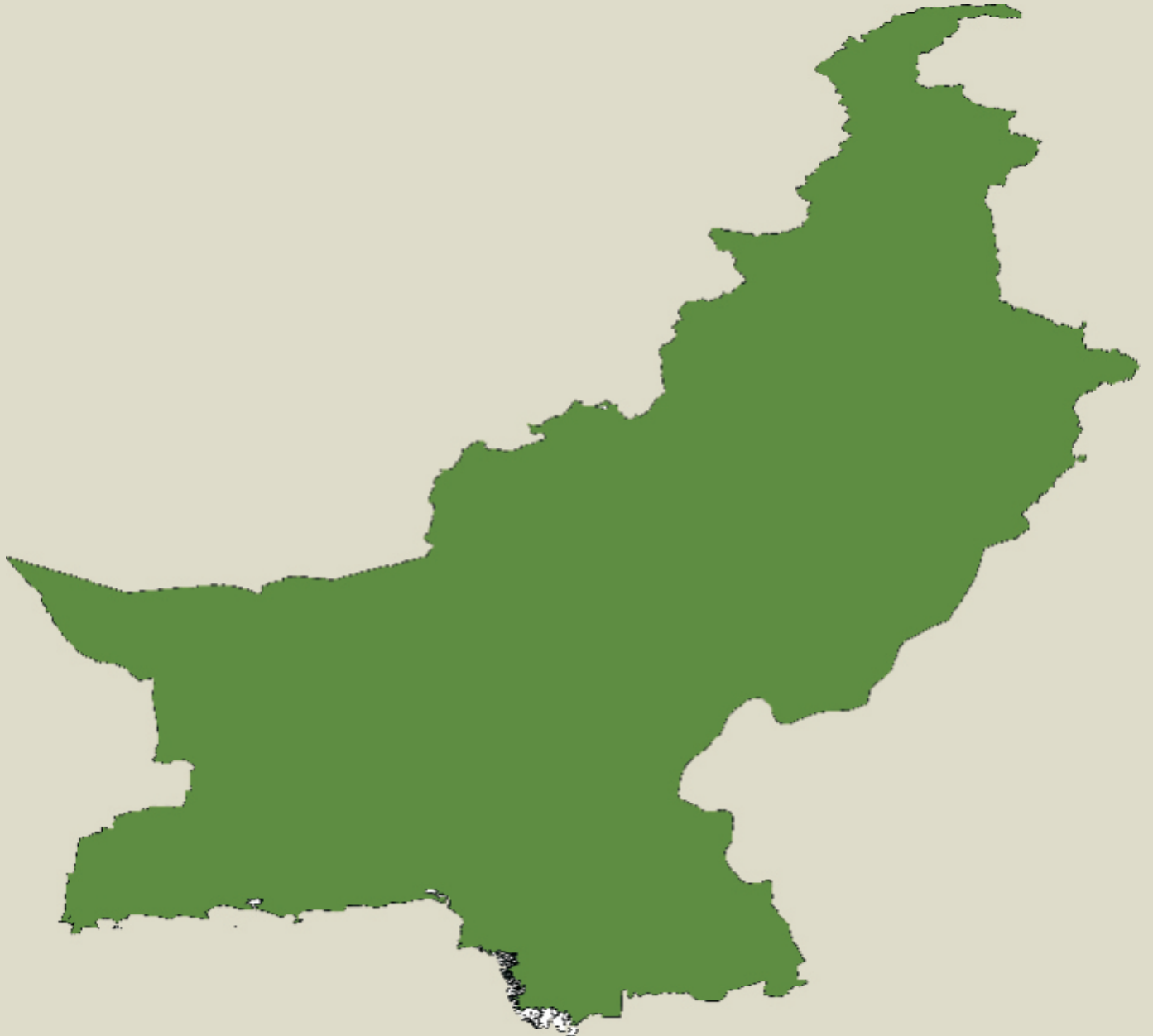


May 2020

# PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



*Prepared by*  
Dr. Zainab Akhter  
Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir  
Dr. Mohammad Eisa  
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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND  
ANALYSES

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, April 2020

CONTENTS

<b>POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS</b> .....	08
<b>ECONOMIC ISSUES</b> .....	12
<b>SECURITY SITUATION</b> .....	13
<b>URDU &amp; ELECTRONIC MEDIA</b>	
Urdu.....	20
Electronic.....	27
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES.....	29

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### **Relief force, Editorial, Dawn, 01 April<sup>1</sup>**

Urgency is the need of the hour. To fight a pandemic that is spreading like wildfire and to mitigate its impact on their citizens, governments need to fashion responses that make the best use of precious time and resources. *Raising a youth volunteer force called the Corona Relief Tigers, a measure formally announced by Prime Minister Imran Khan in his address to the nation on Monday, cannot be described as meeting that criteria.* Moreover, while the premier may have the best of intentions, the move also sends the wrong message to an opposition that feels alienated by the PTI government. Indeed, the PPP has already expressed its reservations, with Senator Raza Rabbani saying in a statement that the move would politicize the national effort against Covid-19. *He suggested that the centre take a leaf out of the Sindh government's book and form mohalla committees including members of different political parties and NGOs working in the areas where relief goods are required to be distributed.*

### **Corona virus and must to do, Saleem Safi, Jang, 01 April<sup>2</sup>**

Pakistan is a unique country. Lies are common here: But many are ready to die on the name of Islam. More than any other country, hypocrisy is practiced in Pakistan: But one will find people offering *nimaz* and keeping fast as well. *Corruption, sectarianism, and discrimination against the poor by the governments have been defining features of Pakistan. Perhaps one of the reasons for all this is that the religious leadership has been trying to establish Islam on their followers more than upon themselves.* And the governments also want to hold only the oppositions accountable, not itself or its members. *However, when it comes to dealing with natural calamities or other threats, the unanimous role of the country has been surprising.* For instance, for last 18 years we have been fighting war against terrorism, especially in the Pashtun areas and have emerged as victorious, mainly because of the will of the society. *I believe that we will be able to overcome the Corona pandemic also: Not because of the government or its policies, as the government is incompetent, but because of the will of the people of the Pakistan. The Corona virus pandemic is a threat only to human lives but "PTI-Corona" has killed our economy also.* If our people follow the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1545428/relief-force>

<sup>2</sup> <https://jang.com.pk/news/752669>

advisories issued by doctors and take precautions, we will control the damage that the virus is unleashing on whole world. Thankfully, barring some exceptions, all religious sects have cooperated in fighting the Corona pandemic. *In many places in the country people listen to their moulvis more than anybody else. I request these moulvis tell their followers to take all precautions to stop spreading of Corona virus.* I would even suggest that the army should rope in the volunteers of these religious groups for delivering essential services because their reach is wide and they are more dedicated.

### **Coronavirus and the society, Saleem Safi, Jang, 08 April<sup>3</sup>**

Every natural calamity is a test for humans. It also has some blessing in it. *While dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic, we need to use the opportunity to address bad things in our society. In this, our religious groups and leaders have a pivotal role.* It is true that majority of the people of Pakistan have never supported any religious group. But it is also true that that 99 percent of the total population is religious. *This is the reason that Prime Minister Imran Khan did not ban religious gatherings unless some fatwa were issued by some prominent religious clerics.* The type of social distancing we require to deal with Coronavirus is not possible without support of such clerics. Though the different religious groups are divided in Pakistan but now because of Coronavirus they will have to come together. *I suggest that any religious group or leader convene a meeting of all religious groups and heads and come up with some collective statement to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic.* The country needs a decision on the issue of maintaining social distance when burying the dead. *One issue in Pakistan is that the state and the government have been considered one. If someone has issues with the government, that should not be seen as an issue with the state.* Difference needs to be maintained that doctors, nurses, police, etc., belong to the state, not to any government. We can also save lot of money by avoiding over spending on marriages, religious functions, etc. Many more things can be done. If the religious groups decide to take some initiatives and the government decides to address the social issues, many goals can be achieved at this time.

### **Government and the opposition, Saleem Safi, Jang, 15 April<sup>4</sup>**

Since we were born we have been told that the country is going through difficult times. However, the current crisis is different. *First time we see a Prime Minister while addressing a nation instead of saying something encouraging, says that people will die because of hunger and*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://jang.com.pk/news/755770>

<sup>4</sup> <https://jang.com.pk/news/758864>

*unemployment.* Pakistan is facing many issues: Afghanistan, India, terrorism, sectarianism and political crisis. But the urgent issue at the moment is economic crisis. Many including Imran Khan were saying in 2017 that the country was going towards a civil war. *In 2018 Imran Khan was voted to power with hope that he would stabilize the economy. But he has failed: growth has fallen, investors have run away and the work on CPEC has slowed down.* Now the Corona virus pandemic has complicated the situation. When every country is looking for itself, if the virus spreads in Pakistan the consequences will be harsh. With no right roadmap to deal with the crisis, in the month of Ramadan people will fight outside mosques. Corona is going to damage the economy most, as accepted by experts and the Prime Minister. *To deal with such a greave situation either the Government needs to have a plan or the opposition should come up with some agenda. But none has anything to offer. Imran Khan has become too arrogant and does not listen to anyone. He wants only sycophants around him. He hates who make sense or are critical. The opposition is silent and wants the people who brought Imran to power to be punished.* Only Allah knows what is inside the hearts of the people but it appears that PML-N is happy with the situation because the supporters of Imran Khan are being punished. But they forget that general public is also suffering. When one asks the leaders of PPP, PML-N, JUI or others why they do not do something, they say that when they will get any signal for the same, only then they will. In such a situation only *Khuda* can save the country!

**IK's gambit, Editorial, *The Friday Times*, 17 April<sup>5</sup>**

PM Imran Khan has made a virtue out of U- Turns as the hallmark of great leadership. *His COVID-19 "Lockdown" policy beats them all: now we have a lockdown, now we don't; now Islamabad and the provinces are locked into a consensual policy,* now each province is free to make its own policies, now the ulema have agreed to abide by the rules, now they are striking out on their own; and so on, ad infinitum. *Worse, at a time when the nation desperately needs a leader who can inspire and unify the people behind one solid policy decision, there is bitter discord between Islamabad and Sindh and between the ruling PTI and the combined opposition parties whose leaders are being relentlessly hounded.* The personalized "attack" on the Sindh Chief Minister, Murad Ali Shah, who has earned popular kudos for his heartfelt handling of the crisis in his province, by the usual pack of PTI louts, is particularly jarring. In fact, the PM has now jumped into the fray and tried to hog the limelight in Sindh as the "true" benefactor of the people. Even a national health crisis is not reason enough to stop such petty politicking!

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/iks-gambit/>

### **Is achievement of 20-points possible? Editorial, Roznama Pakistan, 21 April<sup>6</sup>**

Governor of Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has said that the federal and provincial governments are taking every step to curb the spread of Corona virus in Pakistan. *Mr Chaudhry said that a formula has been designed for the month of Ramadan with the consent of the ulemas. If the formula is violated that can have severe consequences. Interior Minister Brig (R) Aijaz Shah said that clause 20 states wherever the policy will be violated, the ulemas have given authority to the government to take any possible action.* ... There is no doubt that the government and the ulemas were honest in their intentions when they signed the 20-point formula. However, the real question remains whether action on 20 points is possible or not? *Even when the month of Ramadan is few days away, no rules are followed in mosques where congregational prayers are offered. In many places the stated distance is not maintained.* Also, the daily five prayers do not take much time. *During Ramadan, people will offer taraweeh and night prayers together and that will take almost two hours. In such case if there will be only one carrier of the virus, it can spread fast.* Experts have said that many corona virus patients do not show any symptom, making it more difficult to identify the carriers. Therefore, the 20-point policy is a difficult task at hand. Many mosques do not have any lawn and are in congested areas. Also in many mosques possibility of high number of people turning out for prayers remains high. It will be difficult to maintain six feet distance, creating chances for the spread of virus.

### **Reverse the decision, Editorial, Dawn, 23 April<sup>7</sup>**

*The administration, as well as sensible clerics, needs to realize that Pakistan cannot afford to take a chance by reopening mosques at this juncture. Attendance at masjids goes up during Ramazan, and it is hard to imagine how the state as well as mosque administrations will enforce social-distancing guidelines.* Clerics say that social-distancing norms are also being violated in markets. That may be so, and the administration needs to do a better job of ensuring crowding does not take place in bazaars and markets. But the comparison between shopping for food — which is a necessity — and attending congregational prayers — in which there is much flexibility, especially in times of a pandemic — is not a sound one. Even Saudi Arabia has said only a few staff members will be allowed to offer Taraweeh prayers at the two holy mosques of Makkah and Madina. *If other Muslim states can take sensible decisions, there is no reason why our rulers should be swayed*

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<sup>6</sup> <https://dailypakistan.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-04-21/page-9/detail-6>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1551497/reverse-the-decision>



*by emotional, ill-informed appeals. For the sake of public health, both the state and ulema need to reverse the decision on congregational prayers.*

**Stark Warning, Editorial, Dawn, 24 April<sup>8</sup>**

There is palpable alarm among Pakistan's medical community, a sense of foreboding that the country could be on the cusp of an unmanageable crisis. Three times this week, they have urgently asked the government to reconsider its decision to ease lockdown measures. *Pakistan's underfunded health sector is barely able to cope with the regular caseload, let alone an exceptional emergency like the present. If we do not 'flatten the curve' by enforcing a strict lockdown, the only way proven to be effective, the amplified pressure on this creaky edifice could be its undoing.* In what may be a sign of things to come, the doctors at the presser said that hospitals in Karachi were running out of beds to cater to Covid-19 patients. *Also consider that around 10pc of those infected need respiratory support, but public hospitals in Punjab alone have only 1,245 ventilators – and 77 of them are out of order.* With the caseload rising exponentially in the past few weeks, health personnel could be faced with wrenching decisions about which Covid-19 patients to treat with the limited resources available. We are on a knife edge. Listen to the experts.

**COVID game changer, Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 24 April<sup>9</sup>**

*Imran Khan insists the Pakistani media is not just the "freest" in the world; it is anarchic and completely unaccountable. Yet there isn't a single media watchdog, or independent newspaper or channel, at home or abroad that hasn't documented the terrible plight of the media on Imran Khan's watch.* At last count, international references to highlight the tight and unprecedented censorship in "democratic" Pakistan had exceeded two dozen respected voices, including from the EU. The detention of Mir Shakil ur Rahman, the owner-editor of Jang-GEO the largest media group in the country, is a pointer in that direction. *As things stand, the few independent journalists left in the country have either been gagged or kicked out of their channels and survive only on crumbs from YouTube.* Three months ago, the media was rife with speculation that the clock was ticking for Imran Khan because the Militabishment had seen the error of its "selection" and was looking to redeem the situation via a national unity government excluding Imran Khan. But the sudden arrival of COVID-19 put paid to all that. *Pundits say that COVID-19 could tip the scales either way. If Imran Khan's anti-lockdown strategy works, he will live to fight another day. But if it doesn't – if hunger,*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1551774/stark-warning>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/covid-game-changer/>



*joblessness, strikes, riots and anarchy break out, or the economy sends out an SOS – it will be back to the drawing board for the Miltablishment again.*

**Violation of the government-ulema agreement, Editorial, Daily Times, 27 April<sup>10</sup>**

Hopefully the government will take notice, accept that it was wrong to go down this road in the first place and take appropriate action. Yet there's that lingering fear that throughout this crisis the federal government has been living in a bubble of sorts. *It completely buckled under pressure from the religious lobby, making Pakistan the only country in the whole world to keep mosques open this Ramazan, and now the risk of the coronavirus spreading like wildfire has increased manifold.* Who will be responsible now, the government or the ulema, if failure to adhere to the 20-point agreement results in more people and their families testing positive? Of course everybody knows that the two will simply toss the blame between each other, and all the time continue with their congregations, while the rest of the country counts the high number of cases as things spiral out of control. *This is precisely the time when everybody, people and government, should be making every effort possible to enforce a smart lockdown.* The number of infected cases is expected to peak sometime over the next two months. Somebody should also explain why Pakistan must be different from the rest of the Muslim world. *When every other Muslim government has seen it fit not to open mosques for the present, why must Pakistan adopt a different strategy; especially one with potentially such a high cost?* In the interest of the country, both the government and religious lobby are urged to immediately review their agreement and scale down in the face of an expanding pandemic.

**Weak Virus Strategy, Editorial, Dawn, 28 April<sup>11</sup>**

Lockdown measures in most cities have been eased. In some areas, the scenes at bazaars and in mosques are reminiscent of any other day in the pre-Covid-19 era. Overall, the atmosphere of urgency and caution which was palpable in the initial lockdown days is dissipating. *The scenario raises a serious question: what is the government's strategy? A survey has revealed that 80pc of mosques in Punjab and the federal capital are not implementing the agreement reached between the government and ulema. Observers conducting the survey noted that worshippers in 194 mosques violated preventive*

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<sup>10</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/602820/violation-of-the-government-ulema-agreement/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1552826/weak-virus-strategy>

*measures.* The experiment has failed and begs a reassessment. For the government to rely on the notion of individual citizen responsibility, it must confront an unfortunate reality: the Swedish model of self-regulation, if successful, is only possible because it relies on the notion of trust between citizens and state — a historical rarity in Pakistan and in many other countries. The crowds in public spaces are evidence that the government's appeals have not been taken seriously. Therefore, the government must rethink its strategy and impose stringent restrictions even as it ramps up testing to the promised 25,000 a day — a target it is yet to meet. *The approach of 'advice giving' must be abandoned. Instead, the government ought to exercise its constitutional authority to protect the public before it is too late.*

### **Provincial autonomy, Editorial, Dawn, 29 April<sup>12</sup>**

*A recent comment by the federal planning minister describing the 18th Amendment as flawed has sparked a new debate between the supporters of a powerful centre and those who want stronger federating units for a fairer, more effective federal system.* The amendment, which was forged through consensus a decade back, not only transferred greater administrative and fiscal authority to the provinces, but also gave more powers to parliament. That the opposition felt the need to rebut the government's view despite the ruling elite lacking the parliamentary majority to reverse the devolution process set in motion by the 18th Amendment shows the growing trust gap between the two sides. *At one end is the fear that provincial autonomy could be eroded while at the other, there is the concern that the amendment, as well as the seventh National Finance Commission award, has administratively and financially weakened the centre by delegating too many legislative powers to the provinces and diverting a larger portion of fiscal resources to them.*

## **ECONOMIC ISSUES**

### **Next two weeks of Corona virus pandemic, Editorial, Roznama Express, 03 April<sup>13</sup>**

The Corona virus pandemic has spread in whole world. *WHO head has said that the pandemic will last longer in Asia and the Asian countries need to*

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1553097/provincial-autonomy>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107322224&Issue=NP\\_MUX&Date=20200402](https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107322224&Issue=NP_MUX&Date=20200402)

*take long lasting measures to fight Corona virus.* Prime Minister Imran Khan has also said that Corona virus is a threat and challenge. He took stock of the arrangements made to deal with the unfolding situation because of the lockdown in the country. PM Khan said that no essential services should face any difficulty. Different relief packages for daily wagers, exports and the poor were announced in the meeting. ... *Though the government is trying its best to rise to the occasion, the country lacks a clear cut strategy and method.* The Corona virus pandemic has shattered health system of developed countries like Italy, the U.S., UK and France. Their hospitals are overwhelmed with the high number of COVID-19 patients. *In Pakistan, it is difficult to have an exact estimate of the number of deaths. But the provincial governments in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa are taking every measure to fight the pandemic. The chief ministers, governors and the other officials will have to wage jihad to defeat Corona virus.* There will be more challenges in terms of reconciling with the damage on economy and society after the pandemic is defeated. *According to a report, already foreign buyers have rejected a \$30 billion garment order which will have deep impact on the garment manufacturing sector.* The provincial governments should not ignore and be attentive towards economic aspect of the Corona virus pandemic. The economic situation in the country is not good which is creating difficulty in announcing relief packages, much needed at the moment. *The needy are waiting for such relief from the government. People should get all kind of succor and relief in these tough times.* The federal and provincial governments need to work for providing the same. Meanwhile, during the lockdown, people need to cooperate with the federal and provincial governments.

### **Pandemic's economic impact, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 15 April<sup>14</sup>**

With its economy already struggling, Pakistan is likely to be hardest hit as it struggles to simultaneously save lives and livelihoods. Along with Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, Pakistan is in danger of experiencing a negative economic growth rate. With the population growing at 1.8pc a year, the prospects are dismal. *The population explosion that has never been on the radars of our policymakers has also been a major reason for our deteriorating health situation. The current crisis has exposed all these fault lines.* Another serious problem adding to the country's woes are the shrinking job opportunities in the oil-producing Arab and Gulf countries that are the biggest source of employment for Pakistani expatriate workers. This will not only add to the rising unemployment problem but will also affect remittances. The development will have serious social and economic implications. For a country facing a massive debt burden — both domestic and external — it is an

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1549307/pandemics-economic-impact>

extremely serious situation as the Pakistani government is now compelled to divert its resources to fighting the pandemic. *It is certainly the right approach to provide monetary help to the poorest sections of the population worst hit by the economic shutdown. But given Pakistan's limited financial resources the effort will not be enough to meet the enormous challenges.*

**COVID-19 and Expansion of CPEC, Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Daily Times, 13 April<sup>15</sup>**

*Although, China is going through testing times, but China is putting efforts to expand CPEC. The efforts of both governments give confidence that the CPEC will be implemented on time and there will be no delay as it is being propagated.* Chinese government is also extremely committed to help Pakistan to implement CPEC. The commitment can be seen from the efforts of China, even during the spread of COVID-19, China spared time to invite President of Pakistan and signed two extremely important MoUs. Although, China is going through testing times, but China is putting efforts to expand CPEC. The efforts of both governments give confidence that the CPEC will be implemented on time and there will be no delay as it is being propagated. *The commitment of Pakistan has also improved, and it is evident from the establishment of CPEC Authority.* Pakistan is trying to imply all required instruments to make CPEC a success story. In this backdrop we can say, negative propaganda seems unfair and based on malicious intents. The purpose of which is to undermine the importance of CPEC and create hurdles for the development of Pakistan. *However, it will never be successful because CPEC is not joint venture between governments; it is joint venture among the people of China and Pakistan.*

**On the matter of the debt rollover, Editorial, Daily Times, 15 April<sup>16</sup>**

*It's for a reason that the prime minister has been calling for poor country debt write off ever since the coronavirus pandemic changed everything. Pakistan has to pay back approximately \$28 billion dollars in public debt by mid-2023.* There is clearly no way to make such payments in the present circumstances. The lockdown has brought the economy to the halt with predictions of a sharp jump in the fiscal deficit, doubling of poverty, contraction of growth and a sharp recession by the next fiscal. According to news reports, Pakistan plans to seek rollover of half the amount due, to the tune of \$14 billion; although it would be lucky to get even half of that. That much is not a surprise, mostly because this is just about the only option Pakistan really has. Whatever good was coming from the IMF program is now lost to the coronavirus response. *And not only will countries like*

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<sup>15</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/594519/covid-19-and-expansion-of-cpec/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/595820/on-the-matter-of-the-debt-rollover-daily-times/>

*Pakistan not be able to make debt payments for quite a while, they will also need increasing amounts of foreign loans to avoid large scale social unrest as well as hunger and starvation.* Pakistan's debt will grow manifold as it fights off the coronavirus pandemic. And it will get more and more difficult to meet repayment deadlines. Unless our friend agree to roll over some of our debt, if not write some off altogether, a recession might just be the beginning of far deeper problems.

**Covid-19 and impact on economy, Fahd Rehman, *The Express Tribune*, 20 April<sup>17</sup>**

Regardless of the available narratives, one thing is for sure that the global economy is in recession and *Pakistan's economy is not an exception in this regard. Then came Covid-19, triggering lockdowns across Pakistan. These lockdowns have created lots of socio-economic problems.* On the social front, livelihood opportunities have been squeezed all of a sudden. Daily-wage earners, small and medium businesses and traders took a big hit due to this unavoidable action. *On the economic front, the sudden closure of large industries, small and medium businesses, ports, airports and transport have almost jammed the wheel of the economy.* In a nutshell, the marked economic slowdown is now leading to negative GDP growth, as projected by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the SBP. Although philanthropist/charity organisations actively jumped in to provide essential food items to a large chunk of people, the scale is quite large and it is not easy to reach out to all the deserving people.

**Pakistan fails to ask G20 for relief, Shahbaz Rana, *Express Tribune*, 21 April<sup>18</sup>**

Contrary to claims made by a few ministers about securing a substantial debt relief, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) resident representative had said that Islamabad had not made an official request to G20 countries for payment relaxation. Teresa Daban Sanchez, IMF Resident Representative, also said that inflation in Pakistan would remain in double digits this year due to inflationary expectations and expected revision in prices. *Pakistan has neither made any official request to G20 countries nor has it made any announcement in this regard, she said. She was responding to a question about the quantum of debt relief for Pakistan from the G20 countries.* Sanchez said only those countries could avail debt relief that had made requests for forbearance to the G20 nations – the club of 20 big economies of the world. The rupee had fallen to 170 to a dollar but

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<sup>17</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2202021/2-covid-19-impact-economy/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2202934/2-pakistan-fails-ask-g20-relief/>



gradually recovered to Rs163.49 in the past few days. *To a question about Pakistan's response to the Covid-19 and its implications for the economic health, the resident representative said "fiscal and SBP measures must be targeted and temporary".*

## SECURITY SITUATION

### **Protect the police at all cost, Editorial, Daily Times, 06 April<sup>19</sup>**

*News reports that the Punjab police force is "ill-equipped" and therefore runs the risk of contracting the coronavirus in high numbers are cause for the gravest concern for a number of very obvious reasons.* One, they are no doubt the front-line soldiers in this war against the virus; along with our legions of doctors of course And three, since every government must always factor in the absolute worst case scenario in all circumstances, not the least when faced with an unprecedented, out-of-control existential crisis, the Punjab government must have considered what it would do should a large number of the police force catch the virus and law enforcement becomes problematic. Let there be no mistake, if the police force is not protected, it will not be able to protect the people in turn. And, in that case, there is just no way that this fight can be won. Doctors, apparently, are expressing similar concerns. This is unacceptable. Everybody knows that the government has its plate full. ***But it is unclear how Chief Minister Usman Buzdar expects his province to lead the global fight*** against the pandemic when his front-line warriors are compromised in this manner.

### **FATF Extension, Editorial, Dawn, 09 April<sup>20</sup>**

An unexpected development has given Pakistan an additional two months in which to complete the action plan steps that were going to be reviewed in June. ***No doubt this comes as a relief to some in the government, since much work remained to be done by June. But it would be a grave mistake to treat the additional time that has unexpectedly been granted as some sort of 'relief'.*** Instead of an excuse, the present conditions, in fact, grant an opportunity to the government. The priority now is not simply getting through the review meeting without falling into the so-called blacklist. The

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<sup>19</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/589932/protect-the-police-at-all-costs/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1547703/fatf-extension>

clear priority is to get off the grey list altogether. *No matter how well the stars are aligned for us on the geopolitical table where Pakistan is seeking to draw linkages from, there is no better reason to aim for an expeditious end to the grey listing status than the country's own economic interests.* In the perception of outside observers, a pattern has emerged of Pakistan taking cosmetic action and asking for extensions. This is a good moment to lay this view to rest.

**Re-emerging terrorists groups need to be nipped in the bud, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 28 April<sup>21</sup>**

During an operation in Northern Waziristan, nine terrorists were killed. Two soldiers also lost their lives. It is well known fact that terrorism came to Pakistan through Afghanistan. *They were supported by external forces. Pakistan tried to mainstream them and offered talks. However, terrorist groups took the offer as weakness of the Pakistani state. Subsequently, whole world saw how these terror camps were attacked and terrorists killed. In Northern Waziristan terrorists had declared state within state, which was eliminated. Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and NSA Ajit Doval are on record to say that India would revenge Kashmir in Balochistan. Many areas in Afghanistan were used against Pakistan. Many fugitive terrorists were given safe hideouts in Afghanistan. Kabul is helping India in all this.* When these terrorists get a chance, they attack Pakistani army and other security establishments. Even their cowardice minor attacks need to be stopped. This goal can be achieved only by eliminated last remaining terrorist. The recent operation in northern Waziristan was a successful one. *Question remains wherefrom such a big number of terrorists came in the area? Wherefrom they could get huge chunk of weapons? Are they trying to reassemble? Kabul has been helping some tribal's who need to be put under surveillance. Also, it is not unlikely that some terrorists would be hiding in Afghan refugees.* The fencing on the Afghan-Pakistan border needs to be completed. National Action Plan (NAP) needs to be implemented in letter and spirit. At last, facilitators of terrorists need to be arrested so that terrorists do not get a chance to reassemble.

**War without weapons, Saleem Safi, *Jang*, 29 April<sup>22</sup>**

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2020-04-28/page-4/detail-3>

<sup>22</sup>[https://jang.com.pk/news/764747?\\_ga=2.179707309.80345984.1588140292-1172285561.1585539487](https://jang.com.pk/news/764747?_ga=2.179707309.80345984.1588140292-1172285561.1585539487)



“We do not need to fear Corona but fight it” was an inappropriate slogan. *War is fought with powers on earth and with people. One cannot fight with natural calamities and pandemics. In such situations we can only pray and seek forgiveness from Allah.* Corona cannot be fought with nuclear and other weapons. No sophisticated weaponry and jets can defeat the virus. It will be only conquered by doctors. *Unfortunately our behaviour with our doctors and medical professionals has been so bad that they preferred to leave Pakistan and settle in the West.* We do not provide facilities to our doctors. Condition of our hospitals is abysmal. Toilets in western hospitals are cleaner than our hospitals. We have misbehaved so much with our doctors and paramedics that they are often forced to go on strike. Consequently, though we declared war on Corona virus but we did not have cantonments or conditions to fight the pandemic. They were not equipped for war. Many doctors and nurses became victims of the virus. *Doctors are begging for imposing lockdown. But they are ignored. In cases of war with India or against terrorists within the country, whole country listens to the frontline soldiers. But in case of corona virus pandemic, the frontlines, i.e., doctors and paramedics are being entirely ignored.* Some politicians and experts from IMF are deciding the policy. We ought to respect doctors and nurses. Provide them all equipments and safety kits and double their salaries. If some of them become victim of the virus, their kin’s need to be given jobs. **Doctors and experts on Corona need to be consulted for framing policy to deal with the pandemic.**

## URDU MEDIA

**No one will be spared, Editorial, Ummat, 12 April<sup>23</sup>**

Gen. Ayub Khan was criticized when there was an increase of one paisa in the price of sugar in the 1950s. Otherwise, Ayub was praised for his management of economy and providing governance. Later, it was Gowher Ayub, Ayub Khan’s son who became reason for his embarrassment and his popularity started decreasing with the increase of public criticism. *Now the people seem to have grown complicit. There are no mass movements like there were during the tenures of Ayub Khan and Zulfikar Bhutto.* For sugar and flour crises, it has come out that close aides of Prime Minister Imran Khan, Jahangir Tareen, Khusroo Bakhtiar and his brother are involved. Even Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar’s name has also come up. *But they all are safe and no action has been taken. Prime Minister Khan has appointed one more committee for*

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<sup>23</sup> <http://ummat.net/2020/04/12/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

*forensic auditing. Meanwhile, there are new revelations. For example, the sugar mafia has used accounts on names of their employees to evade taxes worth Rs 33 billion.* Thus these people were looting the national money and draining poor people's pockets. Buzdar may not have made money directly. But he has helped these corrupt people. After final investigation, it will be revealed who are these anonymous people. This will be last chance for Imran Khan to prove his claim: no one will be spared. All corrupt people need to be treated equally before the law.

### **Why national government and how? Saleem Safi, Jang, 13 April<sup>24</sup>**

If we try to keep all our biases aside, then we see that we are faced with three bitter realities. *First, the corona virus pandemic is going out of control. It should not have been allowed to enter in the country. At worst, immediately lockdown should have been imposed to curb its spread.* But the government was confused. Now the situation is like that it can be dealt with only by an extensive government that will include all political and religious groups. *Second, economy of the country was in the shambles when Imran Khan took over as the Prime Minister. It was expected that he would help to improve the economy. But it seems he has neither a vision nor a competent team to deal with the economic crisis in the country.* Such a grave economic situation can be dealt with national consensus and with a strategy that will entail every Pakistani citizen. *Third, honesty and commitment that were associated with Imran Khan and his party have been turned wrong.* Many PTI leaders tell me that the government has fallen in wrong hands. Even the spokespersons of the government say now that the party and the government have been high jacked by sugar mafia. Jahangir Tareen has also accepted that how he assembled different dynast politicians in PTI. *Thus the government has become hub of different mafias. Additionally, there are foreign lobbies which are influencing the government, like American, Chinese, Saudis and Iranian lobbies.* This remains the reason for that Islamabad could do nothing when India integrated Kashmir. Group politics remains active in PTI affecting its performance. Thus, there remains only one option to deal with these looming threats: National government for few months.

### **Corona: Prime Minister's reservations, Editorial, Jang, 20 April<sup>25</sup>**

Pakistan is one of the poorest and most congested countries of the world. Over 14 percent of population lives under below poverty line (BPL). *38 percent of people are daily wagers. Being a leader of democratic country, it is responsibility of the Prime Minister to stand with the people during time of*

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<sup>24</sup> <https://jang.com.pk/news/757988>

<sup>25</sup> [https://jang.com.pk/news/761065?\\_ga=2.214702743.1019582940.1587365528-1172285561.1585539487](https://jang.com.pk/news/761065?_ga=2.214702743.1019582940.1587365528-1172285561.1585539487)

*crisis.* Corona virus pandemic is a test for the PTI-Government. Despite having limited resources, the government needs to save lives of the people. That is the reason for that Imran Khan is working hard along with his team from the first day. Despite the lockdown in place, the number of COVID 19 cases has been increasing. Therefore, it is fair if the government is concerned about the rising numbers. *Prime Minister Khan said that though the number of the COVID 19 patients is not as high as in other countries but that should not make us to ignore the threat. The month May is going to be crucial. If people come on roads, the purpose of lockdown will be lost.* We need to be careful during the crisis time and need to act together to defeat the Corona virus pandemic.

### **Corona and religious people, Saleem Safi, Jang, 22 April<sup>26</sup>**

Crisis either proves or makes leaders to fall. *In Pakistan, religious leadership of Fazl-ur Rehman, Siraj-ul Haq, Maulana Tariq Jameel, Mufti Taqi Usmani and Peer Naqib-ur Rehman have increased their stature at the time of Corona virus pandemic.* Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman's rights were sacrificed in the name of "tabdili" (change). Then the government crossed every line while targeting him. If the Maulana wanted he could have used the pandemic against the government. Instead, he took a sensible position and asked his followers to listen to doctors and do whatever they advise to do. He supported government's decision to ban congregational prayers. Similarly, Siraj-ul Haq, Mufti Taqi, Tariq Jameel and Mufti Taqi advised people to maintain social distancing and offered their help to the government in fighting the Corona virus. *If someone is confused about lockdown it is the government. It invited more trouble by announcing some relaxation in the lockdown on 14 April. This provoked Mufti Muneeb-ur Rehman that if businesses can open, why cannot be mosques opened for prayers?* Ulemas met in Karachi in the background of the government's decision and the Chairman of the Hilal Committee Mufti Muneeb-ur Rehman said that there would be no lockdown on mosques. Then President Arif Alvi convened a meeting which came up with 20-point formula. That formula was a face saving for the government. *I would like to ask the ulemas with due respect that when Masjid-e-Nabawi can be closed for prayers in the wake of the pandemic, why cannot other mosques? When old people are allowed to offer prayers at home to avoid any trouble, why cannot people do same to avoid spread of Corona? Also, when the ulemas agreed to offer five-time daily must prayers at home, what is wrong with offering taarawaha at home?* Additionally, Moulana Fazl-ur Rehman has said to me that he would offer all prayers at home. If he can do it,

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<sup>26</sup>[https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107374241&Issue=NP\\_I SB&Date=20200422](https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107374241&Issue=NP_I SB&Date=20200422)

why cannot others? Mufti Muneeb has been saying that because he is appointed by the state, people do not need to oppose but listen to him. Now since the government has announced the extension of lockdown, why is he challenging the state?

### **Afghan-transit trade, Editorial, *Jang*, 23 April<sup>27</sup>**

Many experts on trade have welcomed the opening of the Gwadar port for Afghan-transit trade. They said that it would boost economy of the country. *It would also create avenues of employment and will help in development of Balochistan.* Advisor to the Prime Minister for commerce, Abdul Razzaq Daud said that Pakistan has allowed exports of food essentials to Afghanistan from Gwadar. Because of the lockdown, six thousands containers were stranded at Karachi port and two thousands containers were stuck somewhere in the road. Besides, four hundred containers were stranded at the Torkham border and 16 hundred at Chaman border. *Afghanistan, a land locked country, receives most of its food supply through Pakistan.* Because of the Corona virus pandemic, the supplies were stopped. *Islamabad has resumed the services during these times of crisis, demonstrating that it values its relations with Kabul.* It is good news also as by starting trade with Afghanistan, Gwadar port will also resume its activities.

### **Is COVID-19 just a virus or Affliction from God, Khalifa Mufti Usman Mansoor, *Noor-e-Hidayat*, April 2020 Issue**

#### **What is Corona virus and what does it mean?**

How and why Corona virus attacked a country (China) which believes in materialism and takes pride in its technological advancement. Also its anti-Muslim character is known to everyone. Has any other infidel nation been punished with such virus in past? To understand meaning of *Karo-na* let us consult Urdu, national language of one of China's favorite friend Pakistan. **So *Karo-na* means o Chinese oppressors!** Lord of Muslims is taking revenge from you, so don't indulge in further atrocities and oppression. (*ab mazeed mazalim, masti awr bad mashi karo na???*). As per above, **this virus is an Islamic challenge to Chinese rulers.** Whenever Muslims are oppressed and Pharaoh of the time becomes tyrant towards them then Sustainer of the world comes in to help Muslim and afflict rulers with such virus. This virus has disturbed China and other infidel nations a lot. This trouble is not different from what Pharaoh and his men faced when they persecuted (Tribe of Israel) *Bani Israel*. **Same Pharaoh like tyranny and disobey is the reason for**

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<sup>27</sup> <https://jang.com.pk/news/762383>

**outbreak of virus.** Readers must be aware how China made the life of more than ten Lakhs Uyghur Muslims in 2018 miserable and how Uyghur were forced into special (vocational) camps and targeted with *Bani Israel* like oppression. Chinese president also appealed Muslims to pray to get rid of this virus as Pharaoh asked *Bani Israel*. *Pharaoh was whipped out of map of the world; the same fate is waiting for Chinese and Burmese rulers if they don't stop their tyranny and oppression. We are praying for virus's outbreak in Europe and USA.* It must be in the knowledge of the people who follow media that 33 countries including USA cried like crocodile over persecution of Uyghur Muslim and termed this confinement of Muslim in re-education camps as tyranny. In fact it was economical revenge from western countries. *While at the same time so called Muslim countries shamelessly supported China's inhuman treatment of Uyghur, leaving all ethical and moral behind.* Now all Muslim and non-Muslim countries, who supported China, are under attack of this virus. Till today more than one Lakh communist contracted this virus and almost three thousands of them lost their lives. And numbers are increasing by every passing day. People must remember that Chinese were also punished with Sars virus when they tormented Uyghur and Burmese Muslims back in 2003 and no so called Muslim country protested against this tormentor. We are giving this good news that Pharaoh son of Pharaoh (Firoon ibn Firoon) *"Xi Jinping will meet the fate of pharaoh and Uighur will be survived like Bane Israel provided they refrain themselves from Fironic (False God) system and legislation.* Now Chinese false gods caught in decease in such a manner that parents cannot sit together with their children. *Chinese officials were forcing Muslims to unveil their faces and now Chinese women and men both are compelled to cover their faces.* They confined Uyghur Muslims forcefully now whole China is under complete lock down. Uyghur Muslims were tortured and tormented and now Chinese are dying on roads, homes without any care. *The imposed ban on meetings of Uighur Muslims now Communists cannot meet each other. Why virus broke out in China?* Recently China announced to do away with those Qurnaic and Biblical verses which oppose communist ideology and are not friendly with development of the world. Chinese government put more than a million Muslims in vocational training camps forcefully. Lakhs of Muslim youths were picked and killed or put behind bars and they are untraceable to their parents. *Why Pakistan supports Chinese aggression?* Pakistan tops the list of the countries supporting China on its treatment of Uyghur Muslims though this list include so called Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE and Iran. Pakistan was served as cantonment for USA for a good amount of time. Pakistan also played a pivotal role in fall of Imrat-e- Islami Afghanistan. Now when USA failed in Afghanistan and trying to hide its failure through conference and dialogue. At this critical time Pakistani slaves want to change their masters. *In that case only China is about to emerge as economical, military superpower*

*with technological advancement. Therefore Pakistan wants to change its direction from White House to Beijing.* When China saw this warm following from its new slaves it tried hard to save them from gray list of FATF.

China bought Gwadar against a hefty amount from Pakistan during rule of General Zia ul Haq. Now China has been pleased by ruining and destroying bazaars, markets, homes, and agricultural lands belonging to Pashtuns against few dollars and economic prosperity in future. ***This will pave the way for China to use Pakistan as cantonment.*** Since Pakistan is increasingly tilting towards slavery of China. Seeing this, ***Uighur should not expect any help from ruler of Pakistan.*** In China only Uyghur ethnic Muslims are imprisoned while in Pakistan, Swat, Bajor, Mehmand, Khaibar, Karam, Orakzai, Pashtons from Waziristan to Baluchistan, Ballauchi, Sindhi, Punjabi, Saraiki, Hazara and Kashmir Muslims going through shameful acts. ***Therefore all oppressed Muslims are praying that this Corona virus or other affliction must infect rulers of Pakistan and their friends and this virus should be there forever.***

**Mr. PM, if not Corona at least control inflation, Muhammad Akram Chaudhry, Nawa-i-Waqt, 27 April<sup>28</sup>**

Inflation has been hardly a serious issue for governments in Pakistan. That is why we see no decrease in the prices of essential commodities since 2018. With the start of holy month of Ramadan, prices of vegetables, pulses, flour, sugar, meat and fruits are skyrocketing. ***Only thinking about and issuing statements by Prime Minister Imran Khan are not going to bring the prices under control. The rise in sugar prices is because it is controlled by mafia.*** Experts in the government should come out of their offices and visit markets to check the prices of these things (*lekin hakumat ke a'dad-o-shuma'ar ke mahir thunde kamroo mei ba'th kar file-oon ko upper-niche karne ke bajye sabzi mandi jayein, kisi bazaar mei jayein tu unehin andaza hoo ki sabzyoon aur faloo ki kimatein kya hai*). For example, lemon and garlic are sold at 600/kg; apple 250/kg; banana 150 to 200/dozen, etc. In Quetta, mutton is sold at 1100/kg while the government rate is 780/kg. The recent inflation has hit hard common people. ***Does the Prime Minister have any answer to the questions and troubles of these people? This is complete failure of the government; unconcern of the ministers. The inflation is because of negligence of important people. The trouble is because of the people who were voted to power with hope that they would get people some relief*** (*yeh [inflation] mukamal toor per hakumat ni nakami hai. Yeh wuzraa' ki adam-dilchuspi hai. Yeh mehngai aham afraad ki adam tawjah ke ba'es hai. Yeh mesebat enki wajah se hai jinhein najaat*

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2020-04-27/page-3/detail-4>



*dehenda samajh kar vote deye gaye the*). On the one hand, Corona virus pandemic has crippled all businesses. Daily wagers are facing unemployment. On the other hand, there is high inflation. On all this, there seems no government working in the country. *Close members of the Prime Minister are sitting in closed AC rooms. They issue statements from their cozy places. People are looking at Imran Khan. When will he listen to these people?* Will he be able to overcome the forces/mafia sitting around him and work for people that voted for him with hope!

### **Increasing rush at public places, Editorial, Jang, 27 April<sup>29</sup>**

Different groups of doctors, apart from PMDC, have said that the number of COVID-19 cases is going to increase in coming days. It is unfortunate that people think because the number has been under control so far they can violate social distancing. They should not forget that the most affected countries were of the same view. They violated social distancing which resulted in havoc. *Lockdown has been extended in Pakistan in view of the rising cases. However, it is seen that people are visiting markets and mosques in large numbers. They are violating the lockdown. It is true that Pakistan cannot afford complete lockdown. Over 14 percent population in the country is below poverty line. Because of the Corona virus pandemic, the number may increase by 10 percent. If lockdown is relaxed, the number of cases and deaths may increase. And if strict lockdown is imposed that will create problem for the poor. They may come on roads, creating more problems.* The need of the hour is that all religious and civil society groups be briefed about the gravity of the situation. They need to be asked to maintain the purpose of the lockdown.

### **What happened to PTI's sensitivities? Nasim Shaihd, Roznama Pakistan, 28 April<sup>30</sup>**

Many PTI-workers are celebrating 24<sup>th</sup> foundational day of the party with less fanfare due to Corona virus pandemic. PTI has been successful to form the government in the country. *I recall getting thanks-giving calls from Imran Khan on writing columns in his favour. Imran used to say that media was ignoring him.* What happened to the people who were standing with Imran Khan then? PTI is full of parachuters now. The original workers are not seen anywhere. *I burst into laughter on seeing people like Firdous Ashiq Awan, Shehbaz Gul, Afzal Chun, Mehmood Qureshi, Sheikh Rasheed and others to*

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<sup>29</sup>[https://jang.com.pk/news/763906?\\_ga=2.243788290.624610242.1587959715-1172285561.1585539487](https://jang.com.pk/news/763906?_ga=2.243788290.624610242.1587959715-1172285561.1585539487)

<sup>30</sup> <https://dailypakistan.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-04-28/page-9/detail-1>



*praise Imran Khan.* All these people came from PML-N or PPP. What happened to PTI ideology and its sensitivity? It is true that only commander takes final decision. *Can Imran Khan act like that? He is surrounded by traditional politicians. Imran Khan cannot even touch the ministers and party members those are found involved in sugar crisis. Jehnagir Tareen is right when he said that if Imran would not have taken dynast politicians along, he would not have been able to form the government. Question is when Imran Khan became Prime Minister by colluding with the people against whom he was standing at the first place, how can he be called a person of ideology?* (ab sawal yeh hai ki jis mooresi siyasat ke khilaf Imran Khan 22 saal ladne ka dawwa karte hain, es ke numayudoo hi se agar iqtidaar ki bheek maang ke wazir-e-azam bane hain tu kaise kaha jaye ki who nazaryati aadmi hain). When one sees the members of PTI today, it does not look the party that fought against the system for 22 years. Unlike in PPP and PML-N regimes, it is unfortunate that the members/ministers of PTI are in collaboration with bureaucracy. Bureaucracy has been given complete power. In Punjab, it is the reason for bad governance. If this was to be the result of 22 years of struggle, then one feels ashamed.

### **Inevitable change, Editorial, Roznama Express, 29 April<sup>31</sup>**

At a time when the country is facing fifth-generation war from its enemies, Prime Minister Imran Khan's decision to appoint a former general as special assistant in information ministry is welcome decision. *Gen (R) Asim Bajwa's appointment is meant to state clearly the country's policy, to defend regional and international interests, and to swift out lies from truth to improve the image of Pakistan.* Prime Minister has also replaced Firdous Ashiq Awan with Senator Shibli Faraz as minister of information and broadcasting. *At a time when Hinduota forces in India and the government in New Delhi are pouncing on its "enemies" and are targeting Muslims (in India) by accusing them of "corona jihad", when these forces are aggressively depriving Kashmiris of their identity, doing everything to sabotage peace process in Afghanistan, and when our enemies are trying their best to target CPEC, the appointment of Gen (R) Asim Bajwa in the information and broadcasting ministry seems most appropriate and sane decision.* He is apt for the post (Asim Bajwa ki taqreeri ka es se behtar aur koi waqat hu hi nhi sakta. Es mei koi doo rai hi hai ki Asim Bajwa ki taqreeri na gurez thi). He has served with three army chiefs and has complete knowledge of hybrid warfare and new war strategy. Asim Bajwa is articulate and knowledgeable person and is expert in image building. He will do justice to the post.

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<sup>31</sup>[https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107392918&Issue=NP\\_ISB&Date=20200429](https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107392918&Issue=NP_ISB&Date=20200429)

**Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Debate on the Corona Tiger Force, Geo News 08 April<sup>32</sup>**

The guests on this show are Usman Dar, PTI; Tariq Faisal Chaudhary, PML-N and Senator Mustafa Nawaz Kokar of the PPP. Hamid Mir opens the debate and underlines that the Corona Tigers Force has been widely criticized as a political gimmick by the PTI government. *Pointing towards Usman Dar he asks you have said more than 7 Lakh have registered for the force so far, who are these people?* Usman Dar answers that it is true and we are expecting more than 10 Lakh registrations for the force till the last date. They include students, engineers, teachers, medical workers and retired armed force. The registration is still open and the number will go up. The youth registered from their districts will work in their respective regions. Even the opposition supporting youths or leaders can join the force. The people who could not register in the rural areas, the tigers will go and register them in the force. *Tariq Faisal Chaudhary of the PML-N points out two things is important for the tiger force, first the way of selection and second mechanism adopted. On paper it looks attractive but implementation will be a problem. It is an irony that the PTI government promised one crore jobs for the same youth they are now targeting to volunteer as tiger force. Also the name of the force could be Pakistan force, not tiger.* Additionally the time is critical and there is no time to train a new force. *Senator Mustafa Nawaz Kokkar, Translator of Bilawal Bhutto PPP underlines the idea of having a force is a novel one but training them, providing them uniform, protective gear will be a weigh down on the already burdened economy. He points out instead of making a force; the government can use existing structures to fight the pandemic, for example health workers and teachers.*

**Sethi Se Sawal, Who will come after Imran? Najam Sethi Official, 11 April<sup>33</sup>**

In this episode latest episode of Sethi se Sawal Najam Sethi answers questions from viewers on possibility for regime change in Pakistan, the circumstances that may lead to such a change and who will take over after Imran?

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLNQft3tchk>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eGjKRbb0v0>

***Q: Can Imran Khan Government complete five years? Will there be any forward bloc as there is news that Imran Khan's close associate Jahangir Khan Tareen is not so happy with the PTI government?***

**A:** There are indeed lots of discussions on this topic in the Pakistan media and questions are asked if Imran Khan will be dismantled within 30 days. These kinds of signals were also there when Maulana Fazl-Ur-Rehman led the protest against the PTI government. But things were settled and no action was taken by establishment (army) as it continued working with Imran Khan. But Imran Khan Government did not improve and was unable to improve its governance and hence yet again in this time of crisis the rumor mills are on about a possible change of government in Pakistan. But there is complete silence from the establishment side, there was a time when army and Imran Khan use to say they are on the same page on issues but it looks like the unity is gone. Since 18 months of its government the PTI has failed to deliver results and Imran Khan is also acting very stubbornly as he is not listening to the army. The establishment indicated that they want change in the Punjab government and some new leader should be brought in place of Usman Buzdar but Imran Khan did not listen and Buzdar still continues to rule and ruin Punjab.

***Q: Who will replace Imran Khan?***

**A:** Even though the establishment can bring change in 15 days by forming a forward bloc and bring a national government. But it has very limited options for replacement of Imran. Army has already burn bridges with Nawaz Sharif and even if they are thinking to bring in Shehbaz Sharif, the vote bank and public support lies with Nawaz Sharif. So the problem is will the PML-N support a national government. Especially in times of crisis like this, COVID-19 and the worst economic situation that will be ready to take responsibility? In case, there is a public movement against PTI, and there are riots in the country, then the establishment can think of replacing Imran, otherwise they will continue with him till the situation becomes bit normal.

**Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, The fight between Federal and Provincial government, Geo News, 15 April<sup>34</sup>**

In this latest episode of the Capital Talk, Hamid Mir discuss disconnect between the federal and provincial government in working on a common policy to fight the pandemic. ***The main points are,*** First, while the federal government has announced that it will continue with a relaxed lockdown, opening low risk industries but the Sindh government has announced complete lockdown not agreeing yet again to the federal government.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uudH6x3kFY>

*Second*, the Federal government has charge sheeted the Sindh government for not agreeing to the federal government policies on the containment of the lockdown. Dr. Shehbaz Gill of the PTI on this programme argues that Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah is continuously doing politics on the issue. First he thank Ali Baba cooperation for the Kits and then later the CM said that the kits are not working and that they are sending back 20, 000 kits back to the federal government. Shehbaz Gill also underlines that under the 18 amendment, Sindh has power to take decisions so why CM is making a big deal out of it, rather than taking decisions on their own. *Third*, Nasir Hussain Shah of the PML-N brings in the point related to the money released to the needy and poor under the Ehsaas program. He underlines that in Sindh and many other provinces, the sum of total 12, 000 rupees given out to the needy is not given in the full amount. The officials are taking 500 or 600 Rupees out of the amount meant for the poor.

**On the Front with Kamran Shahid, Governments decision on opening up Mosque during Ramazan, *Dunya News*, 20 April<sup>35</sup>**

On this episode the Anchor analyze the government's decision to review and allow prayers in mosque during Ramazan and open Mosques for prayers from this Friday. *The main points are, First*, Muslim countries have closed Mosques for Friday prayers and Ramazan Taraweeh nimaz but the PTI government has given into the pressure and has appointed religious scholars to oversee the congregational prayers during Ramazan. *The anchor argues that it is not the responsibility of the Ulema to take care of the health of the people but of the government and it has failed miserably in protecting them.* *Second*, After a consultative meeting between religious scholars and President Arif Alvi, this decision was taken and a 20 point plan was approved for preventive measures against the virus during the prayers. *Mosques committees are asked to form congregational rows by maintain a distance of six feet and underlined that people above age of 50 are not allowed in the mosque.* But the anchor underlines, who will make sure they will not attend mosque prayers? He says that people will come to the mosques on the basis of faith or other reason and no one can stop them if the mosques are open. Who will control them, rangers or Police? *The Ulema, Muhammad Taqi Usmani said we have talked about 3 feet gap not 6 feet that means already confusion has been created.* *Third*, The Anchor asks Ali Mohammad Khan (PTI), Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs guest on the show about the government's decision and underlines why have you taken this step, the truth

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2ppKVBE-XY>

is that you have not looked at Saudi, Malaysia, Turkey and other Muslim countries who have decided to continue with ban on prayers in mosques even during Ramazan? The Minister replies by saying that he is happy that the government and the Ulema's *met and came out with a balanced decision with conditions on opening the mosques during Ramazan. He says there is no complete lockdown in any part of Pakistan, not even in Sindh and if we impose a complete lockdown then not Corona but people will definitely die of hunger.* He said as an independent country we are free to take our own decisions, irrespective of any Muslim country. *Fourth*, Dr. Musadiq Malik, PML-N on this show underlines Pakistan is going in a wrong direction, the cases of virus are going up and we are talking about opening up the country. The main point is that there is no lockdown in Pakistan as everything is open except Schools. *In Saudi Arabia everything is closed, even the Haj pilgrim is closed. The government is pushing the people towards the door of death by opening the country amid the crisis.* *Fifth*, Kamran Kara, PPP informs that WHO underlines that the only best practice is lockdown. Ulema has pressured the government, as all other sectors are open why not mosques. He says that Ulema are not responsible to take decisions but the elected government has the right. We have a compromised government.

**Off the Record with Kashif Abbasi, Need for change in 18 Amendment: PTI Government, ARYNews, 27 April<sup>36</sup>**

Lately the noises in the PTI government is getting louder for a change in the provisions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment amid the increasing differences between the centre and provisional governments on the issue of lockdown, especially with Sindh. On this episode the host asks why there is a sudden need for the urge to revisit the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. *The main points are, First*, there are two views in Pakistan and the media too is divided between these two views. One, in favour of complete lockdown led by Sindh government and the other not in favour of complete lockdown, this view led by federal government. *Second*, Bilawal Bhutto in a recent interview with BBC criticizing the PTI government underlined the need for independent decision making for the provinces. Shazia Murrey, PPP leader and one of the guests on this show underlines that Pakistan needs a global strategy to tackle the issue of the pandemic but the truth is that the centre has not been able to formulate a common strategy with the four provinces, AJK and GB. *She stresses that the*

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiLsC63IP3E>



*whole world is saying that lockdown is the only solution, why PTI government is only pin pointing Sindh government's strategy of lockdown. Second, the host asks Murray, are you saying that Sindh government's solution is the only one and that Federal government is wrong? She underlines, that PPP has always stressed for uniform policy. The government cannot bear the fact that Sindh government has followed a global strategy to fight the virus for which it has been appreciated. Taftan blunder was due to centers mis-management she adds. Third, Shafaqat Mehmood, Senior leader of the PTI reacts to Shazia Murray's statement and says that the Sindh government has the right to take an independent decision and they can disagree to follow the 20 point SOPs announced by the centre and also they can close the border. From one month we are discussing the lockdown, but why do not we ask what the businessman, traders, labourers and poor of the country want. I think the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment should be reviewed as we cannot afford to have a different policy for each province, for example schools should be taught according to one curriculum. Problem is that Sindh is always playing politics. Fourth, Musadiq Malik of the PML-N on this show argues that the centre can say that provinces can act independent but until they provide federal fund, the provinces cannot succeed in doing its duty. There are issues between Sindh and government because for making lockdown successful Sindh will need federal money to provide ration and help to the people otherwise it will fail. Now that Pakistan government has received fund from IMF and also there are announcements that debt will be delayed or reduced, so the PTI government can use or divert the money to help the people during the lockdown. But the real question is, does the PTI government want to give the money to exporters or to the poor?*

**On the Front with Kamran Shahid, PTI government's failure to fight the Pandemic, *Dunya News*, 29 April<sup>37</sup>**

On this latest episode, there is a discussion on if Pakistan is under-testing, especially in Punjab? Why there is carelessness and confusion on the part of the government? The guests are Dr Salman Haseeb, Head, grand health alliance, Ali Nawaz Awan, PTI; Dr. Musadiq Malik, PML-N and Chaudhary Manzoor Ahmad, PPP. *Kamran Shahid* starts by pointing to the wrong signalling of the government ministers. *Recent ally Punjab CM Usman Buzdar did not follow the social distancing norm and was without mask while inaugurating Corona Tiger Force in Punjab. Even Firdous Ashiq Awan was seen without mask while they all where posing together for group photo.*

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GvJFwVFSDY>

**Dr Salman Haseeb:** Head, Grand Health Alliance: He informs that there were press conferences of doctors in most part of Pakistan including Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Balochistan and Sindh pleading the government to act against opening up the lockdown. He informs that there has been no such press conference by doctors in Punjab *and underlines that Punjab is under reporting the number of cases and that more than 200 paramedics in Punjab are reported positive. He adds that the doctors and paramedics are protesting that they are not getting the minimum required PPE.* He rejects the claims of the Punjab government that they have build COVID hospital like Wuhan did in one week and informs that it is just a hotel without any basis amenities. *Ali Nawaz Awan, PTI claims that out of the South Asian countries, Pakistan is performing the largest number of test and that the government is in the stage of enhancing the capacity.* However he underlines that the government is making sure test is performed on people who are showing symptoms. *On asked why Punjab is doing less test then Sindh, he replies that we have not gone yet towards mass testing or random testing.* He informs that the chief secretaries of the four provinces every day discuss the issue of testing and we are also considering asymptotic cases also now. But he did not tell about if POK and GB secretaries too join the meeting or not. *Dr. Musadiq Malik, PML-N argues that the PTI government has given up at this stage and opened up the whole country except malls. In Lahore the traffic is running as on a normal day and there are traffic jams in the city. He underlines that Corona has given the PTI government an opportunity to temper with the 18 amendment and empower the federal government to dictate terms to the provinces, not vice versa.* In other parts of the world the center is giving money to the states to fight the pandemic but in Pakistan the centre is telling Sindh take your independent decision but not giving the fund to tackle with the pandemic. He underlines that the money given by the IMF should be equally distributed between the provinces. *Chaudhary Manzoor Ahmad, PPP asks how much test the Punjab government is doing, he informs that 21 Lady Doctors in Lahore has been diagnosed positive and even then Lahore is open without any lockdown. He adds that the government can hide number of testing but not casualties. He underlines that Imran Khan Government want to move towards herd immunity and let everyone get infected so that they can become immune themselves and letting the others die.*



## BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
<b>KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)</b>				
North Waziristan <sup>38</sup>	13/04/2020	Soldier martyred, two terrorists killed in North Waziristan operation	00	03
North Waziristan <sup>39</sup>	14/04/2020	Army soldier martyred in North Waziristan operation	00	01
North Waziristan <sup>40</sup>	20/04/2020	Army soldier martyred, three injured in North Waziristan terrorist attack	01	03
North Waziristan <sup>41</sup>	27/04/2020	Two soldiers martyred, nine terrorists killed during IBO in North Waziristan	11	05

<sup>38</sup><https://tribune.com.pk/story/2197254/1-soldier-martyred-two-terrorists-killed-north-waziristan-operation/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2197895/1-army-soldier-martyred-north-waziristan-operation/>

<sup>40</sup><https://tribune.com.pk/story/2202291/1-army-soldier-martyred-three-injured-north-waziristan-terrorist-attack/>

<sup>41</sup><https://dailytimes.com.pk/603026/two-soldiers-martyred-nine-terrorists-killed-during-ibo-in-north-waziristan/>



# PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

May 2020

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

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, May 2020

CONTENTS

<b>POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS</b> .....	06
<b>ECONOMIC ISSUES</b> .....	09
<b>SECURITY SITUATION</b> .....	13
<b>PROVINCES &amp; REGIONS</b>	
GB .....	15
<b>URDU &amp; ELECTRONIC MEDIA</b>	
Urdu .....	19
Electronic .....	25
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES .....	28

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

### **The PM and the 'elite', Editorial, Daily Times, 04 May<sup>1</sup>**

Yet again the prime minister has made his own government's lockdown strategy, to combat the spread of the coronavirus of course; controversial by saying it was imposed by the "elite" without the slightest regard for the common man. Now, it's been a good couple of days since the not-so-enlightening observation yet nobody's any wiser about what the prime minister really meant. *And who really is the "elite" of the country that somehow hijacked his own government and went ahead with the lockdown despite the prime minister's strong objections?* If he means previous governments, since he holds them accountable for practically everything that is wrong with the country, even the response to the coronavirus, then surely he means only the previous Nawaz Sharif government. Surely he couldn't have found much wrong with the dispensations before Nawaz 3.0 *since many of their senior leaders are members of Imran's cabinet as well. And even many of the core PTI followers, those that have been around a very long time and have not been affiliated with too many other parties, have sizeable bank accounts to boast.* All these things considered it behoves Prime Minister Imran Khan to display a little more solid leadership than his usual style of not caring about what he says as long as somebody else, preferably the opposition, gets all the blame.

### **Lockdown answers, Editorial, Dawn, 05 May<sup>2</sup>**

*Pakistan's confirmed coronavirus cases have crossed the 20, 500 mark with over 450 recorded deaths. These figures have been calculated after a total of 212,000 tests, with maximum daily testing at 9,500.* At this rate, and with some lockdown restrictions still in place, nearly 10pc of those being tested are confirmed positive and 2pc of them are dying. If restrictions are lifted, these figures will worsen, because unlike traffic accidents, the number of coronavirus cases can expand exponentially. An individual with the virus can infect two to three others, and those infected can in turn transmit it to many more. If we are looking at a confirmed death rate of two out of every 100 right now, a situation in which millions are confirmed as having infections may result in a high number of deaths in a population where diabetes, heart disease and cancer are not uncommon. *Our hospitals are simply not equipped to handle such a high volume of critical cases.* The government is still too far from its goal of 25,000 daily tests and therefore unaware of the true spread of infection.

### **Whose policy is it anyway? Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 06 May<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/606435/the-pm-and-the-elite/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1554656/lockdown-answers>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1554941/whose-policy-is-it-anyway>

The leadership's whimsical approach is the biggest impediment in the way of formulating a more rational and holistic strategy that is required to deal with public health and economic challenges simultaneously. In fact, those in charge have never seriously considered the crisis primarily as a public health issue. *By blaming some imaginary force for a policy that has the approval of all stakeholders, the prime minister can only undermine his own authority, for many people will see it as an admission of things slipping out of his control.* It's true that the prime minister has never been convinced about the necessity for a lockdown. But his recent remarks were disturbing. Most worrisome is the fact that a large number of Pakistani expatriates brought back especially from the Gulf countries have been diagnosed with Covid-19. The theory that Pakistan with its large youth population and warmer climate may not be as badly hit as other countries has yet to be substantiated. Trivializing the danger could be disastrous. *Instead of uniting the country to deal with the challenge, the federal government's policy has widened divisions.*

#### **Irresponsibility on part of leaders, Editorial, Daily Times, 08 May<sup>4</sup>**

*It just beggars belief that the federal and Sindh governments still haven't agreed on the necessity of the lockdown, or lack thereof. From Sindh's point of view especially, the frustration is understandable.* They won points down south for taking timely steps, especially going further than other provinces and also closing down mosques even for Ramazan, but they also kept complaining that the attitude of the centre compromised their lockdown to a large extent. *When the prime minister is encouraging people to go out and about, surely a lot of people will do so no matter what Karachi says.* And so, complains Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, their plan of locking down firmly, so the virus doesn't spread, and then opening up slowly was diluted by none other than the ruling party of the country. And since then the two parties have been at loggerheads. It's a shame, really, that the country's leaders put self-interest and even their giant egos ahead of the people's most pressing concerns. PM Khan has been dead against talking to any party of the opposition simply because he knows in his heart, from the looks of things, that everybody in any party other than his is just completely corrupt and it is beneath him to engage with them. *Everything changes, of course, when the same people jump ship and join Imran Khan's party.*

#### **May Day! May Day! Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 09 May<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/608404/irresponsibility-on-part-of-leaders/>

*Thus Imran Khan has been making his own counter moves on the chessboard. When there was talk of some sort of “deal” in the offing between the Miltablishment and the Sharif’s for regime change, he put a spoke in the wheel by stopping Maryam Nawaz from joining her father abroad, arresting party stalwarts, and launching corruption cases against Shahbaz Sharif and his sons. When the Sindh Chief Minister, Murad Ali Shah, was earning kudos for following the Miltablishment’s lockdown advice, the PM sent in his hounds to sic him and derail his policies. Now he has made bold to turn his guns on the Chaudhries of Gujarat even though they hold the balance of the PTI government in the Punjab. Why is that? At every stage, the Chaudhries have jockeyed for more power in the Punjab, even flirting with the opposition outside the Assembly and being soft on them inside it. Now the pressure to change CM Buzdar has increased. So Imran Khan has decided to dangle the sword of Damocles on the head of the Chaudhries by digging up a dead case from 2000 so that they should stop conspiring for the coveted position. **This is killing two birds with one stone. He is stopping them in their tracks while sending out a message to his loyal followers that he is also holding the corrupt within his ranks accountable rather than only victimizing the opposition. This is gamesmanship.***

**PTI’s annual 18th Amendment debate, Hassan Niazi, *The Express Tribune*, 12 May<sup>6</sup>**

*Whenever the PTI faces criticism for its response to national issues, its rank and file appears on television to deliver a stump speech blaming the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Sometimes, they even start contemplating more drastic changes to our constitutional system, such as the last year’s debate on whether Pakistan should adopt a presidential model of government. **This spell of daydreaming is interrupted by reality reminding members of the PTI that they do not have the numbers to amend the Constitution. Provincial autonomy was something that the PTI celebrated after the 2013 elections when it won Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) but not the federal government.** Now when the tables have turned, they appear to hate it, shocked at the fact that the Constitution puts curbs on their power. But that’s how a federation works. The Centre can’t rule over the provinces like colonies — an issue that was partly to blame for the split of Bangladesh in 1971. The PTI’s frustration with the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment comes from its victory in 2018 being less than ideal. Winning the National Assembly by a minuscule margin forced it to contemplate working with the opposition. **And the inability to win Sindh meant that the PPP could trace its own path independent of the federal government.** Critics of the*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/may-day-may-day/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2219335/6-ptis-annual-18th-amendment-debate/>



18<sup>th</sup> Amendment should understand that the PTI did not win the Sindh government. As per our Constitution, that means the province has autonomy no matter how much this may frustrate the Centre. *To tear down the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment on this basis is ludicrous. It would put individual rule on a higher pedestal than institutional development.*

### **State of anarchy, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 20 May<sup>7</sup>**

The court's observation appears contrary to the WHO's declaration of Covid-19 as a global pandemic. *Pakistan would perhaps be the only country in denial about the pandemic. That raises questions about the measures that are required to deal with this unprecedented public health challenge.* How can the citizens be expected to follow the rules if they are made to believe that there is no contagion threatening their lives? Seemingly encouraged by the Supreme Court order, the clerics are also set to defy the rules and are saying they will open mosques for prayers. *A statement signed by a group of leading clerics said that since nothing was sure about the coronavirus pandemic, Muslims couldn't leave religious rituals out of fear.* Interestingly, the federal government has not only been actively backing the clerics threatening to defy the ban on congregational prayers, but also inciting traders to violate the restrictions imposed by the Sindh government. Now some are calling for imposition of governor's rule in the province. When the country needs unity more than at any other time, the ruling party is doing everything to intensify political polarization in the country. *It is apparent that the federal leadership lacks seriousness and is not able to effectively deal with the existential crisis. It has unnecessarily created a controversy by putting the economy before public health.*

### **Sugar probe, Editorial, Dawn, 27 May<sup>8</sup>**

The government of Prime Minister Imran Khan is being commended for sharing with the public the findings of the FIA-led inquiry commission set up last month to conduct a forensic analysis of nine sugar companies to determine the reasons for an abrupt and steep surge in the domestic price of sugar during the winter. *Even the alleged involvement of some key politicians — or their close relatives — linked to the PTI government and its allies at the centre and in Punjab did not deter Mr. Khan from ordering a more thorough probe and making its conclusions public.* The commission has failed to pin responsibility for letting the industry export sugar and claim substantial subsidy. The official argument is that the ECC allowed the export of 'surplus' sugar and Punjab announced a subsidy on it in the wake of

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1558447/state-of-anarchy>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1559648/sugar-probe>

farmers' protest against the mill owners' refusal to start the crushing season on the appointed date. *It does not hold much water because it is the government's job to implement the law and not crumble under pressure from vested interests. Those who cannot withstand such pressure will only be looked upon as having failed the people.*

## ECONOMIC ISSUES

**Debt Relief, Editorial, Dawn, 22 May<sup>9</sup>**

*Pakistan is on the verge of receiving debt relief under the G20 plan and according to an official announcement the total amount is \$2bn. There is a possibility that this amount will increase if the period of coverage is extended beyond December 2020. At the moment, the relief is being extended to loans from bilateral creditors, accompanied by a call from the G20 to private creditors to also offer "comparable terms". Now that the relief is imminent, it is important to emphasize that it be utilized in a manner consistent with the rationale under which it has been offered. The G20 moved at the behest of the multilateral creditors, the World Bank and the IMF, and all three have made it very clear that the resources they seek to free up are to be utilized for the fight against the coronavirus. One part of this fight is the management of the economic fallout that the pandemic and its attendant mitigation efforts have created. But in significant measure, resources are required for social protection and ramped-up health investments.*

## SECURITY SITUATION

**Is Pakistan considering herd immunity? Fahd Husain, Dawn, 13 May<sup>10</sup>**

*As life returns to semi-normalcy with the easing of lockdown by the government, there is heightened concern that Pakistan may be opening up too soon and too fast and pushing policy inadvertently towards 'herd immunity' against Covid-19. No government in the world has publicly supported the case for herd immunity because of the huge risk to human life it entails. The concept centres around enough people in the population – as many as 70 per*

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1558894/debt-relief>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1556710/is-pakistan-considering-herd-immunity>

cent in the case of Covid-19 – getting infected thereby building up their immunity to the virus. With an overwhelming majority having developed such immunity, the rest of the population would be much more secure and the infection would gradually fade away. In Pakistan, too, no official admits that herd immunity has been discussed as a policy option. These officials – *while denying that the actual concept of herd immunity has been discussed in meetings – maintain that immunity will kick in sooner or later and that along with the already relatively low mortality rate will ensure the Covid-19 situation remains under control.* “Everyone will get herd immunity ultimately as the virus runs its course,” says an official.

### **NAB’s politics, Editorial, Dawn, 15 May<sup>11</sup>**

*The National Accountability Bureau has stepped up its investigations against the PML-N president Shahbaz Sharif and has been summoning him for interrogations on a regular basis.* The PML-N has termed these allegations a pack of lies and reiterated its position that NAB is unleashing persecution on opposition members including Shahbaz Sharif at the behest of the government. In the meantime, NAB has once again summoned former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi despite the fact that nothing substantive has been brought out against him in a court of law. Politics, it seems, is heating up in sync with the alarming Covid-19 situation. There is much that does not add up here. *The conduct of NAB has become so controversial that it is very difficult to believe that its actions are not laced with partisan politicking.* This perception is solidified every time opposition leaders are hauled up on flimsy charges while government ministers charged with similar offences are left alone. NAB has done itself no favours by refusing to nullify this negative perception. On the contrary, the bureau has stepped up its activities against those who are opposed to the PTI government. *This is unfortunate because NAB is a taxpayer-funded organisation that is mandated to carry out accountability in a manner that is impartial.* In this respect, NAB has been a spectacular failure. Similarly, the PTI government has done a disservice to the cause of accountability by subordinating it to the political interests of the party leadership.

### **Terrorism under Covid-19, Muhammad Amir Rana, Dawn, 17 May<sup>12</sup>**

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1557233/nabs-politics>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1557728/terrorism-under-covid-19>

Pakistan has also seen a slight surge in terrorist attacks in the last two months, though it cannot be linked to the pandemic as there is no major shift from the pre-virus trends. *The merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and some parts of Balochistan have been hotspots of insecurity and violence for several months now. There have been concerns about the growing presence and activities of militants in parts of the tribal districts, mainly North and South Waziristan.* Most security incidents, including militant attacks, in recent weeks have been reported from areas closer to the Pak-Afghan border, such as Datta Khel. Militants may also be expanding their areas of presence and operation. Reportedly, the TTP and other militants were trying to hit their native towns to reclaim their lost *influence. Outfits like Jamaatul Ahrar could also try to regroup in their towns of origin, including Bajaur and Orakzai.* Questions are also being raised about the possible return of Pakistani Taliban militants sheltering across the border in Afghanistan who may want to relocate to their native towns in the tribal districts.

### **Waziristan murders, Editorial, Dawn, 20 May<sup>13</sup>**

*Last week, police received confirmed reports that two girls were murdered in a village bordering North and South Waziristan, purportedly to 'restore' their families' 'honour' after a mobile phone video of them began circulating on social media.* For such crimes to be committed today, despite all the shock and horror expressed over previous high-profile cases, and despite all of *Pakistan's legislative achievements and claims to uphold the rule of law, a culture of impunity for crimes against women must obviously remain entrenched in the hearts and minds of many in the far reaches of the land where the law dare not trespass.* Tribal 'custom' is a law unto itself, with the state apparatus abdicating practically all responsibility in pursuing legal action for gender-based crimes, and a public inured to brutality shrugging off or condoning the murder of yet another woman. MNA North Waziristan Mohsin Dawar said of the recent murders, *"Honour killings are an extreme expression of patriarchal violence, and the practice has to be condemned in the strongest terms ... timely justice must be served"*. More leaders must speak out for attitudes to change and justice to prevail.

### **One thousand and counting, Editorial, Daily Times, 21 May<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1558442/waziristan-murders>

<sup>14</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/615585/one-thousand-and-counting-daily-times/>

*Pakistan has now surpassed the grim milestone of one thousand deaths from the coronavirus. Government officials are right in claiming that the overall number of deaths here, compared to other countries, has been rather low. But then they should also see other data sets that are coming out, which indicate that Pakistan's daily count of new infections is now among the highest in the world. Let's not forget that all the time we are experimenting with the relaxation, the disease will be spreading and people, unfortunately, will be dying. Both infections and deaths have risen sharply over the last month or so, which shows a very disturbing trajectory. Medical authorities, whose murmurs of discontent about such verdicts have had to be kept within safe confines for obvious reasons, must now prepare for their own worst case scenario. It's one thing for authorities, or the court, to say that one thing didn't work out, despite the best intentions, so another can now be tried. But for doctors the fallout will overwhelm hospitals and deprive a lot of people suffering from other diseases of their services. On another front, it will also mean another shutdown and yet worse financial squeeze. The one thousand mark should provide authorities with a somber moment of reflection about what is really needed.*

**Fifth-generation war and Asim Bajwa's expertise, Assadullah Ghalib, *Nawai-Waqt*, 05 May<sup>15</sup>**

Gen (R) Asim Bajwa has resumed the office in information and broadcasting ministry at a time when journalism is in bad condition. Asim Bajwa has established himself as a fighter in the country against fifth-generation war. India has been continuously waging propaganda war against Pakistan. It did it in 1965 and 1971 wars. The propaganda was meant to attack morale of Pakistanis. *Now we have moved beyond fifth-generation war. I call it twenty-twenty generation war. Unfortunately the front is vacant in Pakistan. Thousands of journalists in Pakistan which can be effective in the front are jobless.* Many big media houses are closing down. Asim Bajwa knows the fact that being a nuclear power no one will dare to attack Pakistan. *We need to win mental and psychological battle. What can be the Corona virus pandemic called? Some call it biological warfare. Asim Bahwa needs to tell the people of Pakistan what is this pandemic? Why is every guideline of WHO being followed? Why have borders become irrelevant? It will be duty of Asim Bajwa to give hope to the people.* Inflation is high. People fear it may increase further. *Second target of corona is Islam. The Harmein Sharief, Haj and Umrah, mosques across the world are closed. This fifth generation war has targeted our fundamental belief: Our belief is our strength against enemy.* How will Asim Bajwa restore that belief? He knows

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2020-05-05/page-4/detail-5>

his stuff well and can succeed. I have lot of hopes from Gen (R) Asim Bajwa and pray for his success!

## PROVINCES & REGIONS

### GB

#### **Caretaker Govt in Gilgit Baltistan: Unprecedented Challenges amidst COVID 19, Sheraz Abdullah, *Pamir Times*, 28 May<sup>16</sup>**

The present Government of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) will complete its five years term on June 24th, 2020 and the next general elections for the Gilgit Baltistan Assembly will fall due within prescribed time thereafter depending on the situations in GB. In the absence of clarity for the rules of game for upcoming elections, once again Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCOP) intervened at the request of Federal Government and ordered to conduct the elections. *On April 30, a seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court in Islamabad, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Gulzar Ahmed, had allowed the government to organize general elections in GB, and to set up a caretaker government there before that.* The decision primarily focused on very important historical and constitutional issues involving the status, authority and powers of GB including the judiciary and the rights available to its people. *What was needed after that judgment back then was that all the political parties join the hands together and show their political willingness to let GB grow constitutionally.* Preventive measures and a nationwide dialogue including the representatives from GB and other state-owned institutions would have been held immediately to help implementing the recommendations emerging as a result of these dialogues. *The political leadership at GB and Federal Government failed to take necessary actions to implement a constitutionally understood framework and remained idle for almost five months till the time SCOP intervened once again at the request of the Federal Government.* The absence of Laws, Rules and Regulations to conduct elections and to put in place a caretaker set up to ensure that such elections are held under a neutral and impartial *Government providing a level playing field to all parties and candidates participating in the elections*

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<sup>16</sup><https://pamirtimes.net/2020/05/19/caretaker-govt-in-gilgit-baltistan-unprecedented-challenges-amidst-covid-19/>



would cause a constitutional vacuum which will create legal and constitutional complications.

## URDU MEDIA

**Why cannot 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment be changed?** Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 01 May<sup>17</sup>

On the proposal by the Government that the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment needs to be revisited, opposition has reacted strongly. Leader of JUI-F Maluna Fazl-ur Rehman has started to reach out to other parties and unite them against any such move by the Government. *The Moulana said that any change in the amendment will not be accepted.* The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed during PPP's regime in 2010. It divided authorities between the provinces and federal government. It gave the departments of health and education to provincial governments to run. Though the PML-N had also supported the amendment at that time but it expressed reservations during its rule at the centre. Even PPP has expressed its concerns on the appointments of Chief Election Commissioner and NAB chairman. PTI expressed its reservations about the amendment as soon as it came to power. *Indeed, the amendment it is not infallible. It is right of the parliament to amend the constitution according to democratic principles.* Information and broadcasting federal minister Shibli Faraz said that the amendment is not a God's word that cannot be touched. *PPP and ANP are opposing any tinkering with the amendment because they benefited the most from it (PPP aur ANP ki janab se es tarmeem mei rad-u-badal ki mehaz es liye mukhalifat ki ja rahi hai ki es tarmeem se sub se zayda enhein hi fayada phooncha).* *PML-N does not seem to be agreeing with PPP and other parties on the matter. Since any change in the amendment will require two/third majority, PTI can reach out to PML-N for support to see the change in the amendment through.* If the amendment is meeting the demands of the situation, it needs to change according to the constitution.

**Reasons for failure of 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment,** Muzamil Suherwardy, *Roznama Express*, 04 May<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2020-05-01/page-4/detail-9>

Debates on 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment are gaining momentum in the country. But it cannot be changed at will. Any change in the law requires two/third majority in the NA. ***PTI Government does not even enjoy simple majority. If PML-N joins hands with PTI, then the amendment can be changed.*** PPP takes credit for 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. But it could not deliver. Though it takes its share from NFC but PPP has not done anything on provincial finance commission. If PPP would have set a strong district level administration, had distributed funds fairly and set up provincial finance commission, no one would have raised question on the amendment. ANP was in power in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa when 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was brought in but the party failed to deliver. In Balochistan also regional parties did nothing to implement 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. In Punjab, then ruling party PML-N made a dummy municipal system in with no actual authority. ***Provincial governments are ready to drain resources from the center but would not give them to local administrations.*** These political parties want democracy in the country: They do not like democracy within the parties. ***Authoritarian forces in the country are unhappy with the amendment as they want a powerful center. They want control on resources. PTI itself says in a lighter vein that the establishment is part of the power in the center. Apparently it is civilian government but the remote is in the hands of the establishment.*** (yaqeenun mulik mei aameryut ki khawhaan quwatein es atharwein tarmeem se khush nhi hain. Kamzoor wifaaq per qabza kar ke enhoo ne kya kar na hai. Wasayil tu sub soboon ke pass hain. Tahreek-i-Insaf khud kehte huye muskarti hain ki es establishment es ke saath shreek-e-iqtidaar hai.) However, as long as the center is weak even remote will not be effective. By not implementing the amendment on the ground and not setting up municipality system, political parties have paved way for change in the amendment. Without local administration and municipality system 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment is ineffective. Both authoritarian forces and democratic forces do not want complete democracy. That is why both fail.

### **Pressure on PML-N for unconditional support on 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Report, Ummat, 05 May<sup>19</sup>**

Government has made the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment as its main target. ***PML-N is being brought under pressure for unconditional support to change some clauses in the amendment on provincial autonomy*** (Subai khud mukhtari se mutaliq es ayeeni tarmeem ki ba'az shaqoon mei tabdeli ki liye noon-legue per belamashroot taawoon ka sakht dabao hai). It is said that Shehbaz Sharif is facing arrest

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<sup>18</sup>[https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107406488&Issue=NP\\_ISB&Date=20200504](https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107406488&Issue=NP_ISB&Date=20200504)

<sup>19</sup> <http://ummat.net/2020/05/05/news.php?p=story2.gif>



threats because of that strategy. *According to a source, though PML-N is ready to cooperate in changing the amendment but it demands give and take formula. It wants that some change should be made in NAB also. That will give some relief to Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz.* The source said that apart from PML-N and PPP, PTI also agrees on the need to change the NAB ordinance. They had agreed to bring in the change but it got delayed. The debates on the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment have brought the issue back. However, Imran Khan and some of his close members do not support change in the NAB ordinance. They think it will help Nawaz Sharif and his daughter. Clause 15 is at debate in which anyone was declared ineligible after sentenced punishment by court. *However some members within PTI also want change in the clause as they are also under NAB's wrath.* According to the source, if the back channel talks between the government and PML-N fail, Shahbaz may be arrested by the Eid.

### **Neither fish nor flesh, nor good red herring, Editorial, Ummat, 15 May<sup>20</sup>**

Because of the confusion and discord between the federal and provincial governments on lockdown and policy to deal with Corona virus pandemic, many people, small businessmen, labours have become jobless and are starving. Many factories are closed. The relaxation in the lockdown before Eid has created more troubles. Prime Minister Imran Khan was right on not imposing complete lockdown in the country. *Many people in Pakistan live on daily earnings. They would go out for selling and buying if lockdown is eased, disregarding social distancing. This increases chances for spread of corona virus.* If normal work was allowed under strict law and ensuring all safety measures that would have helped in curbing spread of the virus. Instead allowing of markets to open for few hours for four days in a week has generated lot of rush. Police is unable to control the crowd. At many places clashes took place between police and people. *If shops were allowed to open in phases for 24 hours, that would have helped in controlling the rush. It would have also helped to manage the Eid rush. In contrast there are reports police is using opportunity to take money. Many politicians are asking for huge amounts for opening shops and businesses.* Eid is an occasion to greet and distribute freely among friends and needy. But because of the inefficient government policies there are all possibilities of confrontations. The people who sit at the top do not realize that how can people earn when transport continues to remain suspended. If the government really wants to help people it needs to shun its neither flesh nor fish policy.

### **How can we accept Israel? Prof Abu Zehra Sajidi, Ummat, 18 May<sup>21</sup>**

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<sup>20</sup> <http://ummat.net/2020/05/15/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

<sup>21</sup> <http://ummat.net/2020/05/18/news.php?p=idr2.gif>

Founding father of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah had criticized Israel after it was implanted in West Asia with the help of America and Britain. *The criticism was not for the sake of it: It had an ideology behind it. Jinnah knew that the state of Israel would displace the indigenous people and would subject them to violence.* In his brief stint as Governor General of Pakistan, Jinnah focused more on Israel than any other foreign policy issue. *He said that "Israel is a usurper state and Pakistan will never accept it" (Israel ek ga'asib riyasat hai aur Pakistan ese kabhi bhi tasleem nhi kare ga).* Only two states emerged on the name of particular ideologies: Israel and Pakistan. Pakistan was created for the Muslims of the sub-continent where they could practice their faith freely. Israel was created as a usurper state by expelling Palestinians for Jews across the world. *Israel considers only Pakistan as a threat to it. That is why it called our nuclear bomb "the Islamic Bomb". It established good relations with our arch enemy India and supports it on every anti-Pakistan policy (esi sabub Israel hi ne Pakistan ke nuclear bom ko Islami bom karar diya aur humare a'zli dushman Bharat ke saath intahayi kareebi talooqat qayim kar ke har mehaaz per Paksitan mukhalif sazishoo ke hawale se pushit panahi karta raha).* Some sections think that along with bringing down three Indian fighter jets in February last year, an Israeli jet was also brought down and the pilot was arrested. *Israel thinks Pakistan is a threat to it, as pointed by Avigdor Lieberman, former foreign minister of Israel. He said in an interview to a Russian paper that though Iran remains a threat to Israel but currently the issues in Pakistan and Afghanistan are more important. He said that Afghanistan and Pakistan are not threat only to Israel but to whole world.* People of Pakistan also support Palestinians. Following the history and feelings of the people, governments in Pakistan have never established relations with Israel. The policy will be continued and the "usurper state" will never be accepted.

**Ghani-Abdullah truce a welcome development, Editorial, Jang, 19 May<sup>22</sup>**

The truce between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah may bring an end to political uncertainty in Afghanistan. The political crisis had emerged after Abdullah had cried foul about the September 2019 national elections. *The truce between Ghani and Abdullah has raised possibility of peace in the country. For intra-Afghan dialogue to happen it was necessary that these two rivals should have come together.* According to the agreement, Ghani will remain the President but the cabinet will comprise of people nominated by the both. *Ghani has worked with Abdullah on similar working relationship in his last tenure as the president. The only difference is that the last agreement was mediated by the US but the current one is facilitated by Afghan political leaders.* Immediately after the truce, Abdullah wrote on tweeter that we need to work as one nation and resolve the issues (*ab humein ba'heseeyut qum ek saath kaam karna aur masaa'l ka kabil-e-amil hal talaash karna*

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<sup>22</sup>[https://jang.com.pk/news/772836?\\_ga=2.215158807.1439910392.1589780230-1172285561.1585539487](https://jang.com.pk/news/772836?_ga=2.215158807.1439910392.1589780230-1172285561.1585539487)

hai). FO of Pakistan, US foreign minister and representative of NATO have welcomed the development. It is hoped that now the intra-Afghan dialogue will be followed. May God help the two leaders to live up to the expectations of the Afghan people!

### **Fighting corona with faith and strategy, Editorial, Ummat, 27 May<sup>23</sup>**

After similar warning by the advisor on health to Prime Minister Imran Khan, information minister of Sindh Nasir Hussain has also said that if the number of COVID 19 sees an increase after Eid, complete lockdown may be re-imposed. The number of COVID 19 cases is continuously increasing in Pakistan. *The pandemic is also creating psychological and economic distress. This can lead to crisis in future. But instead of addressing the problem, politicians in Pakistan are busy in mudslinging. More dangerous is the conflict between the government and the religious sections (siasī ekhtilaf se bhi zayada khatarnaakh who intishaar hai jo hokumat aur deni halqoo ke mutazaad rawayoo ki wajah se pyada huwa hai).* Most of the population is illiterate. Due to the tussle between the government and the religious elite, it is not clear to the public whether the virus is a pandemic or a conspiracy. *Also the government allowed some sections to hold their public gatherings but stopped the majority community from offering nimaz in mosques. This has emboldened the sections who say that the government is operating under the influence of foreign forces.* Instead of opening market for limited hours, normal opening would have reduced the rush and also allowed police to control the crowd. It is hoped that the prime minister will advise his ministers and chief ministers of the provinces to fight the pandemic diligently rather than making people to panic.

### **China-US Cold War and Pakistan, Editorial, Jang, 28 May<sup>24</sup>**

Many analysts would have spotted centuries old views of Ibn Khaldun in the speech of EU foreign Minister Josep Borrell which he have gave to German diplomats the other day. Ibn Khaldun had said that any state, even the strongest has life span of 120 years. *Mr Borrell said that all signs are signaling China replacing US in the world affairs.* Therefore, EU will have to design a strong China policy. These words of Mr Borrell need to be seen in the context of corona virus pandemic, world economic crisis and political instability across the world and the change because of these factors. One

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<sup>23</sup> <http://ummat.net/2020/05/27/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

<sup>24</sup> [https://jang.com.pk/news/775841?\\_ga=2.98281624.604507992.1590469484-1172285561.158553948](https://jang.com.pk/news/775841?_ga=2.98281624.604507992.1590469484-1172285561.158553948)

such change is the reservations expressed by the EU against US' mudslinging at the WHO meeting. *The recriminations between the US and China are emerging as new cold war. Countries those have good relations with both the US and China need to walk carefully.* China is neighbour of Pakistan and partner in CPEC. It has stood by Pakistan in tough times. Beijing has helped Islamabad in fighting Corona virus pandemic as well. On the other hand, America has helped Pakistan right from the beginning. America and Pakistan are together making strong efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan has already paid price for taking sides during the Cold War. *At the moment, it can neither afford to ignore China because of its increasing technology and poverty reduction policy nor can it overlook the economic resources and technology of the US.* Apart from any challenges, security threats to Pakistani state are immediate concerns. Unless and until New Delhi agrees to address pending issues through dialogue, national security will remain priority. *At the time when New Delhi is trying to wage war with Pakistan, creating problems with Nepal and China and other neighbouring countries, all peace loving nations of the world should unite and support the weak and voiceless people of the world and stand for their rights.* They need to take decisions to ensure their survival, welfare and to deal with the challenges emerging because of the corona virus pandemic.

**Social distancing in mosques but absent in markets, Editorial, Daily Pakistan, 29 May<sup>25</sup>**

Saudi Arabia has decided to lift ban on offering nimaz in mosques except in Mecca. Riyadh has issued guidelines to be followed: there will be no eating, distance will be maintained, etc. *The guidelines issued by Riyadh are almost same that Pakistan had issued. Most of the prayerers followed the guidelines strictly. Some mosques were having sanitizer bottles and worshippers used to wash their hands while going and*

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<sup>25</sup> <https://dailypakistan.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-05-29/page-9/detail-3>

*leaving mosques.* In some places guidelines were not followed. It was failure of administration of these mosques. *While in markets all guidelines were thrown into dustbin. Because of that there is re-thinking going on about the relaxation that was given in lockdown before the Eid.* Women were seen shopping while carrying their young kids with them. They did not retrain from using henna. The rush seen in markets made mockery of the lockdown in the country. People were riding vehicles and motor bikes without any hesitation. *Unlike in other countries, in Pakistan nobody cares about lockdown and guidelines. People are visiting each other's houses freely.* Because of violating social distancing the number of COVID 19 cases has reached over 60,000. Islamabad is seeing highest number of cases despite being 100 percent literate city. This implies that citizens need to follow all guidelines strictly and do not endanger others' lives.

## ELECTRONIC MEDIA

**Sethi Sey Sawal, Q& A: Lockdown for the Elites?, Najam Sethi Official, 02 May<sup>26</sup>**

**Q:** *What does the PM Imran Khan means when he recently said that "Lockdown is for the elites" of the country?*

**A:** When the PM is saying, elites, is he talking about the business community or traders but if so then the business community is protesting against the lockdown as they want to open their business. So the point that elites want lockdown disproves here. The truth is that like the traders and business people he too was not in favour of the lockdown. If he wanted the PM could have applied complete lockdown in the beginning as the three provinces where PTI ruled, and Sindh was ready to go for complete lockdown. *But the issue was that the so called elites of the country did not wanted a complete lockdown and therefore PM who always side with the elites went with their wishes, thus creating a confusion against the word lockdown in the country.* Now the PM is playing politics and trying to show as if he is on the sides of the poor and public of the country and that the lockdown is a policy of and for the elites. He is trying to create an illusion of class struggle on the other hand the truth is that he is the biggest elitist siding with the elites. He is backing his whole theory of no lockdown on the poor and needy, but the question is what have you done for the poor in real? *PM changed the name of Benazir Income Support Programme to Ehsaas, took U-turns and did nothing for the poor in reality.* The truth is that all the efforts towards lockdown in the country was done by the directions of the establishment, PM was not on board and is doing politics in the name of corona tiger force, it is visible in Sindh. *Now there is no lockdown in the country, according a report 85%*

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbBAyyAI298>



*SOPs are not followed in the country and there is no social distancing. The religious and business elites ordered that they want to open for business and therefore PM obeyed and opened everything.* But the number is already peaking. There are fewer tests, no kits, the original kits are costly and people can't afford. If there is no testing, how will we know and even if people die how will we know how he died. There is no reporting's due to cultural reasons.

**Q: Will PTI temper with the 18 Amendment?**

**A:** The PTI has proposed that they want to open the 18 amendment and discuss on various aspects of it. On the other hand the opposition, excluding the PPP has said they are ready to discuss but if the PTI is thinking to roll back the 18 amendment or do major changes then they are not on board and will strongly protest. Sindh government has already said they are not at all ready to talk about it with government as they will be the most affected. *The actual problem is that the establishment/army is not happy with the major money being transferred to the provinces. The army believes that not enough money from the budget is saved for them when it is divided between federal and state, therefore they are eying budget for the army to be taken or diverted from the province fund.* The defence already takes 40% of the money in the name of national security and now they want additional money meant for the province and therefore they want to change this aspect of 18 amendments where the money goes to the provinces. *The provinces are already protesting that the army should not be given too much money as they also need money for development, health and education. The PTI will support the army in this issue and the PML-N will also not resist too much due to political pressures. The PPP will resist.*

**11th Hour with Waseem Badami, Interview of Ehsan Iqbal, Secretary General, PML-N, ARYNews, 05 May<sup>27</sup>**

**Q: The Railway Minister, Sheikh Rashid indicated in a press conference that the opposition is in touch with the government about making changes in the 18 amendment and NAB provisions. What is PML-N's take on this?**

**A:** Sheikh Rashid is the master in spreading disinformation and this has yet again come out of the rumour mills of the PTI government in Islamabad. PML-N is of the firm view that there is no connection between the NAB ordinance and 18 amendment, and that the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment was passed after the consensus of all the parties. If the government decides to roll it back now, it will have a negative impact. *The point is that had we been talking to the government through any channel, our leaders would*

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bis1NmZV37Q>



*not be behind bars still and NAB would not be sending summons to Shehbaz Sharif amid the pandemic. Therefore I want to make it clear that after God we are only in touch with the public.* The PM has said that the NAB has again handed over a list of opposition leaders, it means that the government will arrest opposition leaders who speak against the government but we are not scared even if he arrests all, Imran Khan is not capable of running the country.

**Q: Are you in favour of any change in the NAB ordinance?**

**A:** We are in favour of meaningful change in the NAB ordinance. NAB was created by Pervez Musharraf in accordance to a political agenda and it needs changes. But the problem is that the PTI is using it as tool to suppress the opposition and save the PTI leaders from the wrath of NAB, Sugar and wheat mafia are still roaming free and are not arrested under NAB even though the witness is out there. The PML-N has already entered a bill in the senate asking for meaningful change in the NAB. For example we have asked for 14 day remand in case of an arrest. *It has to be noted that people arrested in charge of terrorism are remanded for 14 days under NAB on the other hand all others arrested on bogus references are remanded for more than 14 days, sometimes a month which makes no sense.*

**Q: What has Shehbaz Sharif done as a party head after returning from London?**

**A:** Shehbaz Sharif mobilized the leaders on fighting the pandemic after coming back from London. We have donated protective kits to all the provinces. But the government has disagreed to sit with the opposition and it's there to see how PM is doing politics with Sindh. *It has to be noted that Shibli Faraz lashed out at the opposition for criticizing the government and said the opposition was only doing politics instead of helping the government in hours of need.* He said if the National Accountability Bureau called Shahbaz Sharif in any case, it had nothing to do with the government. "If NAB summons Shahbaz Sharif he must go because NAB is a law enforcement institution," he added.

**Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, Does PTI has a Strategy to open lockdown? ARYNews, 13 May<sup>28</sup>**

The host begins the discussion by underlining that the Pakistani's are on the street and market places and are not following the SOPs laid down by the government before easing the lockdown restrictions. *Shibli Faraz, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting* agrees that this will not work and if the people continue to crowd the markets and roads without following the

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrT2grlOjME>

SOPs then the government might go towards the strategy of reinforcing the lockdown as it was laid down by the PM. He argues that we have eased the lockdown for the poor people and cannot afford lockdown for a long period. There is a limit for the government to provide food and money to the people and the only option was to open the country for business. The opposition is playing pity politics, they said call parliament session to discuss issues and when the PTI did call a session there leaders like Shahbaz Sharif were not present in the session. *Khurram Dastgir of the PML-N* argues that from the start the PM said we are not ready to implement complete lockdown and that provinces are free to take their own decisions but when provinces like Sindh took the decision for complete lockdown, it started critiquing their actions. *According to me there should have been a strict lockdown from the start but there was no strategy of the government to contain the virus and still there is none, he adds. We really need to ask the PM and its team on what metric the lockdown was imposed and then removed? Chaudhary Manzoor of the PPP* underlines that the public follows their leader and in this case when its PM was not serious about lockdown from the beginning then why the people will take things seriously. *Government is saying Alhamdulillah less deaths as compared to other countries then how many deaths they want?* People who do not wear masks should be fined just like people without helmets and *most importantly the PM who is also the countries health minister should attend the parliament meetings and come out with a health policy statement.*

### **Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, Will NAB Arrest Shahbaz Sharif after Eid?** *ARYNews, 26 May<sup>29</sup>*

Kashif Abbasi underlines that NAB is not placed to expose and mudsling people, its main job is to get criminals convicted, file references through proper channel. Arshad Bhatti on this show predicts that Shahbaz Sharif will be arrested by NAB after Eid. Fahad Hussain another analyst underlines that the arrest of Shahbaz Sharif is political and if such arrest happen, the political motive behind it is still not clear. *He adds that NAB has a different approach to the ruling party and a very aggressive approach to the opposition and until and unless it has a uniform policy for all, the effectiveness of the NAB remains questionable.* Imran Khan, another guest analyst on the show claims that he has studied the Shahbaz Sharif case in details and arrest is for sure, until and unless someone chips in to help him out of the arrest. He adds that I have talked to the NAB, and they informed that now Shahbaz Sharif has disowned the property of his wife. Meher Bokhari another analyst on the show informs that Shahbaz Sharif's wife has been looking to sale her property in UK since eight months on a very low price that means something is wrong but not everything is admissible in the court of law.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1ZifzN3viE>

**On The Front with Kamran Shahid, PM Imran Khan: Report Card, *Dunya News*, 28 May<sup>30</sup>**

Since from the time Pakistan has come into being, politicians and governments have always been blamed for Sugar related frauds and corruption. In Pakistan which ever leader government has become popular has always faced insults. For example Nawaz Sharif's popularity took him behind bars and now in foreign country. So, there is a need to debate on the popularity of Imran Khan, his work in the 22 months in government and what will be his future? (*Pakistan mai jo popular kiyadat hai vo exile, phansi, goli ya jelo mai gayi hai*, meaning the popular leaders in Pakistan has either went to exile, faced bullets, or behind jails). **Rauf Klasara, Media Analyst:** I agree to your intro that in Pakistan the popular leaders have met with the worst fate and as you did not go into details of why and how, I would also not go in details. The leaders when they sit on their political chairs feel empowered and assume they are not answerable to any one and that the work of the public is just to vote. These popular leaders have not respected the institutions in place, not even judiciary and therefore their ends are scary. Second is media, these leaders

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnDpSVnul1I>

after crushing the judiciary try to suppress media and assume that it's their enemy. The Imran Khan government has now started this new narrative now, who is media to decide how government should function? In the sugar commission report many of the leaders of the PTI government has been named but no action has been taken against them, neither there are resignations from the posts. Imran Khan has hidden the cases against Jahangir Tareen due to conflict of interest. *Sana Baucha, Analyst:* PM Imran Khan has made the right enemies and he has got the right friends in the right places. He quickly understood that media is no ones friend and therefore instead of extending hands of friendship to media, he started to manage it. But all said and done the PTI government is there to stay for the whole five year term because right now there is no alternative. *Arshad Bhatti, Analyst:* The government has not fulfilled nay promises it made, they showed dreams but nothing has been fulfilled. He has completely changed his stance, he use to talk against electable and now his team his full of electable. Once he is use to say Pakistan should not take lone from IMF and now as PM he is doing the exact opposite. There is lots of difference between the Imran Khan and the PM Imran Khan. He uses to *say media ko Salaam*, and now PM Imran Khan is saying media is corrupt. *Nazir Logari* argues that this government has not delivered anything and has brought the economy down. Unemployment is the highest under PTI government, he promised 1 crore jobs. This current popular PM came with so many promises but delivered nothing.

## BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
<b>Punjab</b>				
Kurram <sup>31</sup>	06/05/2020	One injured in explosion at Imambargah in Lower Kurram.	00	01
Rawalpindi <sup>32</sup>	09/05/2020	Major among six soldiers martyred in Buleda blast.	08	00
Bahawalpur <sup>33</sup>	18/05/2020	Four IS terrorists killed in Bahawalpur: CTD	04	01

<sup>31</sup><https://dailytimes.com.pk/608140/one-injured-in-explosion-at-imambargah-in-lower-kurram/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1555706/major-among-six-soldiers-martyred-in-buleda-blast>

<sup>33</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/614096/four-is-terrorists-killed-in-bahawalpur-ctd/>

<b>KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)</b>				
Peshawar <sup>34</sup>	11/05/2020	At least five injured in Peshawar IED explosion.	05	00
<b>Balochistan</b>				
Mach <sup>35</sup>	19/05/2020	7 soldiers martyred in two spate terror attacks in Balochistan: ISPR.	07	01

<sup>34</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2218880/1-least-five-injured-peshawar-explosion/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1558240/7-soldiers-martyred-in-two-separate-terror-attacks-in-balochistan-ispr>