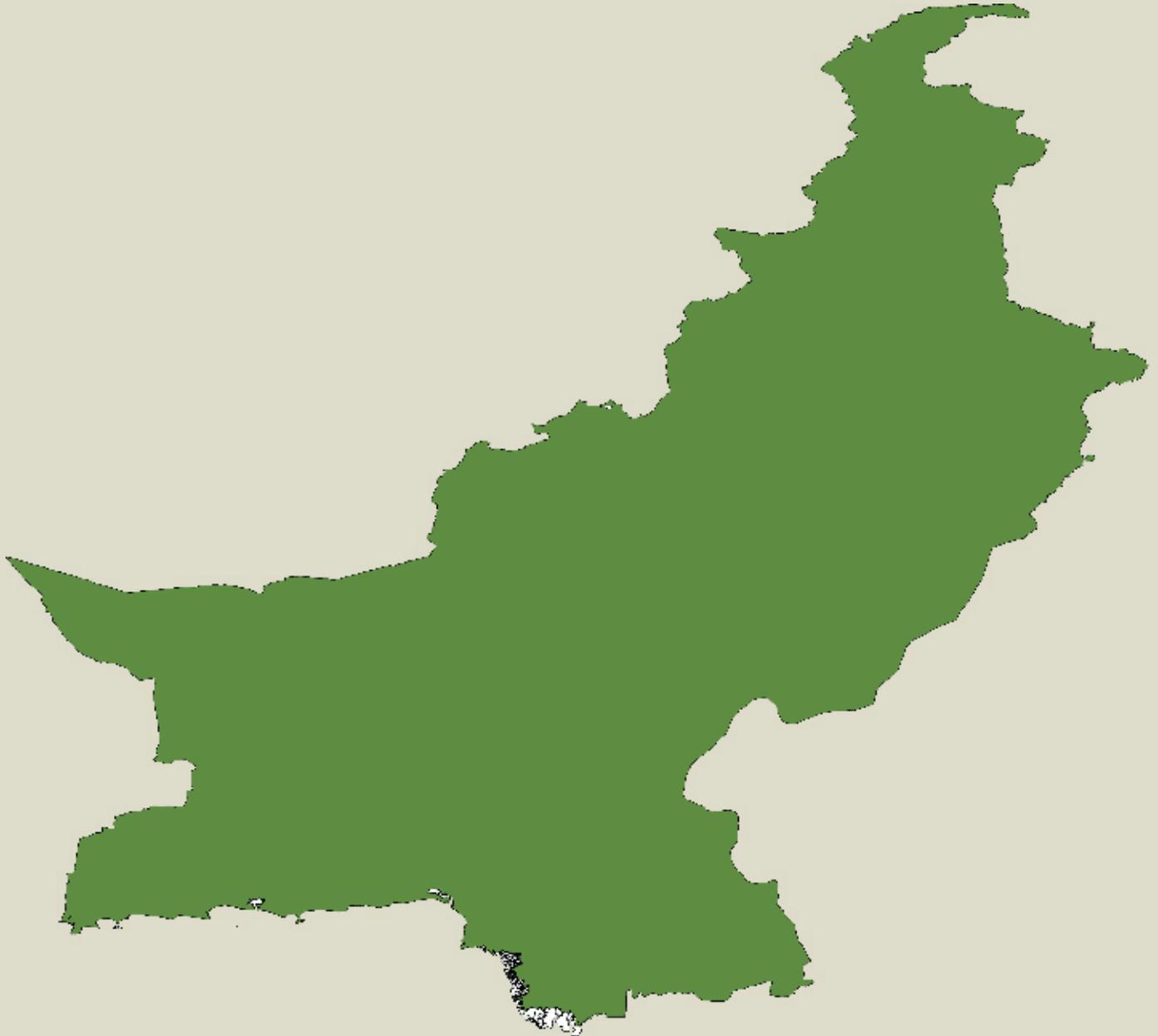


APRIL 2018

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
Dr. Ashok Behuria

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रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, April 2018

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Editorial

After removing Nawaz Sharif as the president of the PML-N, the Supreme Court of Pakistan in a setback to the ruling party and its supporters, a five-member bench of the country's apex court unanimously ruled "that anyone disqualified under a constitutional clause requiring legislators to be "honest and trustworthy" would be considered banned for life ruling out any hope for Nawaz's return to active politics. According to the new ruling the disqualification of any Member of Parliament or a public servant under Article 62 (1) (f) would be permanent. "Such a person cannot contest elections or become a Member of Parliament," the court said. Article 62(1) (f), inserted during General Zia ul Haq's regime sets honesty and righteousness as eligibility criteria for a Member of Parliament.

Nawaz Sharif and his party has rejected the Courts decision underlining that judiciary has no right to declare a politician righteous or otherwise, rather it's the job of the Parliament or the Election Commission. After the ruling, Nawaz Sharif is playing the victim card to gain the sympathy of the public and keep the vote bank of the party intact. But analysts in Pakistan media are of the view that Nawaz's disqualification will damage the party in elections besides putting deeper cracks in the party ranks. With the countdown to the election, the pressure on candidates to declare affiliations and pick sides ahead of the elections is getting intense. After the Supreme Court judgment, Nawaz Sharif has a tough job of convincing his own party leaders to stand by him in the party's interest.

The month of April witnessed a series of terrorist attacks targeting religious minorities, especially the Christian and Shia Hazaras in the province of Balochistan. Quetta was targeted seven times this month killing more than fifteen people belonging to the Shia Hazara and Christian communities. The banned terrorist organizations like the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), the Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ). ASWJ is the sister organization of LeJ and Afghan Taliban having a lethal Balochistan wing, which according to media reports continues its activities with impunity. The increasing presence of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) in Balochistan cannot be ruled out as it has claimed responsibility for several attacks targeting civilians in the province in recent years, including an attack on a Sufi shrine and multiple attacks on Hazara Shias.

The Pakistani Christians and the Hazara Shia's have been at the receiving end of both government and the militant groups. They are selectively targeted across the country and many languish in jail in blasphemy related cases. According to legal experts in Pakistan the main reason for these repeated attacks is the sense of impunity that attackers have. This is largely due to the failures of the criminal justice system to convict them due to lack of evidence as no one dares to testify against them. These target killings of minorities by and large go unpunished thus creating an ideal environment for hate crimes to occur.

The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) organized two major rallies in Peshawar at the beginning of April and in Lahore towards the ending of this month. The peculiar change in the Peshawar protests was the participation of the large number of women from the tribal areas demanding justice for the Pashtuns. The success of this sit in encouraged the PTM to organize the Lahore rally, which is considered to be the heartland of the ruling party, PML-N. Initially the Punjab government tried to put hurdles on the organization of the rally but later gauging the popularity of the movement allowed the rally to happen. The media black-out of the movement continued but due to the popularity of the movement that was spread through social media and international media houses, the English and electronic media started picking up the stories of the movement thus gaining the attention of the public in Pakistan. A few writers supporting the movement demanded a change in the policies of Pakistan vis-à-vis the tribal region and treatment of Pashtuns.

The support base of the PTM is increasing with each sit in and protest, experts in the Pakistani media believe that given the timing of the movement (just before the general elections) the PTM has all the ingredients to graduate into a political party in the future championing the cause of the Pashtuns. This can be a direct threat to the existence of the traditional political parties and also influence the political fortune of the PTI who is ruling the Pashtuns dominated KP.

Dr. Zainab Akhter

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Will reviving MMA have an impact on the 2018 elections?, Mariam Mufti, Dawn, 12 April¹

The latest incarnation of MMA, with JUIF's Maulana Fazlur Rehman as its chairperson and JI's Liaqat Baloch as its general secretary, is in keeping with the previous domination of the two parties, both of which have historically drawn their support from the Pakhtun areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Noticeably absent from the alliance is Maulana Samiul Haq's faction of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-S). There were reports prior to the Senate election that, in exchange for a Senate seat nomination, JUIS would form an electoral alliance with PTI. However, this did not come to pass as PTI dropped Haq's name from its list of Senate nominees. JUI-S's absence from MMA, however, indicates that the alliance's electoral prospects in its own backyard may not be as bright as in the past. It is not clear whether PTI's performance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be evaluated negatively by voters to the extent that it will be voted out of power in the next election. *At the same time, MMA cannot place too much confidence in its electoral rhetoric of being an anti-corruption party, which is also how PTI is likely to position itself.* It is also important to consider other religious parties that are likely to chip away at the traditional vote bank of MMA parties. It will be more challenging for the new MMA to unite the conservative religious votes as it did in 2002. With these newer, more radical and aggressive political parties appealing to the same type of voters with even more hardline sectarian agendas uniting them would be challenging.

Prospects of democracy in Pakistan, Javed Qazi, Daily Times, 13 April²

Democracy in Pakistan is still not fully able to reflect its choice through narrative. Electable politics is still there though diminishing gradually. *All three leading parties, PML-N, PTI and PPP are playing on the complex turf. Bad governance is rampant. Fake news is yet another dominating factor being aggravated also by the rogue social media.* People are not fully trained through the repeated exercise of going to ballot box. After a long time, there is general perception that the system may go derailed. Some extra constitutional thing is on the anvil. Judicial activism has crippled government's function, yet only orange trains are not solutions. This country needs its human resource to be improved in terms of their quality of life. The present position of democracy is

¹<https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398502/will-reviving-mma-have-an-impact-on-the-2018-elections>

² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/227322/prospects-of-democracy-in-pakistan>

devoid to deliver that. We are in a region where even the influence of India is diminishing in favour of China. China will not stamp on martial law here. Another major external actor that has its role in our internal affairs is Saudi Arab, which is also changing from within. It's packing up its state narrative with speed. Its counter narrative is making its inroads quite fast. *Pakistan needs to work on its human resource in terms of the quality of life. Currently, the fragile democracy is inadequate to deliver that.*

Analysis: What next for Nawaz Sharif? Cyril Almeida, Dawn, 14 April³

The most generous argument before the Supreme Court for the application of Article 62(1) (f) to less than a lifetime was for a five-year disqualification. What the judgement has done, however, is to re-focus political debate on Sharif: what is his end goal and where is the strategy to achieve it? In the longer term, the judgement is certainly a blow to the political future of Sharif. *Between his disqualification last July and a declaration that disqualification under Article 62(1) is for a lifetime, the current and several future chief justices of Pakistan have declared Sharif to be ineligible for electoral politics. This before a NAB court has concluded the trial of Sharif and his family.* The implication being that while Sharif does not see an immediate path back to electoral politics, he is focused on the longer term, where national or geopolitical changes could be more favorable to Sharif. Outside Sharif's core circle, then, the relentless legal pressure on Sharif combined with Sharif's relentless campaigning has only one logical answer: Sharif is fighting for the political future of his daughter and his own political legacy.

Anti-judiciary speeches, Editorial, Dawn, 17 April⁴

A decision by a three-member bench of the Lahore High Court to ban the broadcast of so-called anti-judiciary speeches by Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and other PML-N leaders is unfortunate. That interference, both by the political government and other state institutions, has turned TV news channels into a stage for bitter partisan fighting with journalistic independence and the rights of the viewer to both impartial information and informed opinion deeply undermined. The government's failure to ensure the independence of Pemra has allowed it to become hostage to political and other agendas. As the judicialisation of politics has increased, the judiciary has become a greater part of the national discourse. That perhaps may have been manageable from a democratic perspective were it not for two other changes. *While some of the criticisms by the PML-N of the judiciary have been ill-advised and excessive, independent legal experts have also expressed concern about the judgements that have seen Mr. Sharif progressively shut out from electoral and party*

³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1401524>

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1402120/anti-judiciary-speeches>

politics, at least in an official capacity. The judicial verdicts needed to be well argued, firmly rooted in existing law and setting good precedent.

A Pakistan Muslim League without the Sharif's yes, it may happen, Adnan Rasool, Dawn, 17 April⁵

The narrative that is being pushed through the mass rallies has created differences within the party. Even the current president of the party, Shahbaz Sharif, seems to be reluctant to follow Nawaz's narrative as he sees it as a threat to the future of the party under him. They are not entirely wrong. *In a country like Pakistan, going up against the security establishment is not the most ideal path and often hurts any party. And this is where the biggest divisions in the PML-N are coming to the front.* In the absence of party professionalization, party members have little incentive to be loyal as there is no growth potential for them. In the post-Nawaz era, the PML-N will witness a lot more defections, but a bulk will come in the shape of electable choosing to go independent before the elections. We can realistically expect a group of 40-50 independent candidates contesting under the same symbol and as an informal group that will have more sway rather than being associated with a party. This will create a new set of issues for a PML-N that is still not over the idea that they are being taken to the cleaners. With the family out of the party, what will be left is a PML-N with senior leaders, all battling to keep the structure in check. And with the rising threat of further defections, the party may be contesting elections against its former candidates in a host of constituencies across the country.

Coercing the media, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 18 April⁶

Opinion pieces violating 'guidelines' have reportedly been withdrawn by the management of some leading newspapers for fear of being penalized. Indeed, TV channels are much more vulnerable to the threat. And that fear is not unfounded. What we are witnessing is described by some analysts *as the creeping expansion of the power of the 'deep state'. What is commonly meant by the deep state is the security establishment. It is not just about media gagging or the increasing number of cases related to enforced disappearances, it is also about the growing perception of political manipulation by 'invisible forces', often referred to as namaloom afraad.* The recent political re-engineering in Balochistan and allegations that the Senate chairman elections were 'managed' have reinforced the apprehension. With the political crisis getting deeper, there is a growing feeling of coerciveness accompanied by the weakening of the authority of state institutions

⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1401958/a-pakistan-muslim-league-without-the-sharifs-yes-it-may-happen>

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1402280/coercing-the-media>

notwithstanding the growing assertiveness of the top judiciary. In fact, the current judicial overreach encroaching on the domain of the executive has also allowed the deep state to strengthen its stranglehold. Many believe that the unannounced censorship of the media may be a part of a wider plan. The media houses reportedly receive 'advice' on what should or should not be telecast or printed — all in the name of national security interest.

How to save Pakistan? Wajid Shamsul Hasan, *Daily Times*, 18 April⁷

Since the assassination of Pakistan's first PM, Liaqat Ali Khan, divergent religious forces with bigoted agendas of their own have found a safe haven in the country — mainly in the province of Punjab. These were the same forces which had initially opposed the creation of Pakistan. Unfortunately, these extremists readily found their patrons in the power troika that wanted Pakistan to be a security state rather than a social welfare polity. Different religious groups have found a favorable playing field in Pakistan, funded by their Sunni and Shia financiers, including foreign powers seeking non-state actors to deliver for them as we did for the Americans during the Afghan jihad. These transnational Jihadist movements have sprouted in various shapes all over the world, causing havoc and destruction. Pakistan, and Punjab in particular, have been allowed to become an epicenter for the pursuit of what these people call a Khilafat. *Meanwhile, invisible hands engineering alliances, not to strengthen democracy, but to weaken it. It seems as if all this is being done to revert back to General Zia's constitution, and folding up Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's 1973 constitution. The 18th amendment will be done away with as well, since it runs contrary to the concept of a strong center.*

Minorities and the elections, Yaqoob Khan Bangash, *Daily Times*, 22 April⁸

Religious minorities are not just on the fringes of an election, but are central to the electoral process. *There are several national and provincial assembly seats where religious minorities are a significant voting group and the cultivation of their vote can actually change the outcome of an election.* Taken together, the number of seats where non-Muslims are more than 10,000 in all of Pakistan brings up the tally to: 59 seats in the Punjab, 38 in Sindh, and one each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. These are not insignificant numbers, and so minorities need to be made part of the electoral strategy by all political parties. This clearly shows that minority voters can indeed sway an election, not just locally and provincially but also nationally, and therefore they need to be mainstreamed in all political parties as office holders, ticket holders, and workers. Since all minorities are full and equal citizens of Pakistan (at least on paper), they should be treated as such by the political parties. *Most political*

⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/229507/how-to-save-pakistan/>

⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/230923/minorities-and-the-elections/>

parties have a 'minorities' wing' where non-Muslim Pakistanis are clubbed together, shielded not just from the majority but also from the party's decision making processes. There is simply no reason for such 'minorities' wings' to exist. The only thing it perpetuates is exclusion, ghettoization, and marginalization.

Courting Russia, Editorial, Daily Times, 25 April 2018⁹

According to media reports the sticking point continues to be, from the Pakistani side, the constant saber-rattling over the need to do more to flush out militant safe-havens. However Islamabad, insists it has done the needful.. Not least because this country is acutely worried by the rise of ISIS across its western front. This is a concern it shares with Russia. Indeed, the latter has termed the terror group as the biggest threat to Afghan security. Not only does this get Pakistan 'off the hook' in many regards, there is also much truth to this. Indeed, as Moscow likes to remind the US: without the dismantling of Iraq's social fabric there would be no ISIS in that country or anywhere else; from Libya to Syria. *Thus it is this security paradigm that brings Islamabad and Moscow increasingly closer. Neither wants to see Afghanistan to be overrun by militants; as this poses risks to their respective homelands and backyards. Similarly, both want to see Washington withdraw from the military occupation in Afghanistan that has been on the road to nowhere for 17 long years; an entire generation.* It is important to note that Russia has not allowed its traditional closeness to New Delhi to overshadow ties with Pakistan. Making it possibly the only power that would be able to effectively and sincerely assuage Islamabad's understandable disquiet over the Indian footprint in Afghanistan. And as a bonus, it also enjoys good relations with that other regional player: China.

Is a Russia-Pakistan corridor in the making? Saddam Hussein, Daily Times, 29 April¹⁰

The new arrangement of Pakistan-Russia defence relations is a symbiotic realism that flouts conventional wisdom. This is essentially a paradigm shift in the global policy framework. Old allies such as US and Pakistan are drifting away amid changing geopolitics and unfolding regional crescendos. Russia's cozying up to Pakistan is indeed a sign of Pakistan's rising importance in the emerging international domain. Its lifting of the arms embargo against Pakistan in 2015 undoubtedly signifies that Russia is getting quite comfortable with the idea of cooperation with Pakistan. Pakistan is significant for Russia in two dimensions. *First, it serves as an outlet to the Central Asian Republics and the*

⁹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/232145/courting-russia/>

¹⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/233748/is-a-russia-pakistan-corridor-in-the-making/>

Kremlin would never desire instability there. Second, the strategic location of Pakistan connects the Central Asian region with the Middle East and Indian Ocean – thus Russian goods can access the international market very conveniently through Pakistan. Pakistan is at the crossroads of economic giants. With the increasingly improving security situation, these booming economies are looking up to Pakistan for their economic interests. Pakistan can cash in its geo-economic and geostrategic location, but by playing cautiously. With Russia's growing interests in different sectors of Pakistan's economy and tapping into the potential areas where it can either invest or capture the market for Russian goods, it seems that after Chinese adventurism of CPEC, Russia Pakistan Economic Corridor (RPEC) is also in the making.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Why is the Rupee falling? Mahmood Sadiq, *Daily Times*, 10 April¹¹

Blamed by international institutions for fudging its own economic figures, Pakistan finds itself in an increasingly volatile environment. Continuous speculation has added fuel to the fire, especially when seen in the backdrop of Pakistan's political environment. The government's stance remains shaky, and its conduct has been dubious in both the political and economic spheres. Recently, it devalued the Rupee for the second time in the last three months. The accumulative devaluation now amounts to 9.5 percent, implying a \$7.6 billion increase in loans – all without borrowing a cent. And to top all this, the rupee's ordeal is not over just yet, there is likely to be another devaluation before June 18. *Whatever the economic environment, factors or reasons for this twin rupee devaluation over the last three months; it is a vivid reflection of the country's weak economy, indicative through the signs of rapidly depleting foreign exchange reserves, widening current account and trade deficits and inflationary pressure, as well as the destructive impact it has had on this country's impoverished masses.* Whatever the economic environment, factors or reasons for this twin rupee devaluation over the last three months; it is a vivid reflection of the country's weak economy, indicative through the signs of rapidly depleting foreign exchange reserves, widening current account and trade deficits and inflationary pressure, as well as the destructive impact it has had on this country's impoverished masses. With the budget 2018-19 likely to be announced by end of this month and 60 days left in the tenure of the incumbent government the question remains what can be done? Peculiar to our economy, factors which are likely to drive the Rupee in the foreseeable future include the geo-political situation, domestic environment, interest rates, trade,

¹¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/226047/why-is-the-rupee-falling/>

growth rate and inflation. Pakistan desperately needed structural reforms in energy, public sector and taxation which never materialized over the last five years.

Analysis: Implications of tax reforms package, Shahid Kardar | Hafiz A. Pasha, Dawn, 10 April¹²

The claim of the announced scheme is that it will not provide protection to cash and assets acquired from money laundering, terrorism and trafficking in drugs. It is not clear how the government will be able to identify such financial/real assets because if it already knows which individuals and entities had derived their earnings from activities that would be categorized as money laundering or trade in drugs then the obvious follow up question would be why no criminal proceedings were initiated or action taken against them earlier; and if the credentials of the remitters (i.e. their source of funds) would be subjected to investigation either before or after the declaration/receipt of the funds then why would they transfer their money and pay the tax on foreign assets to make them legitimate. *The realisation of the underlying objectives of this audacious package, while addressing the caveats that we have listed above, will depend heavily on the quality of tax administration that will both execute and preside over its implementation.*

Budgeting for reality, Khurram Husain, Dawn, 19 April¹³

But this government has tried to claim its prerogative over the allocations of the state's resources with more vigor, and found itself at loggerheads with the military on this question on a few occasions. Last year, for example, defence allocations saw the smallest increase in many years, at 7pc (where the norm had been 10pc annual increases). But they entertained some of the extra budgetary requests for resources, most notably the Rs90bn annual allocation from the development budget for 'security enhancement'. This year the defence allocations are up by 20pc as per the strategy paper (going from Rs920bn budgeted last budget to Rs1.1 trillion this time), and another Rs100bn on top under the Armed Forces Development Programme, which presumably represents the extraordinary allocation of Rs90bn that went from the development programme in the past three years as 'security enhancement'. *This year's large overshoot is one demonstration of the government's relative retreat before the demand for more resources emanating from Rawalpindi, and the large increase for next year is an indication that they are going the extra mile to accommodate the military establishment. This is the year of the goody*

¹² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1400732/analysis-implications-of-tax-reforms-package>

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1402510/budgeting-for-reality>

bag, since the effects of these goodies are short-lived and more effectively put a short-term smile on people's faces.

Shadows of the budget, Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Daily Times, 19 April¹⁴

Along with the morality argument, the opposition parties criticize the federal government that it would present an 'election budget' and would try to lure voters through announcing popular initiatives. The PML-N claims that because it has the mandate to run the federal government till the completion of the tenure of current assemblies, it has all legal and moral grounds to present its economic road map. There is weight on both sides of the argument. However, the point to be noted is that if PML-N hopes to get re-elected then it will not announce the types of economic measures that would further increase the fiscal and current account deficit. After all, it would have to take care of the economy in its next tenure if voters are brought in. On the other hand, if PML-N loses, and an opposition party or parties form the next federal government, then the new government would be able to present a 'true picture' of Pakistan's and present a mini-budget. The new government would be able to reject PM Abbasi's economic reform package, roll back its amnesty scheme and give its own vision for how the economy of Pakistan ought to be run. *Right now, the constitution does not stop the PML-N from presenting its sixth budget. If the opposition parties want to amend the constitution to avoid such a situation in the future, then they can do it after the next elections. Thus, we should not waste our time debating this issue. PML-N gave an economic package and it is the opposition's democratic right to reject it. However, besides criticizing it, they ought to present an alternative economic agenda.*

SECURITY SITUATION

Murder of Christians, Editorial, Dawn, 04 April¹⁵

While the level of extremist violence in the rest of Pakistan has fallen sharply over the past couple of years, Balochistan has seen no real reprieve. Belonging to Punjab, the family was visiting relatives in the Balochistan capital, and was likely being tailed by the assailants after they had identified them as Christians. *Balochistan has witnessed sickening levels of sectarian violence during the last several years, mainly against members of the Shia Hazara community who are particularly vulnerable because of their distinctive physical features.* While there are known to be linkages between IS and LJ they have in fact

¹⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/229708/shadows-of-the-budget/>

¹⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1399492/murder-of-christians>

carried out a number of joint operations — and among other terrorist groups, the profile of IS in particular is in the ascendant. Attacks targeting religious minorities in the province and beyond, such as the suicide bombing at the iconic Lal Shahbaz Qalandar mazar in Sindh last February which killed over 70 people, are increasingly being claimed by the outfit.

Hazara killings and flawed security policies, Ailia Zehra, *Daily Times*, 09 April¹⁶

Violence against religious minorities such as the Hazara-Shias will not stop if extremist groups and banned terror outfits continue to be given space by the state. What is even more problematic is the way media chooses to report such attacks. Most news reports about persecution of the Hazara-Shia community of Quetta imply that it is an ethnic issue, which is not true. Most analysts and observers either deliberately or ignorantly hide the fact that attacks on the Hazara community of Quetta are triggered by sectarianism and not ethnicity. The LeJ that claims responsibility for almost all attacks on the community vows to ‘purge Pakistan of Shias’. Hazara-Shias are more vulnerable because of their identifiable physical features. Furthermore, it is important to note that violence against the Shia community has been going on in other provinces as well. Targeted killing of the Shia community in Karachi and the recent cases of mysterious disappearances of Shia citizens in the city are further proof that it is all part of a systematic violence against the sectarian minority. Therefore, those deliberately trying to portray the attacks in Quetta as an ethnic issue are guilty of intellectual dishonesty and need to be called out. *That faith-based killings and sectarian attacks are still taking place indicates the strategy against terrorism is marred by loopholes. Just because the ongoing attacks are smaller in extent and are only targeting religious minorities, the authorities concerned appear to be turning a blind eye to them. These attacks will not end completely if the policy of giving space to extremist groups, which are the ideological allies of the perpetrators, remains in place.*

Another attack on Christians in Quetta, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 16 April¹⁷

Pakistani Christians have been at the receiving end of state sanctioned legal discrimination; violent mobs; unfairly applied blasphemy laws; and violent militias that wish to purify Pakistan. Across the country, Christian families have been targeted, their houses torched and many languish in jail due to trumped up blasphemy cases. A key reason for these repeated attacks is the impunity for attackers due to the failures of our so-called criminal justice

¹⁶ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/225518/hazara-killings-and-flawed-security-policies/>

¹⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/228460/another-attack-on-christians-in-quetta/>

system. *The attacks on Christians are by and large go unpunished and this creates an ideal environment for hate crimes to occur. Balochistan is a province mired by violence and lawlessness of all kinds. In certain parts, the Baloch separatists carry out senseless violence.* The banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has a lethal Balochistan wing, which according to media reports, still survives. It should not be forgotten that Balochistan has also been a safe haven for the Afghan Taliban, who for long have operated under the umbrella of Quetta Shura. The most intriguing part of this story is that our state leaves no opportunity to remind Pakistanis how the foreign hand operates in Balochistan, but its ability to crack down on internal and external violent actors seems to be limited. It is time that the federal government, especially the military that has the final say in all matters of security, took note of what is going on and take immediate corrective measures. There is no alternative to the expansion of a police force which is well trained and can undertake public safety measures on a sustainable basis. Paramilitary forces are helpful in the short term but they are no substitute for a provincially managed and accountable police force. Political expediency must end now.

PROVINCES & REGIONS

FATA

Pakhtun populism: to confront or engage? Dr SairaBano Orakzai, *Daily Times*, 01 April¹⁸

Pakhtun populist struggle demanding rights, accountability and end to decades of conflict in the Pakhtun areas of Pakistan is unsurprisingly dealt with an old language and rhetoric of a decolonized Pakistan of 1947 and a country on verge of disintegration in 1971. However, this is 2018, the dawn of new era. Blaming and shamming others to deflect own guilt won't work against this youth movement as it depicts a specie level response. Pakistan needs a civilized, humane and State level response to deal with this youth populism. There is an asymmetrical conflict within the state while dealing with youth populism. The choice is either to use force against them, to label them, or to enter into a dialogue process for solving the crisis. *At present, the state has to carefully consider the tools available for dealing with Pakhtun populism while PTM needs to carve survival strategies to emerge from the divisive and hostility prone politics of Pakistan.* Pakistan, since its inception is struggling

¹⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/222192/pakhtun-populism-to-confront-or-engage/>

with the institutional crisis and upheavals. The constitutional settlement has been theoretically achieved to punish abrogation or suspension of constitution (being representative of people's rights and wishes) as high treason under Article 6. However, no constitutional provision exists to make divisive language, hostility prone hate speech by the State against its own people for demanding rights a punishable crime.

Pakhtun renaissance, Ghulam Qadir Khan, *Dawn*, 03 April¹⁹

Though their first sit-in and the rallies that followed have been peaceful, many fear they will end up becoming violent. And, surprisingly, Pakhtun nationalist political parties fear them as their replacement and have thus advised their workers to stay away from PTM. But the movement is here to stay. The Pakhtun have found their voice in PTM's lead anthem, *Da sanga azadi da (what kind of freedom is this)*. Fata's people in particular have stopped looking up to the recognized leaders, the maliks and mullahs, and have come up with an alternate leadership among the youth. For the first time, someone other than a mullah has been able to gather the Pakhtun under one banner. For too long, they have suffered under the oppressive Frontier Crimes Regulation and militancy. They have seen life down country and the attendant rights enjoyed there, and will not settle for anything less. Many believe this is the dawn of a Pakhtun renaissance, as the youth seek to redefine their political status and create a new social contract with the state. Fata's people in particular have stopped looking up to the recognized leaders, the maliks and mullahs, and have come up with an alternate leadership among the youth. Anger has been building, and like Naqeebullahs murder, any event can ignite this tinderbox of seething anger.

PTM's continued media blackout, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 09 April²⁰

PTM's recent Peshawar rally was without a doubt the biggest political show in the city of Peshawar in recent history. When so many Pakistanis gather in a public arena and demand nothing more than a right to dignified existence, our state institutions must understand that something must have been terribly wrong with their policies vis-à-vis the region. Instead of going on the defensive, the institutions will do well to listen patiently to the grievances of these persecuted and war-torn citizens of the republic. The protesters have been explaining their demands again and again, and the authorities have yet to meet them even half way through. TM's Sunday rally was without a doubt the biggest political show in the city of Peshawar in recent history. When so many

¹⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1399271/pakhtun-renaissance>

²⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/225619/ptms-continued-media-blackout/>

Pakistanis gather in a public arena and demand nothing more than a right to dignified existence, our state institutions must understand that something must have been terribly wrong with their policies vis-à-vis the region. Instead of going on the defensive, the institutions will do well to listen patiently to the grievances of these persecuted and war-torn citizens of the republic. And yet the PTM protest in the electronic media will be remembered for its betrayal of all the principles that underlie the profession of journalism. *None of the channels did justice, in their coverage, to the largest political gathering of the day held by the Pushtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM).*

PTM and opposition bandwagon, Editorial, Daily Times, 12 April²¹

The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM)'s peaceful protests have finally captured the political imagination. Though, frankly, it is a shame that it has taken so long for the rights of ethnic Pashtuns to hover on the verge of mainstream consciousness. For their plight is not a sudden one. This community has, most recently, found itself in the frontline of the GWOT; caught in the all too literal crossfire between militancy and military. But with its secular message of peace, the PTM 'mandate' is resonating far beyond its own community. *The point is that the suffering of an entire people cannot be collectively swept under the carpet only to be brought up as the country prepares to go ballot-boxing.* That is the road to political opportunism. Whereas the role of the opposition is to fight for the underdog. And this should also extend to the fourth estate. After all, with the largest television broadcaster under fire, most of Pakistan's media, too, felt sufficient pressure to largely affect self-censorship when it came to covering the PTM protests. As disappointing as this is, it remains the job of the political leadership to come together to support the tenets of a free media. For the latter goes beyond serving as accessories to press conferences.

Emergence of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed , Daily Times, 14 April²²

In one sense, the PTM is reviving a tradition deeply embedded in their historical memory. When Mahatma Gandhi challenged British imperialism, he found support in the least expected quarters: among the Pashtuns, who in history and legend have been portrayed as a martial people, ever ready to resort to violence. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgars were able to defy such stereotyping of Pashtuns and established a disciplined mass following, which included women's organizations. That after the creation of Pakistan that movement suffered considerable repression, is all too well-

²¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/226838/ptm-and-opposition-bandwagon/>

²² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/227740/emergence-of-the-pashtun-tahafuz-movement/>

known. In fact, the state encouraged the “martial traditions” of the Pashtuns by first sending them into Kashmir in late October 1947 – a decision which proved to be a disaster. Then again, they were drafted into the so-called Afghan jihad during the 1980s. This bequeathed a continuing tradition of extremism, militancy and terrorism. The emergence of the PTM is an indication that Pashtuns are fed up of extremism and terrorism. Once again, they are adhering to non-violent means and methods to protest their grievances. The Pakistani constitution permits such action, and it is perfectly legitimate according to all canons of civilized politics. They can serve as a role model for peacefully protesting injustice for the Baloch and others who have similar complaints about the way they are treated in Pakistan. *Pakistan should be integrated into an effective federation where substantial autonomy to the provinces should be combined with an effective centre applying the same standards and policies and laws everywhere so that Pakistan can evolve as a coherent federation.*

The state should engage with PTM. Dubbing it ‘engineered’ will not work,
Raza Rumi, *Daily Times*, 15 April²³

The opposition to PTM comes from the military itself and the Army chief confirmed the ‘official’ view when he termed the protests as ‘engineered’. The Army as an institution is angry about the PTM narrative for a number of reasons. First, the sloganeering at the rallies has been *critical. Yeh jo dehshatgardi hay/ Iske peechay vardi hay* (literally: *terrorism is backed by uniform*). *Second, PTM’s main leader Manzur Pashteen referred to the intelligence outfits by name in his Peshawar rally.* There are other reasons why the movement has been dubbed ‘anti-Army’ but the key reason is more complex. The young men and women of FATA and KP are challenging the strategic worldview of the military led security policy that has on different occasions patronised and on others, targeted the militants. That some of these militants are Pashtun themselves makes this even more complicated. Hence the refrain that militants found sanctuaries in FATA and were ‘abetted’ by the protestors. The misgivings about PTM have resulted in the standard formula response. The latter is being projected as a foreign-sponsored movement. The support expressed by high officials in Afghanistan is seen as evidence of engineering. But Pashtuns live on both sides of the Durand Line. A point we consider kosher when we want to support the Afghan Taliban but one that suddenly becomes treasonous when an anti-war movement finds traction on the other side of the border. *A movement that asks for the enforcement of fundamental rights cannot be anti-state unless the state thinks that it can dispense with the Constitution as and when required. Given how this has been*

²³<https://dailytimes.com.pk/228112/the-state-should-engage-with-ptm-dubbing-it-engineered-will-not-work/>

trampled on and abused by both civvies and khakis — the PTM narrative strengthens the hope for a pluralist, democratic Pakistan.

Do we have a Pakhtun intifada on our hands? Lal Khan, *Daily Times*, 16 April²⁴

Corporate media's virtual blackout of the rally, however, was a disgrace to 'free speech'. The collusion of media barons with the repressive ruler ship of this country has now been laid bare for all to see. *This upsurge has cut across the prevalent political façade that has blocked the voice of the oppressed. The leadership of the Islamist, nationalist, secular and liberal mainstream parties opposed the rally and tried to stop people from attending.* This attempted sabotage failed miserably. This rally was much larger than any of the rallies mainstream parties broadcast live on television channels throughout the day. The participation of women at the Peshawar rally was spectacular. This revealed the progressive aspect of a people considered the most socially conservative in this country. Women have suffered most in the conflicts which have been devastating the region for decades. The imperialist drones, rise of the Taliban and obscurantism had made women's daily lives completely suffocating. Displacement from their homes during the military operations has taken a heavy toll on the plight of women and children in particular. The reluctance of the state to accept their demands reflects its stubbornness to give up neo-colonial control of these areas. To assert their power through political agents more than two hundred years ago, British imperialists had devised the very structures this country's leadership uses today. *Serious strategists of the bourgeois are fearful of the success of this movement having contagious effects in other parts of Pakistan, where socioeconomic oppression is also fueling simmering discontent.*

The Pashteen phenomenon, Shehar Bano Khan, *Daily Times*, 17 April²⁵

Compromises made by political parties to shift from the peripheral to mainstream for purpose of power sharing, whether in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) or Balochistan, gave no option to this marginalized ethnic group but to place trust in representatives forced upon them in the Parliament. They waited for their status to be redeemed. *They waited for the constitutional recognition of their existence. They waited to be indemnified for the historical, political and religiously contrived wrong done to them. All for naught.* When Pashteen turned into a phenomenon, the issue of land mines, enforced disappearances, removal of check posts and justice for those killed in fake police encounters on

²⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/228480/do-we-have-a-pakhtun-intifada-on-our-hands/>

²⁵ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/228938/the-pashteen-phenomenon/>

the pretext of targeting terrorists spread all across Pakistan. Though the local media willfully decided to exclude Pashteen to retain the deep state's sanctimonious facade, his powerful oratory blitzkrieg found space in the social and international media. *The phenomenon had become more powerful than martial capacity. Pashteen's placidity undergoes a slight inflection when RAW is mentioned. "I wasn't aware of what that was," said Manzoor Pashteen with a glint in his eyes.* No, he was not till the security state's purveyors started sending messages through various mediums of communication about Pashteen's alleged connection with the Indian secret service to destabilize Pakistan. If Pashteen is decimated through archaic and obsolete indictments, the elemental imperatives of peace, human rights and constitutional rights of a citizen, making the phenomenon might not remain too elemental.

Kashmir

Kashmir-Palestine, Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, Dawn, 06 April²⁶

By all accounts Kashmir remains the Indian state's Achilles heel, a blot on the collective conscience of India's democracy. Successive generations of Pakistanis have been bred on a narrative that there is something exceptional about the reign of state terror in Kashmir, with only the Israel's colonial subjugation of Palestine approximating something similar. In both cases, the operative factor is that Muslim lands are being occupied by 'infidels', that the honour and dignity of Muslim peoples is being violated. *More generally, political alignments amongst the global elite, as well as the resistance of the oppressed, have little to do with religious affiliations per se, even if the state and right-wing forces exploit and politicize cultural difference, thereby reducing space for collective action along expansive lines.* India's Kashmir problem has more to do with basic questions of self-determination and democracy, and what is changing under Modi is precisely the fact that the already existing authoritarian tendencies of the Indian state are being fused with a toxic dose of Hindutva in a way that would make Nehru and Gandhi turn in their grave. Hawks in Pakistan may talk up the Indian state's brutalities in Kashmir to give credence to the Pakistani state's militarism just as the Indian state drums up jingoistic sentiment on that side of the border by reducing Pakistan to an abettor of terrorism.

Kick-starting talks on Kashmir, Editorial, Daily Times, 06 April²⁷

²⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1399899/kashmir-palestine>

²⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/224338/kick-starting-talks-on-kashmir/>

The news that Pakistan and India talking to each other to find a way forward on Kashmir is to be welcomed. For it is important, as a first step at least, that this be handled bilaterally. Kashmiri parties — including separatist groups — must be part of the dialogue. *This is something that Pakistan must gently push for. And rather quickly, too. Especially given that this country is going ballot-boxing in the summer.* While Indians are all set to do the same sometime next year. Given, then, that neither side has any time to lose, the last days of the Abbasi regime must proceed with a clear head. Meaning that broaching the subject of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) — a draconian law granting sweeping immunity to Indian forces in -held Kashmir — should be left to the UN. At least, for the time being. The immediate concern must be for both sides to demonstrate willing in terms of good neighborliness. After all, Afghanistan is still plagued by militancy that the presence of US and NATO forces fuels. In other words, this is not a peaceful and stable region. India should be sufficiently mature to understand that it is not the civilian set-up that is planning to mainstream such actors and have them contest elections. Just as it was not the politicians that directed Hafiz Saeed to be released from house arrest. In other words, the world's largest democracy should help strengthen its Islamic Republic neighbours as it continues along this arduous path.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

Hindu right wing and Jawaharlal Nehru, Yasser Latif Hamdani, *Daily Times*, 22 April²⁸

... First is how ignorant the Hindu right wing is not just of Nehru's great contributions as the first Prime Minister of India but also to the fact that Nehru has done more to entrench Hindu majoritarianism, perhaps unwittingly, in India. Second is how off the mark people like Hoodbhoy even with the best of intentions are, just like the Hindu right wing, in properly analyzing the legacy of a towering figure in South Asian history. There is no doubt that Nehru had a fine secular mind. He was a man of enlightenment and in many ways though not all, the Thomas Jefferson of the subcontinent. Like Thomas Jefferson though, he was a man of immense and terrible contradictions. Unlike Jefferson though his contradictions had a direct impact on the history of the subcontinent. When history is written impartially and fairly, Nehru would be, despite his many talents, blamed for having in very real terms provided Hindu majoritarianism and the forces of caste Hindu domination a viable political outlet. *The present Modi government is the logical extension of Nehru's logic of Indian exceptionalism. The twin-headed majoritarianism in the*

²⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/231389/hindu-right-wing-and-jawaharlal-nehru/>

subcontinent that plagues both Pakistan and India is a negation of Jinnah's vision and a triumph for Nehru's politics despite Nehru's own secular liberal leanings. I am sure the verdict of history will come down in favour of this contention.

Follow Mayawati for salvation, Jawed Naqvi, Dawn, 24 April²⁹

What is the strategic selflessness that Mayawati has displayed, which can be of interest to liberals and democrats in India and Pakistan? She first identified the mortal threat to her people and their politics. *She determined it came from the advent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's divide-and-rule politics of hate. She calculated that if she didn't act, her own people would discard their Dalit identity to shore up Hindutva, now gaining ground with the middle classes.* There is a fear stalking Pakistan that a combination of right-wing religious parties with the tacit help of a conniving state apparatus would quell all hopes of Jinnah's inclusive and open society. Mayawati joined hands with a party that once allegedly plotted to kill her. Now she's discovered masterly selflessness as a panacea for India's ills. Why can't Pakistanis join hands against a common fatal threat, and stay there as an invincible, open-minded people? If the PPP could assure the Sharif's, for example, that their best interests would be protected by a confluence of new thought, led by all willing parties, based on the Quaid's tenets for Pakistan, they should easily be able to ford through the gathering storm. *There is an existential threat of religious and ethnic fratricide if the opinionated right wing consolidates further in either country.*

URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Urdu

Kashmiris angry over on Pak's silence, Report, Wajih Ahmed Siddiqui, Ummat, 04 April³⁰

Pakistan has protested over the killings in Kashmir as has been its tradition. *On the other hand, the Kashmiris/representatives present in Pakistan have expressed their concerns that if even now there is no strong reaction from Pakistan, then Kashmiris may take that seriously. Kashmiris are running out of patience over the Pakistan's silence.* It is the time that all parties in Pakistan

²⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1403555/follow-mayawati-for-salvation>

³⁰ <http://ummat.net/2018/04/04/news.php?p=story4.gif>

formulate a united 'Kashmir policy'. It is not an issue of territory for Pakistan but matter of conscience. The Supreme Commander of the United Jihad Council and the *amir* of Hizb-ul-Mujahidin *Syed Salahuddin while talking to Ummat said that "Occupied" Kashmir is fighting jihad for freedom. The Narendra Modi Government of India, Indian Army Chief Gen. Rawat and the Chief Justice of India Dipak Mishra have come together to suppress it by force.* Gen. Rawat has said that whoever supports freedom in Kashmir will be considered terrorist and killed. The Supreme Court of India has given this statement the legal protection. This is the reason that dozens of Kashmiris are martyred in single day. ... *At this time it is legal and moral responsibility of Pakistan to initiate a consistent diplomatic movement to raise world conscience about the issue. Wake up the so-called OIC (Organisation of Islamic Countries). This is the responsibility of Pakistan as it is party to the conflict. If it does not act, there will be a strong reaction from the Kashmiris. ...'*... Leader of Hurriyat Conference and the representative of People's Freedom Party in Pakistan *Farooq Rehmani said that the situation in Kashmir is serious. For last 20-25 years, Kashmiris are being killed and women are being raped. Now it seems that India has decided to ethnically cleanse Kashmir.* Pakistan will have to confront it strongly. Kashmiris have decided to 'do or die' and this will continue. ... Representative of Hurriyat Conference in Pakistan, *Ghulam Mohammad Safi said India has lied to the world that the Hurriyat leaders are free in Kashmir but they are not. They are all in jails. The brutalities of India has continued and they are so serious that the UN Secretary General has asked for investigation.* ... Pakistan will have to get united at the international level. Just issuing of customary statements of condemnation have encouraged India to start cleansing in Kashmir.

Is Pakistan going to become a failed state? Sikander Khan Baloch, *Nawa-i-Waqt* 06 April³¹

There was a time when Pakistan was seen as a respected and progressive country. It was seen as a model of development by some. Today some people are laughing on us. ... *When Ayub Khan had visited the US, 'red carpet' was rolled out for him. Today when recently our Prime Minister visited the US, he was treated like a common man. This was made fun of by the Indian media. It said that the Prime Minister of Pakistan was made to remove clothes.* Few years back Indian Prime Minister had said that he would 'isolate' Pakistan internationally. He has acted on that. *Whether we agree or not, we are 'isolated' in the world. No country of the world supports us. Even China and Saudi Arabia are distancing themselves.* ... Our diplomacy has failed miserably. We

³¹ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-04-06/page-6/detail-8>

could not save the Indus-Water Treaty and India is stopping the water from flowing to Pakistan because of which there is huge water crisis. But since no one listens to us, we could do nothing. Same is the case along the LoC. India is showing unprovocative aggression but we are helpless. We could not save the Jamaat Islami leaders in Bangladesh. *Internally the situation is not good either. Our foreign debt has increased upto \$103 billion. ... People should know that the country is facing crisis. People are suffering and the rich are getting richer. If our leaders continue to serve this way, it will not take much for us to become a 'failed state'. God save Pakistan!*

Increasing extremism in India, Waqaar Masood Khan, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 08 April³²

The partition of India forced the RSS to change its strategy. At the same time it realized that it had no political vision. *The Hindu Mahasabha people present in the Congress increasingly felt that they were no more needed because the partition had taken away the basis of threat for which they were required. The RSS decided that it needed political rethinking to decide on keeping away itself from politics.* Meanwhile one of its former member Godse killed Gandhi and Nehru banned the group. The members who were in favour of making the RSS a political party, increased their demand subsequently. **At the same time, the party got two such leaders who were able to provide it the political vision: Dr. Shayam Prasad Mukherjee and Deendayal Upadhyay.** Dr. Mukherjee was from a Brahman family from Bengal. ... Against some efforts to keep Bengal united in the backdrop of the Cabinet Mission Plan, Mukherjee was of the view that if whole India could not be divided, at least Bengal should be divided. *His tensions with Nehru grew because of the Nehru-Liyaqat 1953 Accord for the protection of minorities. Dr. Mukherjee thought that Nehru was working to please the minorities. He thought Pakistan was responsible and should be held as one. On this issue he resigned few days before the agreement was signed. ...* After that Mukherjee decided that he would do nationalist politics for which he was given full support by Golwalkar. He laid the foundation of the Jan Sangh. *Golwalkar send his prominent pracharak Deendayal Upadhyay on deputation in the party. Upadhyay was also from a Brahman family from Mathura. ... He was believer in ideology and came up with one, 'Humanism' by bringing together Savarkar and Sarasvati's idea.* The ideology was basically of same nature which was supported by Mohan Roy, Sarasvati, Savarkar, Hedgewar and Golwalkar long back. It was like 'Hindus are a nation who inhabit the land of Hindustan where Hindi is spoken. If there are non-Hindus here, they can live happily but under the majority's culture, if they do not become Hindus. ... Germany has set an example how to protect their people by

³² <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-04-08/page-14/detail-10>

clearing Jews and others from their country. What should India do to protect their people, they should take lesson from Germany.'

PML N and its future! Nafees Siddiqui, Jang, 16 April³³

The life time ban on the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from politics will have severe implications for politics in Pakistan. *This is the second big decision after the PPP founder's hanging.* Bhutto was removed and hanged. *At the time of Bhutto, the media or the judiciary were not free. While at Nawaz's time, media and the judiciary were free and supported by free civil society. If Nawaz Sharif continues to fight and remain in politics he can benefit from the decision.* For time being, there will be some political disturbance in the country. ... Apart from the PTI Chief Imran Khan and his supporters, no one has expressed their happiness on the Supreme Court's decision. PTI thinks that PML N's loss is its gain. PPP's stand was sensible and united. ... *There is no doubt that Nawaz has to face tough challenges for himself and for the party. Most important threat comes from the PML N members who may leave the party. These people have no ideology and are known as 'electables' that is they can win elections and wherever they find the chances, they switch over. ... The second challenge comes from that who will lead the PML N? Will Shebaz Sharif take over the control or Maryam Nawaz will take over the party? ... Despite all these issues, Nawaz Sharif has some expectations as well. To benefit from these aspects Nawaz will have to be patient and strategic. He has got a new lease of life. He has moved towards a politics that is called critical politics. Critical politics increases popularity of the party or person who does it. The life of Nawaz Sharif as politician who used to get relaxations has ended and a new Nawaz has emerged. If he is able to control the party and save it from dynasty feuds, Nawaz has a lot of chances. ...* Nawaz Sharif's political narrative is stronger now. Difficulties came to him because of his weaknesses. Politics is not a mean to accumulate wealth. If wealth had been basis of politics, Nawaz would not have been in this position today. In politics the power comes from people.

Pashtun Protection Movement: An emerging political force, Mirza Aslam Beg, Nawa-i-Waqt, April 19³⁴

The emergence of Pashtun Protection Movement is welcome. *Emerging from the South Waziristan under the leadership of 26 year old Manzoor Pashteen, the movement has changed the political identity of the Pashtuns which can have deep implications.* It will have same effects on the Pashtuns in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is a political movement with the purpose to give the

³³ https://e.jang.com.pk/04-16-2018/lahore/pic.asp?picname=08_004.png

³⁴ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-04-19/page-14/detail-9>

Pashtuns dignity and bring them in the mainstream. Many renowned leaders have expressed their views on this. *Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani said that 'It is a historical moment and is a step against extremism. It binds us all morally. It is linked with the 'Baccha' Khan's philosophy.'* However Pakistan Army Chief Gen. Bajwa has said that it is a conspiracy of enemy. His statement was reaction to President Ghani's and Pashtun Protection Movement's slogan that 'the terrorism is supported by the uniformed intelligence people.' ... *The movement has provided an opportunity to the state that it should address the grievances of the sections who have been subjected to injustice and are unhappy. It can improve relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan as well.* ... Pashtuns living in Pakistan and Afghanistan are loyal to their respective countries. They are united against the foreign occupation. No one can force them to accept the Durand Line. Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah had understood that and given the Pashtuns responsibility to protect the borders. Now is the time for us to return to the Quaid's political vision.

Daesh established contacts with local groups in Balochistan, Report, Ummat, April 25³⁵

The terrorists, involved in the recent attacks carried out Quetta, are local people who are associated with *Daesh*, a group helped by the American secret agency CIA and Indian secret agency RAW to establish its roots in Afghanistan. *According to the source, Daesh has established contacts with local terrorists in Balochistan and particularly in Quetta. They provide resources to local terrorists to attack the Hazara community and security forces. These attacks are planned in the Indian Consulates in Afghanistan.* NDS is also part of this dirty game. ... According to the source, *Daesh* with the help of CIA after establishing its roots in Nangarhar and some other provinces in Afghanistan, is trying hard to make its presence in Balochistan. Pakistan security forces had foiled such attempts earlier. This included the operation in Mustang, Balochistan last year. 12 *Daesh* terrorists were killed in the operation. During the operation, a tunnel from Mustang to Quetta was also discovered. The tunnel was used by *Daesh* as command and control centre. *According to the source, Lashkar-Jhangvi-al-Alami and some other rebellious groups have shown their allegiance to Daesh in Afghanistan. It is only after that the number of attacks has increased in Quetta. ... The source said that the planning for the attacks was carried out by RAW agents sitting in the Indian Consulates in Afghanistan. RAW has established three separate desks in Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad in the Indian Consulates wherefrom the planning for carrying out attacks in Balochistan is done.* Pakistan has provided evidence to Afghanistan about the RAW's

³⁵ <http://ummat.net/2018/04/25/news.php?p=story3.gif>

presence in the Indian Consulates in that country time and again but Kabul has yet taken any action. Now 'CPEC desk' has been added to it. Recently retired IB director Aftab Sultan had said to the Senate Committee that out of 865 terrorist arrested in last three years, during interrogation many of them had accepted that they were working for RAW and NDS.

Kashmir: The goal is near! Riaz Ahmed Syed, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, April 27³⁶

Indian 'occupying' forces' brutalities and crimes on Kashmiris have crossed all lines. *Their goal is to break the resolve of Kashmiris in which New Delhi government will never succeed. Dialogue remains only option to improve the situation. But India is not ready for that. It has closed all doors for Pakistan.* ... Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah along with other leaders all have asked to start dialogue to resolve the issue. Mehbooba asked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 10 April that remove uncertainty in the minds of Kashmiris. ... Farooq Abdullah has been persistently asking for restarting dialogue. *Farooq said while speaking to his party workers that the LoC should be changed into 'Line of Peace and Goodwill' and then dialogue of all stakeholders should be started. These kind of voices have come from civil society in India and even from Indian army. One noted journalist Shekhar Gupta wrote in his column that though India has been able retain its control over Kashmir by deploying 4.5 lakh of its army but it is losing psychological and emotional war.* The spark of 1989 has changed into volcano. Pakistan should raise Kashmir issue at all international forums. Delegations should be sent to member countries of UN Security Council and other countries as well. The world should be told that India is doing terrorism and genocide in Kashmir. What happened in Gujarat (in 2002) is being repeated in Kashmir. ... To reach any resolution, the role of LoC is important. In its current form, it cannot achieve its political goals.... *For Pakistan it is a good sign that some Muslim countries are backing its line on Kashmir. Last year Turkish President Recep Erdogan had asked India to resolve the issue by talking to Pakistan. ... On the last Eid, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei clubbed Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan and Kashmir together where the 'occupying' forces are committing atrocities on Muslims.* Kashmir issue should be part of our foreign policy and should be raised more and more at the diplomatic level.

³⁶ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2018-04-27/page-6/detail-10>

Electronic Media

What is the best outcome for Pakistan in the current Political Situation?

*Bay-Laag, Capital TV, 01 April*³⁷

In the latest episode of *Bay Laag*, *Eijaz Haider interviews Dr. Moeed Yusuf* and discusses on “**What is the best outcome for Pakistan in the current Political Situation**”? The anchor opens the debate by asking the guest how Washington is looking at Pakistan. Moeed underlines that the Trump Administration has a different yardstick to look at Pakistan as compared to the previous governments. *In US, Pakistan is discussed mostly in terms of terrorism, Taliban, militant sanctuaries and safe havens and so on.* It has to be made clear that US looked at Nawaz Sharif as someone who had a liberal approach towards issues, especially towards India and Afghanistan and US was more than willing to engage with him. With Nawaz Sharif sacked from his position as the Prime Minister, US believes that the balance of power has shifted towards the army leaving civilian government without any decisive power. Therefore, US has taken its step back and is very careful in engaging with Pakistan. Eijaz Haider interrupts and said that Pakistan is undergoing an internal crisis and there is no discussion about its internal issues in the US, why? Moeed replies that the times have changed now. Earlier in the past when US did interfere in its internal matters, Pakistan use accuse the US for messing up the domestic situation. At present, the focus of the US has shifted and it wants to focus more on terrorism. On being asked about the judicial activism in Pakistan, *Moeed underlines that such activism is not sustainable on long run because any organization that attempts to operate out of its boundary and try to work out of it, it has to face backlash.* Although the judiciary will get popular support because its talking about public issues, but such initiatives cannot be sustained in the long run.

Nawaz Sharif could have avoided lifetime disqualification? , Cross-Check, Capital TV, 13 April³⁸

The historical judgment of the Supreme Court regarding Nawaz Sharif’s lifetime ban on his political carrier under 62(1) f has come as yet another blow to the PML-N party. Although the party has termed it as a state conspiracy to end Nawaz Sharif’s political career but the underlying fact is that the judgment

³⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRQpG9_RszQ

³⁸ <http://dailycapital.pk/program/cross-check-with-ot/KFkX0b6A32w/Nawaz-Sharif-could-have-avoided-lifetime-disqualif>

has erased any hope of his return to politics in the near future. Musharraf Zaidi one of the guest on the show underlines that the judgment is not wrong if one look at it without any political bias. *The power of making legislations and rules lies with the parliament and the Supreme Court can just interpret the laws pass judgment according to the set rules and laws. Even in this case, the court has come forward to fill the gaps and has passed the judgement within the parameters of the constitution.* But one thing which needs to be highlighted is the absence of a fair trial for Nawaz Sharif in this case. Qualification is the main thing in politics and if someone is disqualified, it is a big stain on one's political career. Also, now that that they have set the precedence for disqualification of a PM, it is a grave matter how other politicians will also come into the fold of this law in future. Commenting on the options of the PML-N after this historic judgement, Murtaza Salongi underlines that Nawaz Sharif has no option but to exploit the victimhood card even further to keep the parties vote bank intact. Also he adds that *Sadiq and Amin* are such delicate qualities which will trap many politicians in the near future. PML-N as a party will not vanish and if the parliament have the will they can call a meeting and scrap this law altogether. Politically Nawaz Sharif cannot be written off till he commands support from the public. Had there been a clean and clear handing of power to Shabaz Sharif, Nawaz would not have to play the victim card. But the fact that Shabaz and Nawaz are on a different zone all together is creating all the issues and confusion within and outside the party.

Why PTM is branded negatively? Bay-Laag, Capital TV, 22 April³⁹

Ejaz Haider highlights that the growing strength and voice of the PTM and Pashtuns is been wrongly branded by the government establishments (army/civil) as an engineered movement with hand of foreign handlers. Brig. Asad Muneer one of the guest on the show underlines that the *PTM is a grassroots movement and a result of the long drawn silence of the Pashtun people against the atrocities by the Pakistani government.* The increasing protests in FATA, north and south Waziristan, Quetta, Peshawar and now in Lahore is an indication of the growing frustration of the youth of the region who want the administration to hear to their voice. The need of the hour is to listen to the voices of the youth of the PTM and try to solve their issues in a democratic manner. The people of FATA believes that the Pakistan army along with the Taliban have destroyed the region, by keeping FATA in the dark and opposing mainstreaming of FATA which has worked in

³⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgAV3H3-cqs>

their favour. *For the main political parties in Pakistan, PTM has become a big threat, especially given the upcoming general elections. The growth and influence of the PTM is increasing each day and there are narratives which says that if the PTM fights the upcoming general body elections in FATA they can win a large number of votes and that is how they can enter mainstream politics.* Ejaz Haider believes that by labelling them as anti-Pakistan the government is further pushing them hard into the hands of the enemy. The government should not response to the movement in a predictable manner which obviously will be a plus point for the elements who want to exploit the issue within as well as outside of the country.

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Quetta ⁴⁰	03/04/2018	Four killed in attack on Christians in Pakistan's Quetta	04	00
Quetta ⁴¹	09/04/2018	Suicide bomber wounds 5 troops in Pakistan	00	05
Quetta ⁴²	16/04/2018	2 shot dead in Pakistan's Quetta	02	05

⁴⁰<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/killed-attack-christians-pakistan-quetta-180402161157315.html>

⁴¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/suicide-bomber-wounds-5-troops-in-pakistan/2018/04/09/61603f3e-3c15-11e8-955b-7d2e19b79966_story.html?utm_term=.383023f3e962

⁴² <https://munsifdaily.in/2-shot-dead-in-pakistans-quetta/>

Quetta ⁴³	18/04/2018	Gunmen kill Shiite shopkeeper in Pakistan	01	0
Dera Bugti ⁴⁴	22/04/2018	Security forces kill 5 terrorists, arrest 10	05	0
Quetta ⁴⁵	22/04/2018	Two Shi'a Killed, One Wounded In Quetta 'Target' Attack	02	01
Quetta ⁴⁶	28/04/2018	Two killed in sectarian attack in southwest Pakistan: police	02	15
FATA				
Kurram Agency ⁴⁷	16/04/2018	Ambush at Pak-Afghan border leaves 5 FC personnel martyred	04	12
North Waziristan ⁴⁸	23/04/2018	One soldier killed, 3 injured in North Pakistan IED blast	01	03

⁴³https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/gunmen-kill-shiite-shopkeeper-in-pakistan/2018/04/18/a57a98b0-42f1-11e8-b2dc-b0a403e4720a_story.html?utm_term=.30fe451ffdcf

⁴⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/230954/security-forces-kill-5-terrorists-arrest-10/>

⁴⁵<https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-two-shi-a-killed-one-wounded-in-quetta-target-attack/29185439.html>

⁴⁶<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-killings/two-killed-in-sectarian-attack-in-southwest-pakistan-police-idUSKBN1HZ0BV>

⁴⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1401962>

⁴⁸ <http://www.qatar-tribune.com/news-details/id/121994>

