan before the programme is revived. It means that Pakistan will not get the much-needed IMF tranche in another six weeks, throwing the market to further uncertainty. ... *We have now come to a stage where our friends as well as international lenders are no more listening to our same old stories. They realise we just want to live on dole-outs. The cycle of seeking financial bailout packages is also shrinking.* ... Pakistan has to change its approach and that too quickly. Else the situation will only get worse!

Intimidation by the 'unidentified', Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 06 July 2022²

The identity of the 'unidentified' assailants who assaulted journalist Ayaz Amir in Lahore last week was not unknown. *One of Pakistan's most respected newspaper columnists and a television commentator, he was dragged out of his vehicle and manhandled on a busy street in full view of the crowd that had gathered there. His cellphone was taken away. It all happened a day after his speech at a seminar in Islamabad that went viral on social media. It was scathing and full of sarcasm.* It irked the powers that be who seem to be on edge these days. Tolerance levels seem to have gone down in the current political storm. Ayaz Amir may have been cathing but there was nothing in his remarks that is not being talked about. He didn't reveal any state secrets. It was the truth, perhaps, put too forthrightly for the liking of some elements belonging to a 'sensitive' institution — hence the response in the shape of the crude use of power that we have witnessed so often being applied against those who dare to speak out. ... As per routine, the prime minister ordered an inquiry into the incident and the police have reportedly filed a case against the 'unidentified' persons. But this is just a formality. For who will dare touch these elements, even if

¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2364519/why-are-pakistans-friends-fed-up>

² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1698485/intimidation-by-the-unidentified>

their identity is apparent as in the latest case? ... *The entire episode highlights not only the consequences of the deep involvement of the security agencies in political engineering but also their role in manipulating sections of the media. This was much more pronounced during Imran Khan's hybrid rule. Propped up by the security establishment, the Khan government shut its eyes to reports of intimidation of journalists.* ... It is imperative for the military leadership to pull itself out completely from the political power game, and also important for security agencies to refrain from indulging in illegal actions. The Ayaz Amir incident raises questions about the claim that security agencies will not be used for intimidation and unlawful actions.

No to state gifts! Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 08 July 2022³

Gifts that come the state way in the form of accolades have become a bone of contention in Pakistan. *There are unending tales ranging from embezzlement to misappropriation of those valued gifts, and almost all heads of state and governments, as well as officials and ministries, are there in it. This is quite an unethical aspect of our public life, and is a grim reminder that decency and recourse to rule of law is apparently missing. Thus, the legislation introduced by a private member in the upper house to regulate Toshakhana (treasure office) and restrain public office-holders from retaining gifts is worth pondering.* The contention that state gifts should rest with the state in the form of archives is well appreciated, and should be case in all humility. ... The proposed bill now stipulates the procedure for depositing, maintaining and disposal of gifts. It also wants a ban on office-holders and their family members prevailing over Toshakhana, and the same be auctioned, if necessary. This piece of legislation, if it goes through, will be of great help in clearing the mist that has led to slandering and abuse of public office bearers. Moreover, it will act as a lawful deterrent in checking abuse of power, and undue favours at the cost of national pride and treasury.

Treason season, Editorial, *Dawn*, 18 July 2022⁴

The government seems bent on committing a blunder that will have the opposite result to that which was intended. *The federal cabinet has put together a special committee to determine what 'legal action' can be taken under Article 6 against former prime minister Imran Khan, President Arif Alvi and the former speaker and deputy speaker of the National Assembly. The government wants to prosecute the PTI leadership for its ultimately unsuccessful attempt to thwart the vote of no-confidence against then prime minister Imran Khan and the subsequent dissolution of the assemblies by the president.* The PTI has itself to blame for matters coming to this point. It has made a habit of branding political opponents 'traitors', which has opened

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2365152/no-to-state-gifts>

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1700220/treason-season>

the door for the government to retaliate in kind. However, the PTI's immaturity does not need to be perpetuated, especially since the government cannot expect to achieve much with its chosen strategy. ... *High treason is a severe crime that ought not to be trivialised. It has been committed on multiple occasions in Pakistan's history by powerful individuals aided and abetted by institutions of the state.* It used to find legal sanction from the highest courts of the land. Recently, the state itself made a mockery of the severity of the crime when it said it would welcome Gen Pervez Musharraf, who stands convicted of the crime, back to the country. In such circumstances, the government's sanctimonious stance rings quite hollow.

Pak-US relations, Raashid Wali Janjua, *The Express Tribune*, 18 July 2022⁵

Pak-US relations were born out of a transactional necessity. It was this logic that defined their engagement on four occasions despite regular estrangements on account of geopolitical differences. ... *The Biden administration inherited the aborted alliance and went on to implement his long thought of Afghanistan strategy of abandoning nation building projects and bringing US troops home.* ... US scholars like Daniel Markey believe that the US failure in Afghanistan also reflects the failure in the US's approach towards Pakistan, which has remained too munificent in the past. He recommends a more nuanced approach wherein instead of all-or-none the US-Pak relations should be based on a narrow set of interests reflecting Eliot Cohen's statecraft approach as against George Kennan's grand strategy approach to use alliances against rival ideologies. The US administration at present is too consumed with Russo-Ukraine conflict to grapple with the question of the right balance between Kennan and Cohen's approach. It does not really know whether to go for partial engagement or complete detachment leaving the stratus of the Afghan conflict to be swept by regional countries. *Should the US leave South Asia to its regional surrogate India to keep China and Pakistan engaged in a destabilising Cold War or should it engage selectively with Pakistan and Afghanistan to serve its residual interests in the region?* The above question needs to be answered by US foreign policy mandarins before the vacuum is filled by another competitor. ...

Political machinations, Editorial, *Dawn*, 22 July 2022⁶

Politicians never learn. What should have been a straightforward walkover for the joint candidate of the PTI and PML-Q after the alliance's triumph in the Sunday by-poll is no longer a certainty. *The run-off election for chief minister of Punjab today has been tainted by allegations of horse-trading as the ruling coalition led by the PML-N makes a last ditch effort to save the minority Hamza Shehbaz government. Political horse-trading is not a new phenomenon in Pakistani politics. ... The way*

⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2366429/pak-us-relations>

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1700980/political-machinations>

Imran Khan was supported by the agencies that coerced many contestants in Punjab fielded by the PML-N to either quit the race or seek PTI tickets to stay in the competition in the run-up to the 2018 elections is still a fresh memory. More recently, the parties of the ruling coalition have been accused of offering money and rewards to entice several PTI lawmakers to break away, so that the PML-N can retain Punjab and keep its government at the centre secure. ... It will be no service to the cause of democracy if the situation turns violent in today's session. If democracy is to move forward, the PML-N and its allies must take a step back and refrain from any move that is unethical or that violates the law and Constitution. If they fear that a hostile PTI-PML-Q administration in Pakistan's most populous province will be a hurdle in the way of implementation of its political and economic agenda, they should hold early elections to seek a fresh mandate.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Unacceptable demand, Editorial, *Dawn*, 01 July 2022⁷

The finance ministry's projection of 15pc inflation, much higher than the targeted rate of 11.5pc, during the new financial year, is perhaps the first official admission of the potential impact that fiscal stabilisation will have on the lives of most Pakistanis. *The tough economic conditions will not only kick up inflation, they will also slow down the growth rate and lead to higher unemployment going forward. Many would argue that the inflation estimates are still on the lower side considering the elevated global energy and other commodity prices that the government has to pass on to consumers to stay solvent. ... To say that the coming months will be extremely tough for Pakistanis, who will see their incomes erode and living standards decline further, does not capture the current impact of the deteriorating macroeconomic imbalances on the lives of low- to middle-income groups. ... True, the government does not have any control over exogenous factors such as global commodity markets and the ongoing Ukrainian war that are responsible for the elevated energy prices and supply disruptions. But it could have mitigated the adverse impacts of external shocks by putting its fiscal house in order, scrapping wasteful expenditure and pursuing prudent growth policies.*

Miftah's misery, Editorial, *Dawn*, 06 July 2022⁸

It cannot be easy to be finance minister in times like these, with friend and foe alike gunning for you over difficult decisions that you were forced to take in the greater national interest. *This is the sorry predicament Miftah Ismail finds himself in at the*

⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1697629/unacceptable-demand>

⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1698481/miftahs-misery>

moment, merely two and a half months since he took over arguably the most difficult job in Pakistan. It is unclear why he is being given such short shrift. It appears from a recent statement made by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif during a TV show that some within the party hold Mr Ismail responsible for eroding the PML-N's political capital. However, this is quite an amnesic reaction on the part of these individuals, considering that the risks to the PML-N's electoral prospects arising from the economic adjustments the coalition government was going to be forced to undertake were extensively discussed and understood. The party knew what it was getting into when it decided to stick it out in Islamabad after ousting the PTI from power. ... If rumours are anything to go by, Mr Dar plans to displace Mr Ismail from his post upon his expected return to Pakistan later this month. There is nothing reassuring about this tug of war, which bodes ill for economic stability. Much damage has already been done to the economy due to the PML-N's infighting over key policy decisions over the past two months. Tussles within the party created political instability, spooking capital markets and leading to considerable damage before budget negotiations with the IMF finally created some hope for stability and led to the restoration of a semblance of order. The market now expects the finance minister to deliver on the IMF front. By most accounts, we are now on the last stretch of negotiations. Any major upheaval in the finance ministry — especially one that sees the main decision-maker changed — is likely to once again set the process back. Is that something we can afford?

Battered economy, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 22 July 2022⁹

The bleeding of the rupee as the greenback goes on a rampage has literally unnerved the economy. For the third consecutive day, the rupee witnessed a stampede pushing investors to take a backseat. The fiat traded at Rs226.81 to a dollar, slumping by more than 6%, whereas it was Rs242 in terms of opening a letter of credit. The scenario is bleak and with dipping forex reserves, which stand at around \$9.7 billion, pundits of doom have painted a horrible picture over the weeks to come. This alarming situation warrants an immediate intervention, and apparently this is why Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has sought an emergent huddle with the IMF to get the *staff-level agreement approved, entitling it to the desired succor of \$1.7 billion. ... The hurdles, nonetheless, are many as Pakistan banks in donor's benevolence. It is very unlikely that the Fund will hear us out unless their prerequisites are incorporated, which pertains to further increasing the electricity tariff and imposing Rs10 per unit levy on petrol and Rs5 per liter on diesel from August 1. On the other hand, Islamabad is yet to secure a \$4 billion financing commitment from friendly countries. It is a catch-22 dilemma as there is not much room to maneuver with the lenders. ...* The rehabilitation

⁹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2367097/battered-economy>

seems remote until and unless the political discord is put to rest, and a stable administration is ushered in.

Selling SOE Shares, Editorial, *The Nation*, 29 July 2022¹⁰

Finance Minister Miftah Ismail has announced that the government will be amending laws to allow for the sale of shares of listed state-owned entities (SOEs) with a buyback option to friendly countries on a government-to-government (G2G) basis. *This will essentially help bridge a part of the \$4 billion financing gap that has been estimated by the IMF for the current fiscal year. To make this possible, the federal cabinet has approved the Inter-Government Commercial Transaction Act 2022 because the existing privatisation law did not allow for such commercial transactions on a G2G basis.* ... Based on the statements put forward by FM Ismail, it should not really be a concern if the share price is not reflective of its actual worth because according to the G2G agreement, Pakistan will be able to buy back the shares at a minimal premium of around five percent. Moreover, *it has been clarified that management control will be retained and that the government will not be selling majority or ownership shares. Based on the information that has been shared thus far, this is an unconventional idea that could work if the above-mentioned safeguards are included in the transactions.* The government should be prepared to field a lot of questions and face criticism considering the scepticism (organic and induced) surrounding this decision; nevertheless, such measures that can help us attract investment into the country are the need of the hour.

SECURITY SITUATION

Negotiating with the TTP, Lt Gen Naeem Khalid Lodhi Retd, *The Nation*, 04 July 2022¹¹

It has been officially announced that talks with TTP are in progress and the Afghan Government is acting as a facilitator. An in-camera briefing has been arranged by the Intelligence Agencies for the Parliamentary Committee on Security, in the presence of services chiefs. *On the political side it was attended by the apex leadership of all the parties, except PTI. The communique after the briefing was encouraging. The importance of peace in the region, good relations with Afghanistan, seeking an arrangement within the confines of Pakistan's Constitution, and political ownership have all been emphasised.* ... *Now, the historical fact is that every conflict culminates and closes with the help of negotiations.* ... In case of this conflict, one side (TTP) has been largely defeated. Most of the perpetrators of heinous crimes, like APS, have been

¹⁰ <https://nation.com.pk/2022/07/29/selling-soe-shares/>

¹¹ <https://nation.com.pk/2022/07/04/negotiating-with-the-ttp/>

eliminated. Any remnants may be prosecuted under the law. As long as a potential agreement, if any, is discussed in the parliament, is non violative of our Constitution, owned and endorsed by the civilian government, it should be adopted to put this matter to rest. However, there will be many opposed to the idea of peace with TTP for a number of reasons. **1. US and India along with their friends would perhaps want the Pakistan Army to remain entangled for as long as possible for certain reasons. India would not mind the fact that Pakistan is engaged on two fronts. ... 2. Some intellectuals are fearful of Afghan Taliban's world view and their interpretation of Islam, and are against their rule in a neighbouring State and thus would be against any kind of engagement. ... 3. ISIK, BLA, BRA and similar dissident and sponsored groups would also like to throw a spanner in the works, preventing any positive outcome of peace talks in the region, because a confusion ridden environment is best suited for their activities. ...** Peace is always the preferred option, but it only works if it is enforced from a position of strength, aided with ample verifiable guarantees and monitoring mechanisms to ensure prevention of intrigues and the resurgence of any evil. We are confident that the state of Pakistan is well aware of all such nuances related to these talks and will decide a course of action that is in the interests of the country and its people.

Security Briefings, Editorial, *The Nation*, 06 July 2022¹²

Talks with the banned outfit Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are going forward, this time with the federal government also fully informed of what all is being set on the negotiating table, with an attempt for better transparency to the public as well. ***The parliament has summoned an in-camera session of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS) to give a briefing on ongoing talks on the TTP-government talks. The balance between the role of security forces and the parliament in these issues of such high national security importance is a tricky one to maintain. The two pillars of state must work together and discuss the best way forward in what is a very vulnerable situation. ...*** This coordination and strength of negotiating power are particularly important considering how difficult this dialogue looks out to be. TTP's demands are not acceptable and some must be retracted for progress to be made – one of the most unreasonable demands, and one which TTP does not appear ready to compromise on is the reversal of the Fata merger. ***... The government must not forget that even during TTP's ceasefire, terrorist attacks did not subside – just on Monday, 10 security personnel were injured when a suicide bomber attacked a convoy of security forces in North Waziristan, the second suicide attack on the security forces during the last one month.*** Therefore, it is important to enter into these talks keeping in mind that other banned outfits will be keeping an eye on the result of those negotiations as well.

¹² <https://nation.com.pk/2022/07/06/security-briefings/>

Sino-Pak relations and regional economic stability, Editorial, *Daily Dunya*, 01 July 2022¹³

The recent visit of the high Chinese official Yang Jiechi, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Director of the Central Committee on Foreign Affairs is a significant one. The Central Committee on Foreign Affairs is considered as the architect of China foreign affairs. *Mr. Yang visited Pakistan at a time when the latter is at the crossroads both politically and economically. A part of China's ambitious BRI project, CPEC can fulfil the long pending dreams. CPEC is central in the Pakistan-China relations at of Pakistan of becoming the center of the regional economy. To increase its exports Pakistan needs to be connected with experts, markets, and investors. CPEC can meet demands of Pakistan. That is the reason that the rulers of Pakistan as well as people are united in that Pakistan's better economic future is dependent on CPEC.* However, to fulfil these dreams Pakistan's trademark slow approach and deferment are creating huge hurdles. The issue may be a matter of concern for China as well. But it is more dangerous for Pakistan.

Generally with any corridors economic zones are also developed. *In the case of Pakistan despite having a need for such zones, not a single economic zone has been made. The issue of slow approach for development work is not as big of an issue as the issue of electricity for such industry areas if they were to be created. However, the government in Pakistan has not been able to come up with any strategy or agenda for the same. ...The current economic crisis has one again made it clear that Pakistan's manufacturing sector is nonproductive. For getting loans from the IMF the government did not leave one sector where taxes are not raised. If the manufacturing sector would have been strong, there would not have been an issue of foreign reserves. To become a regional and economic hub Pakistan has all the required potential. But all this potential needs to be explored for the same purpose. That will also require political stability and economic sustainability. ... Need of the hour is that China and Pakistan together adapt a regional approach and along with Afghanistan and the Gulf create avenues for development and welfare in the region.*

¹³ https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2022-07-01&edition=LHR&id=6158102_21135281

There is a lot of debate in Pakistan regarding Pak-China relations. We have understood that whatever we do, China will always stand with Pakistan. That is why people are angry about why China is not with Pakistan. It is difficult for ordinary Pakistanis to imagine that China could be angry with Pakistan. Many believe that Pakistan was not invited for the recently held BRICS Summit because of India's objection to it. But how could China let that happen? People are not ready to understand that China may also have compulsions. However, there is veto in BRICS that the member countries can use and India used it. There was no option for China after India's veto. Therefore, it is not right to paint it as a setback in Pak-China relations. *Our general attitude towards China-Pakistan relations is always about what China has done for us. We never consider it necessary to cover the point of what we have done for China.* China also has some expectations from Pakistan. ... CPEC is an important link in the Pak-China relations. It needs to be taken forward to enhance the ties. If the pace of CPEC is slow, then Pak-China relations are cold. *Gwadar has a huge significance in CPEC. There is no concept of CPEC without Gwadar. Today, it has been two decades since the CPEC and Gwadar projects were discussed. But we have not been able to activate Gwadar and the rest of the CPEC projects have not been completed. ...*

Islamabad is not ready to do the work that China has paid for. In particular, work has not yet begun on many of the projects that China has funded to activate Gwadar. Chinese officials are watching all this helplessly. China has also made a plan for Pakistan regarding Gwadar. It is up to Pakistan to take action. In China's opinion, Pakistan should give Gwadar the status of a special economic district. This special economic district should have an automated system of operation. China cites the example of Hong Kong. A country can have two systems. To run Gwadar, it should be given the status of a special economic district that is subordinate to the federal government. But this is not possible in the specific circumstances of Pakistan. Locals are also disappointed. They say what CPEC has given us so far. They are tired of hearing CPEC's stories. They have not found employment or prosperity. But China still has hope. That is why China is sitting there. When their hopes are dashed, they will leave.

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https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1109368809&Issue=NP_ISB&Date=20220701

Mohammad Khorasani: Spokesperson of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, TTP Media,

27 Dhul-Qa'dah 1443 AH; 25 / June / 2022 AH



A group of Baloch Mujahideen led by Aslam Baloch from Noshki area of Balochistan joined Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on June 24, 2022 and pledged allegiance to migration and jihad at the hands of TTP leadership. *Under all the Shariah policies and orders of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the anti-Islamic forces of Pakistan will not shy away from any sacrifice against the occupying forces and will try to liberate the Baloch land from these usurpers. God willing!*

Negotiations with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Amir Rana, Roznama92 News, 4 July 2022¹⁵

The military leadership has assured political leaders that no unconstitutional agreement will be signed with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). A statement issued after the National Security Committee meeting two weeks ago said that a secret session of parliament would be convened, in which the Leader of the House, the Prime Minister, and also other leaders will participate. This statement gives the impression that the issue of negotiations with the TTP has been resolved amicably with the political leadership. *Political leaders trust the insight and vision of the security establishment. It is even unthinkable that political leaders would ask*

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https://www.roznama92news.com/efrontend/web/index.php/?station_id=2&page_id=7&is_common=Y&xdat e=2022-07-04&n=n7

the Establishment under what constitutional or political framework negotiations were initiated with the TTP. The political leadership had not expressed any concern even when the 'Protection of Pakistan Ordinance' was introduced in Parliament in 2014, a provision of the Pakistan Army Act was extended to civil jurisdiction, and terrorists were termed 'enemy aliens'. "Enemy aliens" is described as a person who fails to meet the requirements of Pakistani citizenship on the basis of specific offenses mentioned in the schedule. ... *Surprisingly, when initial reports of peace talks with the TTP surfaced, there was no major reaction. Only some of the families affected by the Army Public School attack raised their voices or the political parties like the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Awami National Party, which have suffered the most from the terrorist violence, made some noise.* The reaction of the ANP and the PPP is understandable. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) has always supported the idea of dialogue because of its ideological affiliation with the TTP, while the PML-N is more concerned with issues such as its political credibility and economic recovery.

Despite the compulsions and shortcomings of political parties, the lack of response from civil society has been even more astonishing. ... Until recently, the public was unwilling to accept that the Taliban or other religious militant groups could be involved in terrorism against Pakistan. Outside the country, their actions were called jihadist acts. In contrast, pro-establishment media and opinion-forming elements have frequently used the term "treason" to refer to separatist movements in East Pakistan and Balochistan, and ethnic movements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. People became accustomed to seeing such terms in a particular context, and when these terms were used out of context, it took them a while to understand a new perspective. So in Pakistan, when terms like 'traitor', 'miscreant', and 'enemy' were applied to religious militants after 9/11, it took time for people in public to understand and digest the different meanings, perspectives, and backgrounds of these terms.

Pak needs better ties with every country in the world, including US, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 06 July 2022¹⁶

Pakistan-US relations have a long history. *The ties have witnessed ups and downs from time to time, due to misunderstanding of each other's position on different issues. Many a time, the US did not keep its promises made with Pakistan and thus created hurdles in the bilateral relations between the two.* In the latest case, Imran's allegation that that America was involved in conspiring against his government and finally managed to topple it has created a new misunderstanding between America and Pakistan. The American administration has time and again rejected such allegations. ... *Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has wished the US and its people on the independence day of the country (4th July) and said that his government would like to enhance ties between the two countries. The situation that Pakistan is facing at*

¹⁶ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Gawadar/2022-07-06/page-4/detail-10>

the moment demands that Pakistan has better ties with every country of the world. After the clarification from America as well as from the National Security Council, Imran Khan should come out of his 'allegation politics' and look at various affecting him, as a matured politician. Otherwise, he would harm himself as well as his party.

Delay in Gwadar Breakwater Project, Editorial, Roznama92 News, 8 June 2022¹⁷

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a Twitter statement has ordered an inquiry into the delay in the Gwadar Breakwater Project. The Gwadar Breakwater Project was one of the projects of the PTI government for which a grant of 445 million, easy loans and a feasibility of 484 million had been prepared. But despite this, the plan was ignored. There is no doubt that the goal in Gwadar should not only have been the completion of infrastructure but also its political, economic, and strategic importance as a part of CPEC. The Breakwater project is a guarantor of the prosperity not only of Gwadar but also of Balochistan. *The biggest problem in Gwadar is access to clean drinking water. The Breakwater project can meet the needs of the local people by converting saline water into clean water. In the current situation, 5 million gallons of water are delivered daily through tanks. If the project had not been delayed, this problem of the local population could have been easily solved in a period of two years.* Therefore, there is a need to complete the inquiry into the delay in this project as soon as possible and to hold those responsible accountable for the same. In addition, other delayed development projects should be scrutinized and completed on time.

Talking to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman, Roznama Jasarat, 13 July 2022¹⁸

The issue of negotiations with the TTP has always been a different case. The main flaw in its structure was that it was not decided on what principles the negotiations would take place. In the early days of the PML-N government, talks were held with the TTP but failed. After the failure of the talks, 'Operation Zarb-e-Azb' and 'Operation Radd ul Fasad' were launched in South and North Waziristan respectively. *PPP, in terms of its ideological structure, has not been in favour of such talks. The ideological direction of the PTI is not clear: It includes ultraliberals like Fawad Chaudhry and Shirin Mazari. Khan Sahib is a collection of contradictions. He was sympathetic to his pro-US policy in the early days of General Pervez Musharraf. He later opposed the operation and talked of resolving the issue through negotiations, but could not do so during his tenure.* Now, for the first time, our security agencies have taken the

¹⁷

https://www.roznama92news.com/efrontend/web/index.php/?station_id=2&page_id=7&is_common=Y&xdate=2022-07-08&n=1

¹⁸ <https://islamabad.jasarat.com/2022/07/13/islamabad/2>

government and the parliament into confidence in negotiations with the TTP. Apart from emotions, only meaningful and fruitful dialogue can solve these problems. The United States was trapped in the Vietnam War without any favourable result. The United States finally had to come to the negotiating table. *Therefore, it is important that basic rules should be laid down before entering the stage of decisive negotiations. For example, in the current situation, it should be decided that the negotiations will be within the ambit of the Constitution of Pakistan.* Whether it is the TTP or someone else, if they want to be a part of the political process in Pakistan, they have the right to do so within the ambit of the Constitution. Keep in mind that Afghans are great negotiators. They are not in a hurry and they do not give the impression that they are under pressure. Therefore, Pakistan's negotiating team must speak with vigilance, tolerance, and high spirits.

Also, before entering into negotiations, the national security agencies and the political leadership should decide what space we have to accommodate the opposition so that later they do not blame each other for anything. Dialogue with the TTP should include diplomats with the security agencies and those with Jirga expertise according to Pashtun traditions. After that, it would be very useful to bring other deviant and rebellious sections inside Pakistan, such as the Baloch Liberation Army, etc., to the negotiating table. Great politicians like Akhtar Mengal and Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch should play the role of mediator instead of being a party in this whole process.

Article 6 should not be used for political vendetta, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 16 July 2022¹⁹

Article 6 of the Constitution states clearly that in which situations and upon whole it is applicable. In the last five decades the article has been used just once. Even in that case only the judgment from the court was announced, punishment was not implemented. ... *While taking the decision on the actions of the former deputy speaker of the national assembly for stopping the no-confidence motion against former Prime Minister Imran Khan the court has stated that if the parliament can see whether Article 6 is applicable against Imran Khan.* In this regard interior minister Rana Sanuallah said that after the court's statement President Arif Alavi should resign immediately. He said that the speaker of the national assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf should send notifications to the former Prime Minister Imran Khan, former speaker NA Asad Qaiser and deputy speaker Qasim Suri, among others. The judgment of the court is indeed historical. *However, Article 6 of the Constitution should not be used for political purposes. By doing so on the one hand the sanctity of the Constitution will be shattered and on the other the article will lose its significance as well.*

¹⁹ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Gawadar/2022-07-16/page-4/detail-9>

A new political map? Editorial, Jang, 28 July 2022²⁰

Between Tuesday and Wednesday night, Chaudhry Pervez Elahi took the oath of office as the Chief Minister of Punjab in the President's House, Islamabad, but it is not easy to say with certainty at what moment the camel of the power struggle in the largest province of the country will take a turn. ... *Declaring the oath of Hamza Shehbaz unconstitutional, the Supreme Court declared the Punjab Cabinet's notification null and void and ordered that the Governor of Punjab administer the oath to the new Chief Minister by 11:30 on Tuesday night, and the President administers the oath if he is not available.* After Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman excused himself from taking oath as the new Chief Minister, Pervez Elahi arrived in Islamabad by a special plane on the order of the President and took the oath in the President's House late at night. The brief judgment containing 11 pages has been written by Chief Justice Umar Atta Bandyal. Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan welcomed the decision and announced a celebration on Wednesday evening. While the decision was rejected by the leaders and activists of the ruling alliance including the Muslim League (N). Leader of Muslim League (N) Nawaz Sharif said that Pakistan has been made a spectacle. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his disappointment over the non-constitution of a full bench and said that the expectation of justice was dealt a blow. *JUI (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman says that he will not accept judicial martial law. The politics of the province with a population of 12 crores will soon become stagnant. To deal with the challenges faced by our dear country Pakistan, it is necessary to bring stability to politics. It is by no means appropriate to continue the series of tug-of-war. Political parties are the capital of the nation.* It is good that all the parties create such an environment through dialogue in which everyone is seen to be making joint efforts for public welfare and national security and safety.

Afghan Taliban's attitude, Jameel Murghz, Roznama Express, 29 July 2022²¹

Pakistan has been providing all necessary things to Afghanistan. Most of these commodities are not legally exported to Afghanistan but are smuggled. Afghan students study in Pakistan. *The entire 'economy' of the state of Afghanistan, political and commercial, is on the weak shoulders of Pakistan. It is impossible to imagine life in Afghanistan without Pakistan. Despite these favours, Afghanistan's approach towards Pakistan is deleterious and breach of the trust.* A few days ago, the Prime Minister of Pakistan mentioned buying cheap coal from Afghanistan. What did the Taliban government of Afghanistan do in response? *The Taliban government in*

²⁰ <https://e.jang.com.pk/lahore/28-07-2022/page6>

²¹

https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1109438401&Issue=NP_ISB&Date=20220729

Afghanistan doubled the price of coal. 'Payment to Afghanistan' will be in rupees instead of dollars after the Prime Minister's announcement, the Taliban government increased the price of imported coal from 90 dollars per ton to 200 dollars per ton. The price has been increased this time by 80 dollars per ton. According to Asmatullah Burhan, the spokesperson of Afghanistan's Ministry of Minerals and Petroleum, the new price of coal will be \$280 per ton. ... At the same time, the Afghan Taliban continue violations on the border. A statement of a Taliban leader read 'when Afghanistan becomes powerful, it will immediately take back its territories from Pakistan'. Terrorists of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan are still present in Afghanistan and are frequently carrying out operations inside Pakistan. The Afghan government neither expels them nor asks them to recognize the government of Pakistan. Instead, demand is made in Pakistan that FATA should be separated from Pakistan and handed over to them. Given the favours of Pakistan on the Afghans, the Taliban should take care of the interest of Pakistan.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Jirga with Saleem Safi (Hina Rabbani Khar's Exclusive Interview), Geo News, 03 July 2022²²

Saleem Safi asked Hina Rabbani Khar, the foreign minister of state, that Imran Khan claims that during his tenure he took Pakistan to its height in terms of independence of Pakistani foreign policy. Your government claims that Imran Khan isolated Pakistan due his hasty decisions. What is your opinion on that? *Hina Rabbani Khar responded that the worst thing about Imran Khan's government was that it gave more importance to the image or marking of Imran Khan's personality than the interest of Pakistan. Today we are doing course corrections silently, especially on the issue of CPEC and the improvement of relations with the western world. Imran Khan's insistence on the renegotiation of the terms of the CPEC impacted our relations with China. When asked about the China-US hostility and Pakistan's position in this rivalry, Hina Rabbani said it is true that balancing between China and the USA is becoming difficult day by day. But we are clear about one thing Pakistan's interest cannot be compromised in these rivalries.* On the question of FATF condition and undermining the Kashmir issue Hina said that both the issues are different and should not be mixed. On the question of why Pakistan is over-prioritizing the issue of FATF as the UAE, Turkey, and many other countries are on that list, she said it is important for a country like Pakistan which needs foreign investment, especially in the infrastructure sector. On the question of TTP negotiation and outcome, she said that any negotiation at the cost of Pakistan's integrity and sovereignty will not be accepted.

²² <https://youtu.be/XzdL7CFraQc>

Her party is clear about it that TTP is an armed militant group and should be treated like one during the course of negotiation.

Live with Dr. Shahid Masood, GNN HD, 12 July 2022²³

The Host Naila Ali raised the issues of upcoming elections in Punjab, Biden's visit to the Middle East, and the Sri Lankan crisis. *The guest Dr. Shahid Masood said that the next few days will be very crucial for Pakistani politics. They will decide the political future of the country. Imran Khan and his party are ready for everything. If they win they will form the government and if they lose they will not accept the result and continue their protests. Whatever the results, they will create more problems than a solution. Whatever the result of these elections will be, one thing is very clear: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will not be able to manage things properly.* The only solution is that he should dissolve the National Assembly and call for fresh elections. On the issue of the Sri Lankan crisis, he said that it is a developing story. The US China rivalry in the Pacific islands is also getting reflected. Most importantly Pakistan is also following in the footsteps of Sri Lanka. It is better to learn from the mistakes of others and not to repeat them. Dr. Shahid also discussed the new developments in the Middle East during Biden's visit. He said that Putin and Erdogan are also visiting the region. These visits are very important for the already polarised Middle East region.

Capital Talk with Hameed Mir, Geo News, 19 July 2022²⁴

The host Hamid Mir discussed the impact of recent Punjab by-elections. Hamid said that the impact was not just seen in the politics of Pakistan but also in the economy of the country. The dollar has reached its historic high. Many political experts are suggesting that the federal government should resign and call for fresh elections. But during the recent meeting of the PDM, all the coalition members agreed to continue their term. *Shoaib Shaheen (President of Bar Association Islamabad) said that the PTI would have won all the seats if PML-N had not been involved in booth capturing and electoral rigging on many polling booths. The PML-N did every possible thing to change the election results but the strategy of the PTI workers and leaders ruined their plans.* Kamil Ali Agha (Senator PML-Q) said that the PML-N does not believe in democratic politics. They have been doing electoral malpractices in Punjab for some time. We did our preparations accordingly but still they managed to succeed in some places. On Fawad Chaudhary's statement on banning Rana Sanaullah after 22 July, he said that Sanaullah has been involved in a political vendetta against the PTI and its workers.

²³ <https://youtu.be/r8e3BFNB2dA>

²⁴ <https://youtu.be/lKylEWnBFol>

Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, ARY News, 27 July 2022²⁵

The host Kashif Abbasi discussed the recent cabinet meeting and the Prime Minister's address to the assembly. In his address, PM Shehbaz Sharif said that his government is not imported and the no-confidence motion is a constitutional method that his coalition followed to come to power. The accusations of corruption against him are politically motivated and he is ready to give detain of every penny. He further said he was not interested in becoming the Prime Minister, it was the coalition members who pushed him for that. This government was forced on him but since his party is leading this government he will complete its tenure and try to solve the problems created by the PTI. My party will fix the problems. Kashif asked his panellist Arif Bhatti (Political Analyst) what is the meaning of this long speech by the Prime Minister. *Arif Bhatti said that what he said during the meeting was a complete lie. He said he was not interested in leading this government but the reality is that he had corruption cases against him and when the establishment offered him government he happily accepted it as an opportunity to save himself from any possible persecution. When he says, he will fix the problems of this country my question is who created these problems?* Throughout the history of Pakistan, his family and party ruled the country. Then why these problems were never taken care of during those years? On the issue of the clash of interest between the judiciary and the parliament Habib Akram (Political Analyst) said that the court should not interfere in the matter of the parliament. It is against the traditions and norms of parliamentary democracy. We have broken this tradition and failed to ensure the spaces in which both the organs of state can work without undermining the authority of each other. But sadly these kinds of clashes are not new in Pakistan. On the issue of judicial reforms, Waseem Badawi (Political Analyst) said that the judicial reforms are a must and any initiative in this direction should be welcomed but it should not be done with vested interests. Targeting a particular bench of judges is not reform. The justice delivery system should be reformed to make courts and justice accessible to common people.

²⁵ <https://dai.ly/x8cpp1h>

BOMBING, SHOOTING AND DISAPPEARNCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Sindh				
Karachi ²⁶	26/04/2022	4 people including 3 Chinese killed in a suicide bomb attack	04	4

²⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1686920/3-chinese-nationals-among-4-dead-in-suicide-attack-at-karachi-university>

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Balochistan ²⁷	14/07/2022	Army Col. Killed/ terrorists killed	2 03	00
Peshawar ²⁸ Kech district ²⁹	04/03/2022 26/01/2022	At least 30 dead, dozens injured in Peshawar imambargah blast. Ten Soldiers martyred, one militant killed	30 10	50 01
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
KP ³⁰	19/07/2022	3 policemen injured in an attack	00	03
KP ³¹	07/07/2022	1 civilian killed in bomb attack	01	02
KP ³²	06/07/2022	4 policemen killed	04	00

²⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1699589/pak-army-lt-col-abducted-martyred-by-terrorists-in-ziarat-district-ispr>

²⁸<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2346343/at-least-30-dead-dozens-injured-in-peshawar-imambargah-blast>

²⁹<https://defence.pk/pdf/threads/10-soldiers-martyred-1militant-killed-and-3-apprehended>

³⁰<https://www.dawn.com/news/1700414/three-policemen-injured-in-kohat-checkpost-attack>

³¹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2365084/bomber-attacks-mardan-police-station>

³²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1698415/four-policemen-martyred-in-dera-tank-attacks>

KP ³³	12/06/2022	1 security personnel killed in a terror attack	01	00
KP ³⁴	08/06/2022	4 terrorist killed during an operation in North Waziristan tribal district and Balochistan's Noshki district.	04	00
KP ³⁵	03/06/2022	1 soldier killed in a terrorist attack	01	00
KP ³⁶	April	24 law-enforcement personnel killed	24	26
South Waziristan ³⁷	27/04/2022	SI killed	1	
Peshawar ³⁸	04/03/2022	57 dead, 200 injured in Peshawar's imambargah attack	57	200
North Waziristan ³⁹	29/03/2022	Four terrorists killed in North Waziristan operation	04	00

³³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1694423>

³⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1693697/four-terrorists-killed-in-north-waziristan-noshki-ispr>

³⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1692924/sepoy-martyred-in-gun-battle-after-terrorists-attack-military-post-in-north-waziristan-ispr>

³⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1687008/24-law-enforcement-officials-martyred-in-ttp-attacks-since-late-last-month-in-kp>

³⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1687110/police-official-martyred-in-south-waziristan-attack>

³⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2346343/57-dead-200-injured-in-peshawars-imambargah-attack>

³⁹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2350051/four-terrorists-killed-in-north-waziristan-operation>