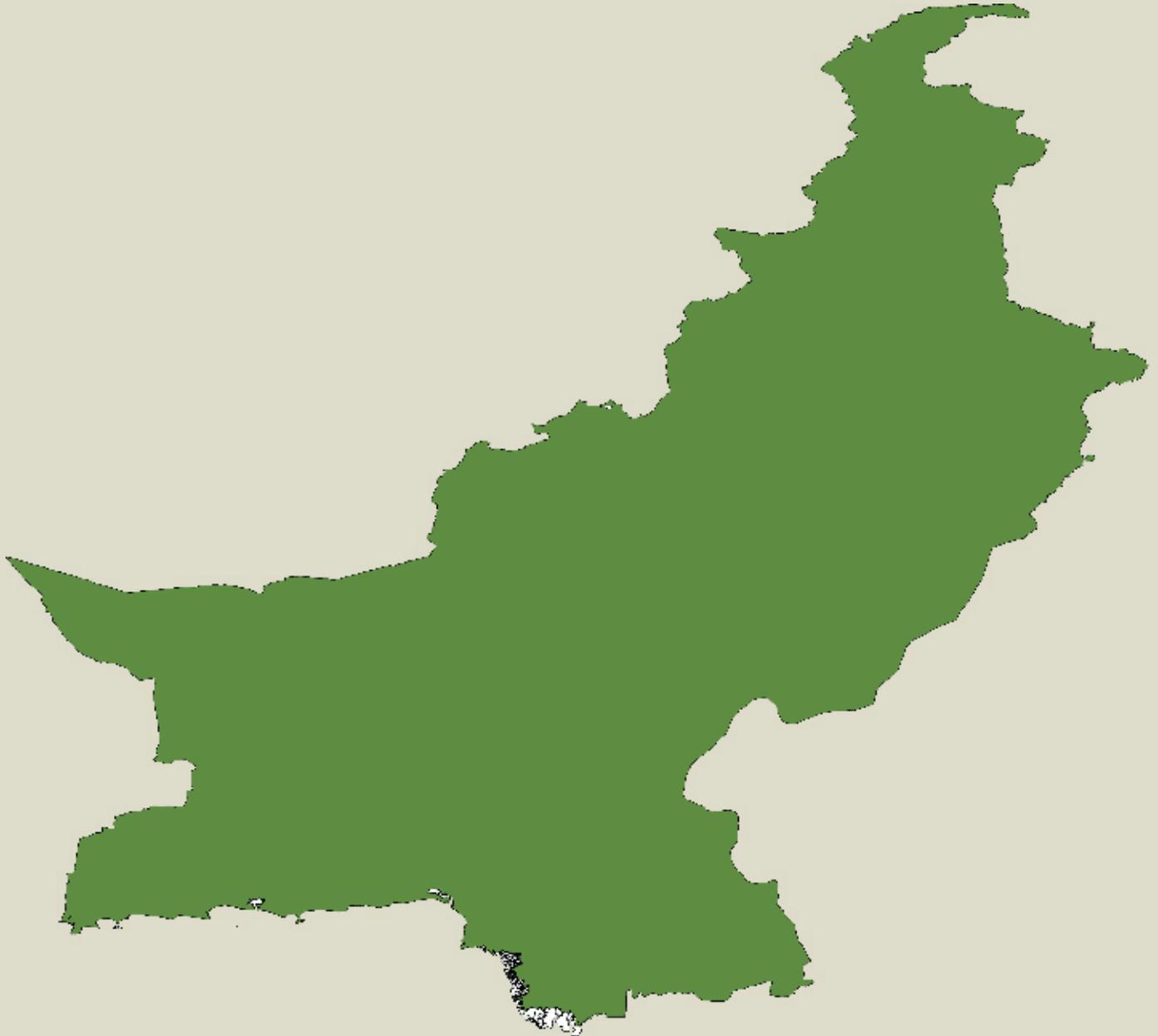


August 2018

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



Prepared by
Dr. Zainab Akhter
Nazir Ahmad Mir
Dr. Mohammad Eisa
Dr. Ashok Behuria

idsa
INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
1-Development Enclave, Near USI
Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi-110010

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, August 2018

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| EDITORIAL | 03 |
| POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS | 12 |
| SECURITY SITUATION | 16 |
| PROVINCES & REGIONS | 17 |
| GB..... | 18 |
| Balochistan..... | 19 |
| Kashmir..... | 20 |
| URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA | 21 |
| Urdu..... | 25 |
| Electronic..... | 27 |
| STATISTICS | 28 |
| BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES..... | 30 |

Editorial

PTI emerged as the single largest party in the elections of 2018 winning the Centre as well as the provinces of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, besides managing a notable presence in Sindh. Most of the media both English and vernacular described the role of Imran Khan as new Prime Minister to be full of challenges and as a beginning of the real test of his capability as a leader. He took charge at a point when the country is already facing a huge crisis in the economic, energy, internal and border security, civil-military relationship and foreign policy sector. In his maiden speech to the Pakistan National Assembly as the PM Imran Khan emphasized that it took him twenty two years to reach where he is today. The Pakistani media described his transition as a start of a new struggle and underlined that it's time to practice what he has been preaching all along and deliver his promises of a Naya (new) Pakistan.

At the same time Imran Khan's victory was marred by allegations of rigging and manipulations on the day of elections by the opposition parties, especially PML-N. They also hinted the role of the establishment in the victory of Imran Khan and termed it as a propaganda to sideline PML-N politically. The PML-N and other political parties in Pakistan rejected the election results alleging their polling agents party workers required to be present at the time of the vote count were evicted from the polling stations during the vote count. They also complained about the inordinate delay in the release of preliminary results by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

The Islamic fundamentalist parties fielded more than 1,500 candidates in Pakistan's provincial and national elections but the surprising element of the Pakistan elections was the rise of Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP), a relatively new anti-blasphemy party. Surprisingly the TLP was able to pull more than 2.23 million votes in the national assembly elections, its first general election, and more than 2.38 million provincial votes, according to data. Reports suggest that it cut into the votes of the mainstream parties in Karachi, Punjab and KP and after emerging as the fifth largest party in the elections has become one of the biggest headaches for the mainstream politicians and human rights activists. According to media reports the rise of the new Islamist parties and their participation in the democratic process will

push the Pakistan politics further into dilemma and affect the future legislations.

Zainab Akhter

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Imran Khan's opportunity with America, Michael Kugelman, Dawn, 02 August¹

For the US, relations with Pakistan are always seen through the lens of Afghanistan. One reason the US government hasn't walked away from Islamabad despite all the tensions and frustrations of recent years is that it desperately wants Pakistan to help it pursue its goals in Afghanistan. From Washington's perspective, Pakistan hasn't been terribly helpful, mainly because it has not addressed America's concerns about Afghan insurgents allegedly based in Pakistan. And for years, American troops have tried but failed to tame the militants that Washington accuses Pakistan of harboring. America's new Plan B for Afghanistan has always been Pakistan's Plan A — or at least Islamabad has stated as much publicly. Until now, the two countries' plans had never been in alignment. Washington has now agreed to pursue direct, bilateral talks with the Taliban. *In effect, Khan's perceived soft side for militants, rightly considered by many to be a liability, can also be an advantage. The qualities that inspire the moniker "Taliban Khan" could actually help serve US and Pakistani interests in Afghanistan — and, in the process, help boost US-Pakistan ties.*

How a phone app and a database helped PTI clinch election victory, Dawn, 06 August²

PTI was secretive about the technology plan ahead of the July 25 poll, fearing rivals could copy it, but several party workers showed Reuters how the app transformed their campaign and gave them an edge. *The phone app proved especially useful in getting supporters to the polls when the government's own telephone information service giving out polling station locations suffered major problems on Election Day, leaving other parties scrambling.* It partly explains why PTI managed to win tight-margin races across the country. Developed by a small tech team, the Constituency Management System (CMS) was a key response to Mr. Khan's bitter complaints after the 2013 poll loss that his party failed to translate mass popularity into votes because it did not know the "art of winning elections". PML-N ran a more erratic campaign, hurt by divisions within the party and the loss of key leaders who were either disqualified or in case of Nawaz Sharif and his daughter, jailed. Weeks before the elections, Mr. Khan sent out a video via

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1424252/imran-khans-opportunity-with-america>

² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1425242/how-a-phone-app-and-a-database-helped-pti-clinch-election-victory>

WhatsApp urging PTI candidates to embrace CMS. For the national election PTI focused on 150 constituencies it felt it had the best chance of winning. Party workers said they used scanning software to digitize publicly-available electoral voter lists to create the database. *By typing in a voter's identity card number into the app, PTI workers could see details such as family home address, who else lived in the same household, and where they needed to vote. It became so crucial to the PTI campaign that when on Election Day the programme went down for an hour, it triggered some panic in the party's ranks.*

Can PM Khan deliver Jinnah's Pakistan? Yasser Latif Hamdani, Dawn, 06 August³

While Jinnah did say on a couple of occasions that Muslims had learnt democracy 13 centuries ago in a bid to convince his co-religionists that a modern democratic state was not antithetical to Islam, his political ideals were drawn from the western model in general and Britain in particular. This is why in his famous inaugural address, he referred to Catholic and Protestant conflict in Great Britain and did not refer to Islam or Islamic History even once. Prime Minister in waiting Imran Khan speaks of Jinnah's Pakistan but his own methods have been entirely contrary to Jinnah's principles. By using the same rhetoric that Majlis-e-Ahrar used against Jinnah, the PTI Chief has reignited the Khatm-e-Nabuwat issue. PM Khan's claim to Jinnah's mantle actually proves to be quite superficial. Unlike Mr Khan, Quaid-e-Azam was never a rabble-rouser. As one biographer put it, even in the heat of battle for Muslim rights, Jinnah deliberately kept himself above crude communalism. Imran Khan on the other hand has attempted to use a specific appeal to one theological issue as the central plank of his election campaign. Can he now deliver Jinnah's Pakistan? I hope so but I certainly do not believe so. *Perhaps Mr Khan has it in him to still reverse swing the ball as he used to in his cricketing days. I am afraid however that this might require a little political ball tampering.*

How did women candidates fare in the elections? Kapil Dev, Daily Times, 08 August⁴

Women MNAs and MPAs must be encouraged to contest on general seats in the next elections. By developing consensus and fielding women candidates against other women in the next general elections, a far larger number of women could get elected on general seats. There is also a need to revise the

³ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/278755/can-pm-khan-deliver-jinnahs-pakistan/>

⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/279734/how-did-women-candidates-fare-in-the-elections/>

reserved seat quota modality and develop stronger mechanisms to ensure political parties implement five percent provision of tickets to women. There were a lot of hopes and expectations that 2018 elections will augment the unprecedented presence of women in the National Assemblies (NA), as a record number of as many as 171 women candidates contested on 272 NA seats across the country. Out of them, 105 women contested on party tickets while another 66 contested as independent candidates. *Sad part of the story is that the number of women getting elected on general seats is decreasing in every subsequent Assembly; in 2008 there were 16 women, in 2013 there were nine women, and now in 2018 the number has further shrunk down to eight. Though, the five percent provision has not increased the number of women in the assemblies, it surely did increase the number of women who contested the 2018 polls. Besides this, those conservative and religious parties who would hardly think to award tickets to women candidates were also bound under the law to give at least five percent of their party tickets to women candidates.* Meanwhile, political parties should work on amending the Act and devising a mechanism to declare 22 percent of constituencies (17 percent reserved seat quota seats plus 5 percent party tickets seats) multi-member constituencies where both men and women members contest from the same constituency. Besides, an amendment should be made to ensure that 33 percent of office-bearers at all levels of party structures should be women.

Evaluating China's commitment to Pakistan, Benjamin Clark, *Daily Times*, 09 August⁵

However, it appears the depth of those ties are sometimes overstated within Pakistan. This has led to reports that China has committed to directly defending Pakistan's territorial integrity and that it supports Pakistan's claims over Kashmir. The problem is, they aren't true. *To understand why, it is necessary to grasp the two fundamental goals of China's South Asian policy. Firstly, it wants Pakistan to balance against India. Secondly, it wants to improve relations with all countries. China is playing a balancing game. Pakistan and India have different interests, and China is trying to satisfy both while pursuing its own interests.* This does not involve openly siding with Pakistan against India. *China will of course continue to support Pakistan's ability to defend its own territory through diplomatic, economic and military assistance. China wants a stable and secure Pakistan to prevent India dominating South Asia, wary of India's deepening ties with the US and potential containment strategies.* However, it seems many commentators conflate China being pro-Pakistan with it being anti-India. This is not the case.

⁵ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/280399/evaluating-chinas-commitment-to-pakistan/>

While India and China have had their difficulties in the past and still have issues to overcome, relations are improving through careful management. So why China's commitment to Pakistan's interests frequently is exaggerated? With US relations hitting all-time lows, leaders may seek a crutch to demonstrate their foreign policy credentials. Poor relations with India and Afghanistan fuel a sense of insecurity which can be alleviated by portraying China as a comprehensive ally, and claiming to have engineered such an alliance boosts popularity. The media may also be responsible — some reports make unsubstantiated claims which contradict official Chinese policy.

PML-N's new reality, Umair Javed, Dawn, 13 August⁶

The results are not entirely unexpected, even if the scale of the swing might be. The PML-N had been losing ground in north Punjab since 2013, when it saw its winning margins on seats reduce by two per cent compared to 2008, the only region in the province where this happened for the party. In the south, the defections and the party's conjoined failure to address the question of either serious devolution or a new province cost them seats in Seraiki-speaking areas, leaving them competitive only on seats with a sizable settler (abadkar) population. Most television channels regurgitate the 'let's give him a chance' line wholesale, which means the honeymoon period should last for a bit, leaving the PML-N with little ammo to snipe at from the opposition benches. This is particularly ironic because the PML-N has historically been the beneficiary of an understanding and a considerate media sphere, while the PPP was taken to the cleaners every evening during its time in office. *Third, it now finds itself in a strange position where it has nothing to sell unless the incumbent slips up massively. Contrast this with the PTI, which consistently fired away through its corruption rhetoric and then expanded to talk about governance more broadly. For better or worse, it has a brand that it can supplement further by performing in office.* The PML-N, on the other hand, has nothing akin to the anti-corruption assault launched on it by the PTI, and which it once had when its closest foe was a heavily compromised PPP.

Imran time is here, Cyril Almeida, Dawn, 19 August⁷

The economic arena has made itself a candidate for big, quick, splashy change that can drive the politics of change. And Imran has a hidden advantage here. The N-League was beaten so senseless politically over its mishandling of state finances and the economy that there is no greater political truth today than that a financial crisis of monumental, historic, unprecedented proportions is

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1426736/pml-ns-new-realit>

⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1427942>

already upon us. It doesn't exist. At least not as a crisis we haven't seen before or that can't be reasonably managed until the future lot are handed a familiar bag of steaming you-know-what. *Actual crisis is: close-to-zero or negative GDP growth; big inflation; no electricity in the system; serious sanctions or no external creditors available at any cost when the familiar dollar crisis hits; a vastly bigger-than-usual chasm between state expenditure and revenue generation; and monumentally unmanageable debt relative to the size of the economy.* If Project Imran is about bypassing and side-stepping the core problem of who actually runs Pakistan, there's two changes in the first few months of Imran's term that may cause that question to bubble up. The first, in October, can't be mentioned for reasons of the muzzle and the leash. The other big change is in the court. The fag-end of the incumbent's tenure will begin soon, always a tricky stretch. And the judge who follows may want to quickly establish there's a new top robe in town. Imran time is here. But is change really a coming?

Shahbaz's distasteful job, Arifa Noor, Dawn, 21 August⁸

But what was it? Did the party lose in Punjab because the establishment worked overtime to ensure the defeat or did Shahbaz Sharif's lily-livered message during the election campaign do the damage? For, if it was the latter, then really, what chance did Shahbaz Sharif have? Had he roared like his brother and niece, would it have reversed all the 'damage' done in the past one year? Reports have it that the party's protest plans are being orchestrated from behind jail bars and Sharif Jr usually finds out about them along with the opposition. Marriyum Aurangzeb knows more about the plans to protest than he does; a newspaper report last week said that during a visit of party leaders to Adiala, the former information minister was given special instructions regarding plans to protest in parliament. *Indeed, his relatives are part of the reason he faces a credibility crisis. Despite having stuck by his brother's side, there is little doubt of who considers him and labels him a Trojan horse.* The PML-N needs to find its own strategy of which there are as yet few signs. This is perhaps Sharif Jr's biggest failure so far. Already there is talk of a forward bloc in the party; the few extra votes polled in favour of Pervez Elahi in the Punjab Assembly have already set off feverish speculation about a breakaway faction. And while there are few chances of it materializing right now, when it does, Shahbaz will once again be blamed. *But if it happens now, and Nawaz Sharif strike a deal and leave Pakistan and Shahbaz Sharif stays back, he will have to deal with a heavily demoralized and divided party — the forward bloc might become inevitable*

⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1428374/shahbazs-distasteful-job>

then. But the rump left behind will still not look up to just him; the exiles will continue to exercise control too. He will have to live with the divided authority. And that is always been his destiny — power in bits and pieces.

Resetting foreign policy, Editorial, Daily Times, 21 August⁹

For its part, the PTI government must remain pragmatic in approach. For there can be no two ifs or buts about it: bridges need to be mended. And fast. This is crucial to fostering peace in Afghanistan as well as to ending efforts to isolate Pakistan at multilateral forums. Not least because the spectre of going to the IMF with begging bowl in hand looms forever large. *In short, the time has come not for bravado but for sincere engagement; from both sides. All the while noting that this will not translate into surrendering the national interest.* But, rather, recognizing that the American regional presence will not diminish in the near future. To be sure, this represents a good start in terms of intent. For what could be more amenable to regional security than a Pakistan at ease with its neighbours and working in tandem with the US for collective peace. After all, both Kabul and Islamabad are battling the ISIS threat; also cause of concern to Russia and China. This is not to mention the recent UN report that identifies Al Qaeda as a still credible force for devastation across the western front and, by extension, here too. And while failure for the American intervention in Afghanistan lies primarily with the US and its aversion to nation-building, such terror groups threaten the entire neighbourhood. Thus a truly multilateral response is needed. It is therefore hoped that regional allies and neighbours will give PM Khan and his government a chance; and vice versa. Of course, results cannot happen overnight. But they can be achieved over the next five years. Thus it is in everyone's interest to pursue unity and reconciliation at all costs.

Nawaz on ECL, Editorial, Daily Times, 23 August¹⁰

The point, nevertheless, is this: Imran has won the popular mandate. His focus should now turn towards long-term policymaking and implementation. After all, this is why he announced a pre-emptive three-month foreign trip sabbatical; to better concentrate on the myriad of challenges facing the country. And this is just what he must do. The most urgent items on the agenda being clotting a haemorrhaging economy and resetting international relations. Which is why Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's reaching out across the political divide to those who had previously held this post — including PMLN man Khawaja Asif — to introduce a process of non-partisan consultation was appreciated. But none of this will be effectively achieved as

⁹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/286524/resetting-foreign-policy/>

¹⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/286947/nawaz-on-ecl/>

long as the PM surrenders the larger picture of reconciliation for what now risks looking a lot like personal enmity. It would therefore be far more prudent if the new set-up allowed the courts to do their job; which is the first step towards strengthening the judiciary. For if Imran continues down this path of Nawaz-centricity the inevitable fallout will be found in the politics of distraction; as tit becomes tat *ad infinitum*. And as always, it will be the people of this country, who risked life and limb to vote in a quite literally bloody election that will ultimately pay the price.

The 'Pakistan first' approach, By Kamran Yousaf, *The Express Tribune*, 27 August¹¹

In the past, elected governments were sent home on this tricky issue of national interest. Similarly, there were a number of decisions Pakistan took in the past in the name of national interest that eventually turned out to be disastrous for the country. Two such follies include supporting the so-called "Afghan Jihad" at the behest of the West in 1979 and then switching sides and becoming part of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Both those major policy decisions were taken by the military dictators. At the time they might have justified those decisions but history tells us that Pakistan has paid and in fact and has still been paying the price of those blunders. Given this baggage, it would be a great step forward if the PTI government led by Khan is able to determine Pakistan's national interests. For this purpose, some hard questions need to be asked. For example, is it in Pakistan's interest to move away from the security-centric state? *Is it in Pakistan's interest to follow a set of policies that help the country get rid of this notorious tag of supporting certain militant groups as proxies? Is it in Pakistan's interest to have friendly or at least manageable relationship with its neighbours, including India? Is it in Pakistan's interest to further enhance strategic partnership with China and deepen ties with Russia while at the same time not to follow a confrontational path with the US?* Is it in Pakistan's interest to maintain a delicate balance in our ties with both Iran and Saudi Arabia? If the answer to all those questions is yes, then the new government led by Prime Minister Khan shouldn't have any difficulty in formulating a "Pakistan first" foreign policy.

¹¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1788642/6-pakistan-first-approach/>

Sycophant culture, Moeed Yusuf, Dawn, 28 August¹²

Sycophancy is the brain-eating amoeba of Pakistani politics. It affects everyone — the upright and the compromised. Sycophants are simply rational actors who recognize that sucking up to the boss offers greater benefit than objective critique in cultures with weak integrity and an absence of meritocracy. To be sure, different leaders have different levels of susceptibility to sycophancy. But no one comes into office believing that they'll fall for it. Yet, most end up addicted. Leaders tend to get surrounded by a group of people who act as gatekeepers. The leader's reality begins to be shaped; they gradually lose touch with the view on the street. *This problem tends to be acuter in contexts like Pakistan's where there is no end to bad news; praise, genuine or not, offers leaders welcome relief from the constant stress and anguish of dealing with the country's myriad problems. Khan won't be immune to these pressures. And no matter how different he may be from his predecessors, sycophancy will begin to affect his outlook unless he consciously acts to nip it in the bud now.* Pakistan's problems are too vast and complex for a hands-on leadership approach to work. Instead, the prime minister's time should be spent recruiting the best talent for the key public-sector political and technocratic positions around the country and empowering them to deliver results. The sycophants would then find more value in flocking to these decision-makers. This is a far less damaging prospect as long as the prime minister can set up a mechanism to evaluate the performance of these individuals on a regular basis and penalize those unable to perform because the sycophants have got the better of them or otherwise.

Fathering Pakistan's foreign policy, Ayesha Siddiqi, Daily Times, 30 August¹³

The FM indeed did not have a good start, with the fiasco of the telephone call between the new Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. The Foreign Office (FO) reportedly claims to have been in the dark about who advised the new head of government to take the call, or what the conversation was. It is quite obvious that Qureshi was not in the loop. Soon after the call, the US State department issued a 'read out' of the call which was later tweeted. The FO responded by tweeting its response late in the evening after 9 PM, in which it was demanded from the American to withdraw their statement. Perhaps, had the FM been in charge of the entire call business he might not have taken such a harsh stance. Being an experienced FM, Qureshi is aware of how diplomacy is conducted, especially

¹² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1429437/sycophant-culture>

¹³ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/290077/fathering-pakistans-foreign-policy/>

with an arrogant superpower. Later during his press briefing, the minister did stand by his ministry's claim but his tone was far more controlled than the FO spokesman's. But at the risk of repeating, the briefing made it clear that the FM was more of a bystander than a real player. *Here is an issue of an obvious difference of opinion between the political FM and the state bureaucracy.* The former is certainly conscious of the fact that despite Islamabad's anger over several 'let-downs' by the US or Trump's hostility, or hope of Chinese assistance, Islamabad needs to improve ties with Washington. Though highly unfortunate, the fact remains that a more diplomatic handling of the matter was beneficial. *Political masters in Pakistan have failed to comprehend the cost of making populist claims, especially when they are riding the foreign policy tiger.*

ECONOMIC ISSUES

China road, Huma Yusuf, Dawn, 27 August¹⁴

Do not be fooled by the \$2 billion post-election bailout. If anything, this timely intervention betrays China's recognition that our new prime minister will struggle to reconcile his populist politics and the current relationship with Beijing. Indeed, China's anxiety about Sino-Pak ties in the Khan era was betrayed the moment his victory was clear and the Chinese media began to warn Khan against paying heed to Western media coverage of the bilateral relationship. *The issue is not whether CPEC will proceed in 'naya Pakistan'. That is a must. There is military and cross-party support for the investment corridor and, frankly, Pakistan has few other options. The issue is whether CPEC's progress will expose Prime Minister Khan's populism as rhetoric.* PM Khan's populist politics will necessarily take him down a rocky path to Beijing's doorstep. How can he speak of transparency without being confronted with the opacity of CPEC financial arrangements? Similarly, how can PM Khan continue to rail against the Sharifs' and the PML-N's corruption and economic mismanagement without scrutinising CPEC projects? Then there's the matter of job creation. PM Khan's promise of creating 10 million jobs in his first 100 days has been among his most lauded. But his tenure will see an influx of Chinese workers to service CPEC projects, while unskilled

¹⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1429227/china-road>

Pakistani labour is relegated to the sidelines. *That leaves the prime minister with the disconnect between widespread unemployment even as the presence of Chinese workers grows.* But the prime minister's post-election odes to China, the tweets in Mandarin, the sudden reframing (without evidence) of CPEC as a jobs generator and promoter of human development — these are the actions of one who is falling in line. Indeed, with his praise for China's anti-corruption and poverty alleviation programmes, PM Khan has gone one step further than our previous leaders, who celebrated the strategic importance of the alliance with China, to embracing Chinese governance and values. It seems China will get what it wants from the 'naya Pakistan', but for the prime minister this will be at the cost of broken promises and betrayed principles.

Populism and governance, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 22 August¹⁵

Financial constraints have also been a factor in low investment in the social sector. Khan's promise to get millions of children into school needs massive resources. It is a similar story in the health sector. The party may have succeeded to some extent in reforming the education and health sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that it ruled for five years, but a lot more needs to be done. The financial crisis is certainly the most serious concern for the new government as acknowledged by the prime minister. The current account deficit and falling foreign exchange reserves need urgent action. But Khan does not seem to have clear thoughts on the question of whether to seek an IMF bailout or to see if other options are available to deal with the crisis. The massive debt burden has limited our options. The delay in making decisions could worsen our predicament. Also on the issue of accountability, the PTI government has taken populist rhetoric too far. Indeed, there is a need for across-the-board accountability but the government's actions reinforce allegations of a witch hunt. The pledge of bringing back looted money is nothing more than rhetoric. It would be much better for the PTI administration to let the law take its course rather than have its leaders trumpeting the mantra day and night. *Although Khan has vowed to implement the National Action Plan, there seems little clarity on how the administration plans to deal with the menace of religious extremism that threatens to tear apart our social fabric. There was not even a mention of the problem of violent extremism in the prime minister's address to the nation.* Notwithstanding Imran Khan's commitment of building a 'naya Pakistan', there is now a need for the new incumbent to focus more seriously on

¹⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1428500/populism-and-governance>

governance rather than pandering to populism. Governance is serious business and must be taken as such.

SECURITY SITUATION

What does the future hold for minorities? Nasir Saeed, *Daily Times*, 03 August¹⁶

However, minorities are not ready to rejoice the arrival of Khan's PTI. Read through his election agendas and victory speech and you will notice something is missing *Khan has not outlined a specific policy to deal with minorities, forcing people to read between the lines. He spoke of his desire to make Pakistan like Madina. Khan even said: "I wanted Pakistan to become the country that my leader Quaid I Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had dreamed of."Jinnah achieved Pakistan through a democratic struggle and believed in equality for all citizens.* But without any concrete minority agenda, nor any consultation with minority leaders, confusion and worry remain. Minorities are left asking what the future holds for non-Muslims in the *Naya* Pakistan. Will Khan follow the Madina state model, a western welfare system, or make the country Quaid's Pakistan, where religion or caste or creed had nothing to do with the business of the State. *Despite one horrific crime after another, those in power did little to stem the tide of violence against Christians. Indeed, with such a poor track record on minority issues, there are few Christians in Pakistan sad to see the PML-N go.* His election comes at a critical time for minorities. Khan has promised major reforms, particularly in the areas of welfare and governance, and there are many minorities who have been hoping that his coming to power will indeed usher in a new, more equal, cleaner and fairer Pakistan for all. I, however, fear that it is expecting too much of Khan to think that he will bring in any significant changes for the country's minorities. Instead, I fear that the equal rights that could elevate the country's minorities from their current status as demonized second-class citizens is but a distant dream.

The politics of religion, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 08 August¹⁷

Indeed, the growing electoral support for the extremist outfit whose politics is based on animus against other religious groups and that justifies violence in the name of faith is worrisome. There may or may not be any correlation between those two developments; still, the spectacular rise of a radical Barelvi movement has given a new and dangerous twist to the issue of religion and

¹⁶ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/277170/what-does-the-future-hold-for-minorities/>

¹⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1425703/the-politics-of-religion>

politics in the country. *It may be indicative of disenchanted voters of the mainstream Islamic parties leaning towards extremist groups with a stronger bias against adherents of other religious beliefs. Meanwhile, the spectacular rise of the TLP over the past one year has changed the dynamics of religious politics in the country.* It gets more and more bizarre as even Pemra had banned the telecast of TLP rallies because of the vitriolic speeches of its leaders. How come the two state agencies have different laws applied to such a group? Similarly, some banned militant outfits were also allowed to participate in the election under new banners in violation of the law. This is more than a policy of appeasement and has raised questions of tacit backing from some state institutions. Radical groups deal a serious blow to the nation's struggle against extremism and militant violence. The TLP may not have a concrete programme for it to be a formidable electoral force in the long term. *But allowing such groups to operate freely and participate in elections could be disastrous. It remains to be seen how the new PTI administration deals with this scourge of extremism.*

Rise of the new Islamists, Qamar Cheema, Dawn, 31 August¹⁸

In Pakistan, many Islamists participated in the recent general elections but failed to make significant inroads into parliament. Obviously, these were Islamists who believed in the power of the vote and democracy, such as the Jamaat-e-Islami. Then there are what I call the New Islamists. These are individuals and groups whose past is tainted with acts of violence. Some are involved in violent sectarianism like Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ). Others are involved in militancy in Kashmir. Some of these New Islamists do not have a violent past, but are so intolerant in their approach that they end up hurting the state. One such group is the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), led by Khadim Hussain Rizvi, a firebrand speaker who rose to national prominence during a blasphemy-related row in 2017. The Pakistani state and political parties seem unaware of the repercussions of mainstreaming parties with violent ideologies and ties to militant groups. *Let us remember when we wanted the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to shun violence and cooperate with the state. This did not happen, as the TTP kept engaging in violent acts of terrorism. Eventually, Pakistan was forced to go after them with the military.* If the New Islamists are successful, the international community – including India – could make a case against Pakistan, saying terrorists have found space in the Pakistani parliament and could gain control over nuclear weapons. Sadly, it seems we are clueless about how to deal with this issue.

¹⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/290478/rise-of-the-new-islamists/>

PROVINCES & REGIONS

GB

Terror threats to Gilgit Baltistan loom ahead, Masud Ahmad Khan, Daily Times, 26 August¹⁹

Hostile agencies are trying their level best to create unrest in the region through their proxies. One issue resolves around sectarianism. Agencies can exploit the sectarian issue, which started in 1988, and even a small incident can trigger clashes in the region. However, the recent burning of schools and sudden eruption of terrorist activities in a short span of time is alarming and has brought Gilgit Baltistan and Chilas into the limelight. Chilas has witnessed a swath of schools being burned and this is not the first incident of its kind, according to the Chief Minister. *With the recent terrorist activities there should be no doubt of looming terrorist threat in the area to CPEC and Diamir-Basha Dam along Karakoram Highway.* The Karakoram highway is dual carriage, all weather road, which connects Pakistan with China. Almost 150 kilometers of Karakoram Highway passes through District Chilas from Thalachi to Thor. *Indian and other hostile agencies will not miss an opportunity to damage CPEC. The US too has serious concerns over the rise of China, and the US defence secretary has already raised concerns that CPEC passes through disputed territory.* The Gilgit Baltistan government needs to enhance security along Karakoram highway to thwart terrorist attacks similar to ones carried out in the past. They need to ensure the safety of vehicles plying through KP area on the way to Gilgit Baltistan, an even though the convoy system is causing inconvenience to commuters, this can be solved by employing mobile patrols and also by establishing check posts all along Karakoram Highway.

Balochistan

India's renewed strategy of destabilizing Balochistan, Col (R) Muhammad Hanif, Daily Times, 21 August²⁰

India has been working to destabilize Balochistan in two ways; by sponsoring terrorism using Afghan soil, and, by inciting the Baloch dissidents abroad to

¹⁹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/287996/terror-threats-to-gilgit-baltistan-loom-ahead/>

²⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/286526/indias-renewed-strategy-of-destabilising-balochistan/>

carry out a movement for the province's separation from Pakistan. In this context, while India's activities in sponsoring terrorism in Balochistan were confirmed by the apprehension and confessional statement of Kulbhushan Yadav, India's renewed game plan to incite and support the Baloch dissidents against Pakistan is now quite clear from the fact that it is about to grant Indian citizenship to Switzerland based Brahumdagh Khan Bugti and his colleagues, currently residing in various European countries. The above discussed Indian strategy of destabilizing Balochistan further came to light when, according to an article by Shailaja Neelakantan that appeared in a leading Indian daily newspaper, India inaugurated the "Free Balochistan" Office in New Delhi, on June 23 2018. The office will be run by Baloch dissidents to authenticate and promote the "Free Balochistan Movement" (FBM), with the obvious support of the RAW. They will arrange seminars, featuring foreign journalists and diplomats, on the so called "atrocities of Pakistan in Balochistan". *These activities are nothing new for India. It is a historical fact that India has used this strategy of destabilizing neighboring countries by supporting the dissident elements within, and by providing them refuge and military training.*

Kashmir

PTI, China and Articles of Settlement on Kashmir, Dr. Syed Nazir Gilani, Daily Times, 29 August²¹

As such, Prime Minister (PM), Imran Khan and his cabinet find themselves faced with numerous challenges. One of the main challenges is the Kashmir dispute. Despite how crucial this matter is to the future wellbeing of our country, our political governments have mishandled Kashmir at numerous points throughout history. Now Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari has prepared a conflict resolution paper on Kashmir. This may be one more mistake. Another important factor is that the Indian and Pakistani governments have failed to articulate the manner in which the UN describes the Kashmir case and the will of the Kashmiri people. *The new government will be faced with its first challenge at the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly. It should prepare itself in accordance with the existing UN jurisprudence on Kashmir.* For example, it should have a reliable understanding of the case and make a reference to Document III, which was submitted on January 15, 1948 "containing a statement of the particulars of

²¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/289542/pti-china-and-articles-of-settlement-on-kashmir/>

Pakistan's case with reference to both the matters dealt with in Documents I and II." Pakistan has admitted that the "two Dominions have tried to seek a solution by the methods described in article 33 of the Charter", but have failed. The bilateral engagement has continued and has failed. It is time that UN reorients its ownership of the case under article 103 of the Charter. Britain and America may not be as forthcoming and enthusiastic as they were in taking the Kashmir case to ICJ in November 1947 and August 1951. However, there are other countries who have remained robustly involved in the debate on the Kashmir situation (later named the India-Pakistan Question). There is an urgent need to revisit the interests and obligation of these countries. Argentina, China, France and Netherlands have played a crucial role during these debates. *China has made a serious case for 'pacification'. There would be many more countries in the future that would in pursuance of their Charter obligations revise their policy on Kashmir and support the right of self-determination.*

URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Urdu

Who are you? I am no one- America! Editorial, Ummat, 02 August²²

America has been an ally of Pakistan since our first Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan. It indeed gave financial aids to Pakistan and also asked international institutions, like IMF to assist Pakistan. *However, because of ill-intentions of the western powers and the financial institutions and also because of vested-interests, selfishness and incompetence and abysmal functioning of the rulers of Pakistan, the debts have eaten up every aid package apart the country's economy. ... Majority of the population of the country is unaware of the fact that many historical buildings of Pakistan, airports and roads have been kept as mortgage for foreign loans.* Every child of the country is indebted upto 1.5 lakh rupees. The claims of 'patriotism' of some of the leaders sound false when they give this offer to the US that if they were given one more chance to be in power, they would allow the US to access Pakistan's nukes. While one religious leader had suggested to the US that if he was to come to power, he would eliminate Afghan-Taliban from Pakistan. ... *Upto to the*

²² <http://ummat.net/2018/08/02/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

former government, Pakistan was badly caught in the trap of foreign debts and loans. According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBI) because of the difference between import and export, our exchange reserves have reduced to \$20 billion dollars only. No party has won simple majority in the national elections. That means it will be an alliance and weak government. It would be always under pressure and ready to compromise. *Because of our weak economy, America is expecting that we will ask for a bailout from the IMF and it will set the conditions for that. Thus the US will try to lay its hands on Pakistan's nukes.* However, Pakistan has not as of now asked for a bailout. The expected finance minister of the PTI led government has said that we would not ask for the one and would focus on using our own resources instead. The best way to get rid of the foreign debts and loans is to bring back the looted money of the former rulers and put that in the national treasure. *...America is not only willing to curb Pakistan's activities. It also has enmity with China, to whom it wants to contain. It opposes the Belt Road Initiative (BRI). Because it will allow development work to happen in Pakistan in particular and in the region in general. That Pakistan will become developed and independent in economy and America will lose its control. ...* The IMF's reprimand to the US that 'who is it and it should stop unnecessary' meddling to delay the policy. This is sign that America is in decline.

The story of 2018 elections, Mirza Aslam Beg, Ummat, 03 August²³

General opinion about the recent 2018 general and provincial elections has been that they were free and fair. *Still there is hue and cry about fraud and rigging. It is done by those who lost the elections.* They demand resignation from the Election Commission and also hold responsible the institution who ensured the election that they have soft corner for Imran Khan. *Actually Imran Khan won the elections because of his protests and his decision to boycott the parliament. ...* The reactions about the result of the recent elections emerged from roads and streets. It was to a great extent fueled by our media. All these used a language that has defamed our politics. ...

Ideological and culture change:

The democratic process that has emerged out of these elections, stands alone in many aspects. *Major role in this was played by veiled-women Mohtarma Bushra Khan. She has had significant impact on the election process and spiritual aspects of Imran Khan. One friend of Bushra said: 'Bushra Khan's*

²³ <http://ummat.net/2018/08/03/news.php?p=idr2.gif>

prediction that Imran Khan will become the Prime Minister has come true. Her prediction that the PTI would win 116 seats has also been right. She is a religious woman who advises her husband on religious and political issues. Because her groups like Peers of Sial, Pers of Sulatn Bahu-Sharif and others have supported PTI. ...' Certainly for last few months, there has been change in Imran Khan's personality, which is surprising. Imran now visits shrines and Peers. He keeps an amulet. Now it seems that 'Naya Pakistan' will be of same ideology. He is no more captain of a world cup winning team but a follower of his wife's spiritual dictates. After winning majority number of seats in the national assembly, Imran Kahn will rope in smaller parties and will for the government. He has ignored in the PPP which could have given him a clear majority. His decision to distance himself from the PPP will be his blunder. (He seems to be in touch with PPP through back channel.) Now he will have to face strong opposition in the parliament led by PPP and PML-N. The opposition has decided that they will give tough challenge to Imran Khan. ... Our media will cash on it. In such circumstances, Imran's foreign policy will be same like the previous governments. Or his 'spiritual' guru will bring him out from this trouble also.

Imran is not yes-man, Hamid Mir, Jang, 06 August²⁴

'You will get the responsibility when you will be prepared to shoulder it.' These are words told to Imran Khan by Mian Bashir Sahab after the former fiasco in 2002 elections. ... After the 2002 elections, PTI was going through financial crisis. Imran Khan was disturbed. His friend Goldi ((Umer Farooq) took him to Mian Bashir. Mian Bashir guides Imran Khan in political affairs along with in the spiritual world. Goldi asked Mian Bashir that when would the PTI come in power? Mian Bashir closed his eyes and after he opened them he said to Imran Khan that you would get the responsibility of heading Pakistan when you would be ready to carry out your duty. After listening to this, Imran Khan realized that he was not ready to shoulder the responsibility of being head of the country. ... 2011 was year of PTI rise. In the next seven years so many such politicians joined PTI who were critical of Imran Khan otherwise. Ten days after July 25 results I got chance to meet Imran Khan at his residence, Banigala. He was satisfied, calm and resolved. ... We talked about many things off the record. In our conversation names of different politicians and journalists came but Imran Khan did not speak ill against anyone. I told him that many messages have come from Srinagar after he spoke about the Kashmir issue in his victory speech. But after a phone call from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the attack in Diamir

²⁴ https://e.jang.com.pk/08-06-2018/lahore/pic.asp?picname=08_006.png

was disturbing. ... Before leaving I suggested to Imran that he should not pursue politics of vendetta to which he nodded positively. Prayed that may he succeed in his task! In past I have heard same words at the begging but once the people came to power, they changed radically. ... *While leaving I came across Jehangir Tareen with few independent candidates. He complained about some things and said that we journalists are accusing him horse-trading. Talk to these independent MNAs, they have voluntarily joined the PTI.* ... While coming back from Banigala, I recalled the words Mian Bashir. Imran Khan is getting the responsibility but he will succeed only when he fulfills the job. And does not break the promise. He has to be yes-man of public only, not anyone else!

Need to revisit foreign policy, Editorial, Jang, 07, August²⁵

There is major development in Pakistan's relations with Russia: Russia has offered Pakistan SU-35 fighter jets. Before this Russia was giving Pakistan MI-8 and MI-17 helicopters. *Pakistan's weapons mostly come from the US and China. The situation in Afghanistan and our relations with India demand that we expand our options and buy weapons from reliable partners. According to experts of strategic studies and international relations Pakistan committed a blunder by ignoring the Soviet Union and relying on the US immediately at the beginning of Cold War.* However improving ties with China has helped to set the record straight to some extent. Friendship with the US was at the cost of the Soviet Union which made us to pay in the loss of East-Pakistan. America never supported us. It helped and supported India in breaking up Pakistan. It is still arming India. ... *Because of its relations with India, Russia many a times rejected deals with Pakistan in past. Now because of India's swing in mode, Russia has started to give importance to Pakistan which is important for regional peace and security.* It also is thinking that if it does not have better relations with Pakistan, China will capture the market. ... *On the other hand, India to sabotage CPEC is fueling terrorism in Gilgit-Baltistan. It is urgent for the new government in Pakistan to re-visit the foreign policy. Rather than relying too much on the tested friends, Pakistan should act like a strong nuclear state. It should better its ties with countries who were not friendly with us in past.* There are many countries in Central Asia and other regions who are keen to improve relations with Pakistan. World has become a global village in which neither can be alone development achieved nor survived. For our economy and security, Pakistan needs to focus on its foreign policy.

²⁵ https://e.jang.com.pk/08-07-2018/lahore/pic.asp?picname=08_001.png

Change has come but! Saleem Safi, Jang, 08 , August²⁶

Change has come. It started to come when the results started to pour in. *Biggest change happened for the PTI and PML-N. For last five years PTI was raising hue and cry that there were fraud in 2013 elections and the PML-N was asserting that they were fair. Now PML-N accuses of fraudulency that the PTI insists they were not. ... For last five years Imran Khan was cursing the parliament while Moulana Fazl-ur Rehman was tutoring about respecting the house. Now Imran Khan will become Moulana Sahib and Fazl-ur Rehman will declare the parliament bogus on Islamic scholarship. ... For last five years Ishaq Dar was suggesting to go to the IMF and PTI would mock him. Now Asad Umer has said same thing and the opposition is targeting him. For last five years PML-N was upset about the media's role and now PTI will be upset. For five years PML-N was saying that the judiciary does not allow it to work and now PTI will claim same. PTI will also claim that the power institutions are creating hurdles in it way of delivering, like the PML-N did for five years. The biggest change is that Imran Khan will become Nawaz Sharif, Fawad Chaudhry will be Maryam Aurangzeb, Asad Umer will become Ishaq Dar, Shireen Mazari will be Khurram Dastgir, Pervez Khattak will Ahsan Iqbal, Ali Muhammad Khan will be Talal Chaudhry and Murad Saeed will Abid Shareen. If there is no change that is there will be no change in people's life. The issues of Pakistan will remain. The condition of people will remain bad. Economic crisis will continue. The nature of civil-military relations will remain same. Justice will be delayed by the courts. ... The authority that Nawaz Sharif had on foreign policy, Imran will have same. There is possibility that foreign minister will be same person who was part of Nawaz Sharif's foreign policy team. ... There is big change going to happen after some time. That is that same fate will be met by Imran Khan that was suffered by Nawaz Sharif. If his religious beliefs are questioned or he is made a security threat then will keep proving him a patriot and true Muslim. ... Media will stand by him. Similarly the media will do the wrong things on social media that Imran's party is doing. Pakistan will remain same.*

India's bad time has begun? Aijaz Mangi, Ummat, 09 August²⁷

History is an interesting story about the rise and fall of societies/countries. The governments which rose like the sun disappeared in the darkness of history that no trace of these is found today. ... Russian novelist Dostoyevsky in *The Gambler* wrote that there is a time for a gambler that even if he wants to lose, he does not. And then comes the time of his fall and nothing goes right. *India is currently in casino like a gambler. We can compare India with*

²⁶ https://e.jang.com.pk/08-08-2018/laohore/pic.asp?picname=08_004.png

²⁷ <http://ummat.net/2018/08/09/news.php?p=idr2.gif>

Dostoyevsky's character of Alexei Ivanovic in The Gambler. The fate of the country will not different from what is called in the Hinduism text of Rigveda that 'These are not small pauses but ambers. They have had strong mark on my heart.' There is no doubt that India's foreign policy was successful for last half century. Jawaharlal ran the foreign policy with diplomatic skills. After Nehru's death, threats loomed large but India escaped. At the end of the Cold war, India was again in doldrums. India though if it did not go with America, what would happen? Even this was not bad time for India. India did not shun Russia and established relations with the US. It also established strong relations with Israel. ... In its pursuance of interests, India believed that it would keep both the US and China happy and would convince the latter to agree on its demands about the CPEC. But China sent back Narendra Modi after offering him a cup of tea (Baharat ki is bar yaqeen tha ki who ek taraf US ke saath aur dosri taraf Che'en ke saath taluqaat qayem karne mei kamyabi hasil kare ga aur Pakistan se Che'en ka CPEC wala mohidey ko tasleem karne ki keemat wasool kare ga. Magar Che'en ne Baharat ke wazir-e-azm Narendra modi ki chai pela kar wapas beja). It is India's old tactic that it undercut roots of people/countries whom with it establishes relations. Nawaz Sharif became victim of same tactics. He had good relations with Narendra Modi. The plan that Modi used to establish personal relations with Nawaz Sharif costed the latter heavily and created problems for Nawaz Sharif government. ... India is disturbed because of Imran Khan's victory. It is mainly because of three factors. First, Imran Khan is a world known leader and a pragmatist politicians. India is worried that Imran will woo the world because of his personality. Second, Imran has the support of educated section of Pakistan and it identifies itself with Imran Khan's New Pakistan idea. Third, India has been always creating tension between the civilian leadership and the establishment. Is it forgettable that Narendra Modi whispered in the ear of Nawaz Sharif in a foreign land! About Imran Khan India is worried that he has good relations with the establishment and he would not bypass it. ... India's relations with the US are now on shaky ground also. President Trump's policy on Iran is a cause of worry for India. ... India was dreaming to step in the space along with the US but it had forgotten the history of fall of civilizations/people. India's political and statecraft journey is mining downward at this moment. It cannot save itself. It will have to get used of its bad days.

China is united to save Pakistan from falling in US trap, Report, Ummat, 14 August²⁸

China has come forth to save Pakistan from falling in the trap of America. *The Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan is playing crucial role in this regard. An important possible minister in the next cabinet has been assured by the Chinese officials that if needed China can offer a few billions of dollars bailout to Pakistan.* However the government in Pakistan will have to take some steps to reduce unnecessary expenses. According to the source, after this offer it has become difficult for Asad Umar to go to the IMF for financial assistance. Though Umar has maintained that in case need the IMF can be asked to help. *The sources from the CPEC told that it is baseless propaganda from some Pakistani experts and foreign secretary of the US that Pakistan has to pay a big amount to China, which is more than \$3 billion. Since Pakistan does not have the money, it will reach out to the IMF. According to the source, the amount to be paid is less than \$1 billion. There is an increase of \$.9 billion to it every year any 2023 it will reach upto \$3.50 billion. However after that it would come down.* However the matter of concern is that \$6 billion debt which needs to be paid. Despite that loan of \$4 billion from the Islamic Development Bank, there is possibility that Pakistan may default in paying the debt. ... On Monday the British newspaper *Financial Times* reported the meeting between a prominent leader of the PTI and the Chinese ambassador in which latter assured the former about the bailout if needed. ... *However despite the Chinese generous approach there is no surety that Pakistan will not approach the IMF for financial help. On the one hand PTI leader has suggested the need of \$12 billion and on the other the IMF and other experts have said that Pakistan would need \$26 billion in next few years.* While speaking to *Ummat* economist Dr. Shahida Wizarat said that some experts while criticise the IMF loans and then support going to the same institution for asking money. Same thing is happening this time also. There are chances that the government may fall for such 'arguments'. ... *China is seeing the CPEC as an alternative to the threats of the US that the latter would block the former way of trade through the Malacca Strait.* Few days back Pakistan's foreign said in a TV interview that America is unhappy with Pakistan not because of Afghanistan but because of its relations with China.

Change and that with the help of Musharraf and PPP's team? Editorial, Jasarat, 20 August²⁹

²⁸ <http://ummat.net/2018/08/14/news.php?p=story1.gif>

²⁹ <http://www.jasarat.com/2018/08/20/180820-04-8>

After oath taking ceremony, Captain has announced a small cabinet of 21 odd members that includes coalition partners as well. Though Imran's cabinet did not start working. But questions started emerging on selection of team. Does Captain himself selects his team or it is handed over to him. Horse trading and pressure making must have worked in election of Punjab's CM. But the team selected by Imran in Centre tells that he got this list from somewhere or instructed to do so. 12 out of 21 of this team member have worked with former dictator General Parvez Musharraf. Interestingly two ministers served as ministers during PPP regime are also part of this newly announced cabinet team. Surprisingly Parvez Musharraf's advocate in treason case is also there. Now when the advocate became the minister. This question is natural that will PTI government continue with the treason case or not. Imran Khan held home affairs with him. Interestingly Imran Khan as interior minister and prime minister became plaintiff against Parvez Musharraf and his minister is advocate. *Though Imran came with the slogan of change but it seems that what goes to mine of salt becomes salt. He was compelled to choose the major dacoit of Punjab as speaker of provincial assembly. Imran himself termed this man as major dacoit.*

From winning of election till the formation of government one cannot see any change from past practices. In fact one fails to understand that change could be achieved through ministers severed Parvez Musharraf. First they should change themselves. Imran Khan said in an interview that if the leader is correct than every things will be correct. Now Imran Khan will be tested. His claim should be accepted. *Its habit of Pakistani nation that it believes every claim and promise. When five years will be about to pass then PTI will be justifying as Nawaz Sharif, Zardari and Benazir used to justify. Imran got for what he toiled these years. Now time is ripe to get his expectations and promises fulfilled. To analyze any party's claim one need to see if the directions are right? From distribution of tickets to electable to compromises in formation of government, nowhere direction is correct.* Then how change will happen? How failed politicians and corrupt gang of Imran Khan will bring the change. Will these VIP culture loving people allow wish and policy of Captain for change to succeed?

Electronic Media

Imran's Meeting with the Media, Breaking Views with Malick, *Zem TV*, 31 August³⁰

Anchor: Muhammad Malick and Participants: Arshad Sharif, Rauf Klasra, Hamid Mir.

Imran Khan's meeting with journalists was discussed in detail. Hamid Mir started by saying that Rauf Klara asked Imran about the logic of including Fehmida Mirza and Zubaida Jalal. He said that he asked Imran as to why he chose not to go to UNGA meeting and Imran answered that he was dealing with serious issues and he did not want to waste four days at this juncture. He also said that he would visit countries which can bring some benefits to Pakistan. The commentators held that Imran wanted to replicate his KPK governance model at the national level. Malik asked, "Is Usman Buzdar a seat-warmer for Jehangir Tareen?" *Hamid Mir said that he had reliable information that Jehangir Tareen did not even know Usman before he was nominated by Imran as CM of Punjab and therefore the rumour that he was picked up by him was baseless. Malik said that he had information that Imran was impressed with Usman because while other leaders were busy demanding ministership, Usman was demanding a hospital for his constituency.*

Rauf Klasra said that Imran evaded questions about transfer of district police officer (DPO) of Pakpattan upon complaints by Khawar Maneka, ex-husband of Imran's wife. He said that the behaviour of his government ran counter to the moral high ground that Imran had taken before the elections to bring change to Pakistan. He asked as to what was Ahsan Jamel Gujjar (who is married to Farah a close friend of Bushra Maneka, Imran's current wife) doing in Punjab CM's house that day. He also said that recommendation for Usman might have come from Ahsan Jameel Gujjar and Farah. Hamid Mir revealed that Khawar Maneka's family members were visiting the local shrine during the night and it was known to the local police when they stopped Maneka family members for the first time on 5th August. However, between then and 23rd August the police stopped the Manekas at least five times. Khawar then suspected that his ex-wife could be behind such harassment. The children, however, defended their mother (Bushra Maneka) to begin with but felt later, upon repeated incidents of police harassment, that there must be some deliberate conspiracy behind such repeated action by the police. Then there was another theory that Khawar's brother was elected as MNA from PML-N party and therefore he was being victimised by the new government.

³⁰<http://www.zemtv.com/2018/08/31/breaking-views-with-malick-31st-august-2018/>

Rauf Klasra said that Imran was unaware of the controversies that Fayaaz Ali Hussain Chauhan had raked up because of his abusive behaviour. Hamid Mir revealed that he was quite surprised by the assertion by Shah Mahmood Qureshi that he did not ask for the ministry that he was heading now and that foreign policy would now be framed within the foreign office and not outside it. *This, according to Mir, was an important issue that ought to have attracted serious attention from the media person. Mir said it was unfortunate that out of the 90 minutes that the media had with Imran, 50 minutes were wasted on the Khawar Maneka's issue. Klasra was, nevertheless, appreciative of Imran's patience while dealing with a very frank, open and assertive media.*

Klasra said that Imran responded to criticism from the media that he had picked up many corrupt politicians by saying that the media should give him at least three months or 90 more days and then look at the performance of his government to prove whether he was right or wrong in his decision. He also defended Usman Buzdar and said that he was confident that the media would change its mind about Buzdar after 90 days. Klasra held that even if Imran sacks Buzdar and others who are deemed to be corrupt after 90 days for non-performance, and many in the media were to clap and cheer his decision, Imran should know that he had taken wrong decisions to begin with like all those politicians before him whom he criticised all these years. He also rued that the media was informed by his party and people close to him that for six months PTI, led by Arbab Shahzad (former Chief Secretary of KPK and Head of PTI election cell) and Azam Khan (Secretary to the PM), was selecting the right team for the nation. He said *that Kasif Abbasi asked Imran whether he was unprepared to run the office of the prime minister and Imran laughingly accepted this point of view. Klasra said that he and Amir Mateen had always advised Imran and his party MNAs to attend the parliament sessions and learn how government affairs are conducted. But he had not heeded their advice. Hamid Mir said that Imran's cabinet was not complete yet and he may induct people with clean image in the ministry in future.*

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

| Place | Date | Description | Killed | Injured |
|----------------------|------------|---|--------|---------|
| Balochistan | | | | |
| Nushki ³¹ | 14/08/2018 | 11 injured in a blast in Nushki | 00 | 11 |
| Gilgit | | | | |
| Kargah ³² | 11/08/2018 | Three police personnel martyred in Gilgit on Friday night | 06 | 00 |

³¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/283275/11-injured-in-a-blast-in-nushki/>

³² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/281723/three-police-personnel-martyred-in-gilgit-on-friday-night/>