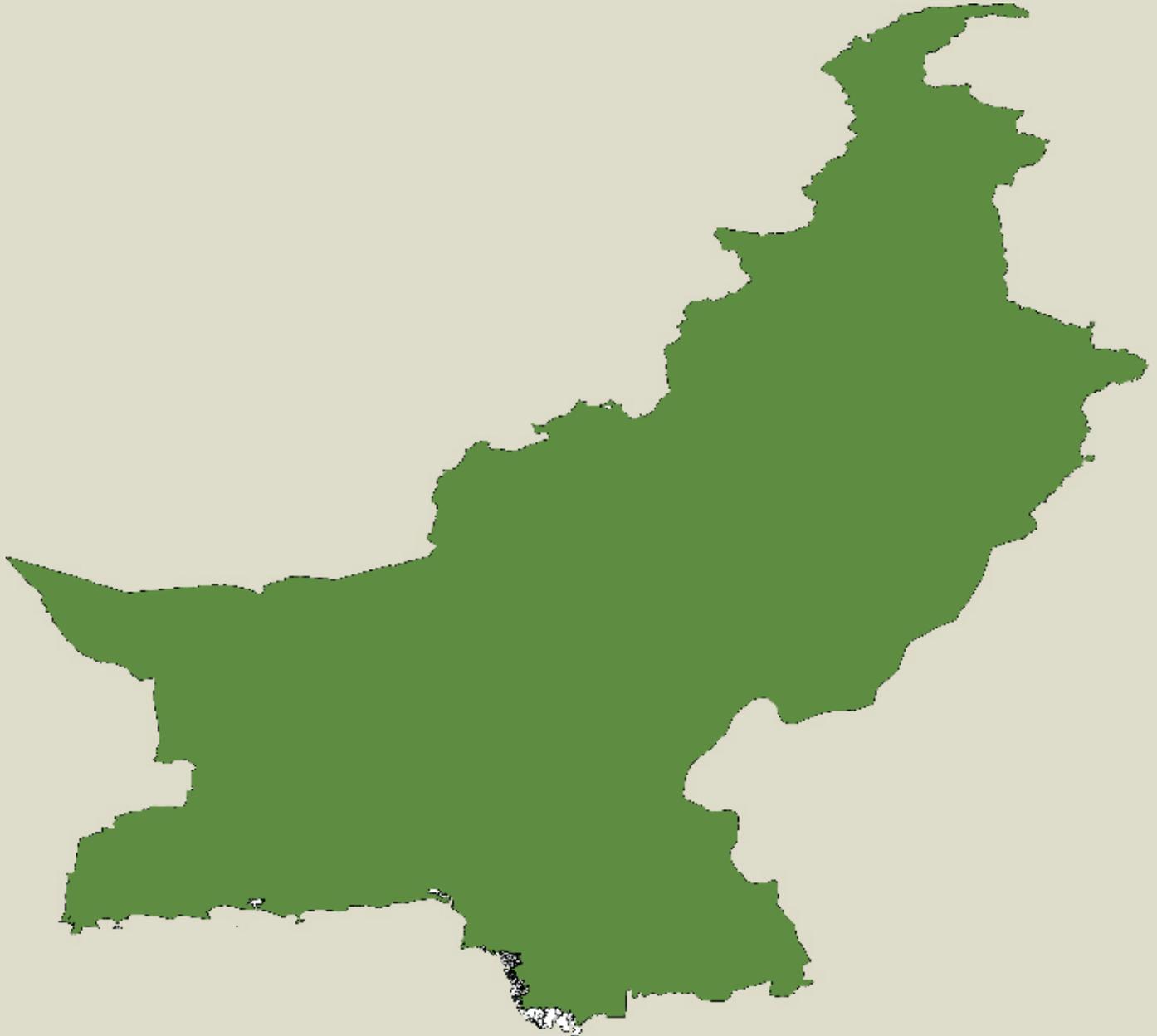


December 2018

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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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, December 2018

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

100 days of PTI government, S M Hali, Daily Times, 01 December¹

To start with, the 100 days benchmark in a Parliamentary System of democracy appears to be unrealistic. Secondly, if the PTI had set lofty goals for themselves, we should gauge its performance in the backdrop of the morass that had been left behind. Realism would demand PTI having taken these aspects into consideration but perhaps Imran Khan himself was not prepared for the gravity of the situation. The shattered economic legacy ; teetering under massive foreign debt, the IMF breathing down Pakistan’s neck with severe preconditions; US President Donald Trump cancelling payments due to Pakistan and stopping economic aid altogether along with issuing warnings to the IMF for not extending loans to Pakistan lest they are used to repay Chinese debts; revival of terror attacks, the absolutely hostile attitude of the opposition, which has ganged up with the sole aim of making Imran Khan fail are but some limitations.

Naya Praetorian, Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 07 December²

There is mounting evidence to suggest that Pakistan under Imran Khan is becoming a modern Praetorian republic — classically characterized by a disorderly state as a power tool in the hands of a highly politicized Militabishment and partisan judiciary, jointly propping up an adventurous, anarchic and charismatic civilian leader. Significantly, Imran Khan’s road to office is marked by defaming attacks on the very parliament and political system that he now seeks to manipulate and control with the help of the other two players. *It isn’t surprising, too, that NAB is brutally striking down the political opponents of the PTI while treating friends, cronies and associates of the PM with kid gloves.* The judges, too, seem to have a soft corner for the PM. Two extraordinary statements by the PM nail the argument for Naya Praetorianism. “The army is on the same page as the PTI manifesto”, he says. That means the army is not on the same page as the PPP and PMLN etc manifestos. That means the army is party-partisan.

¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/328139/100-days-of-pti-government/>

² <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/naya-praetorian/>

Another province, Rasul Bakhsh Rais, The Express Tribune, 09 December³

While we have to wait for the Seraiki or South Punjab province to be carved out from Punjab that requires much broader political consensus and constitutional amendment, Gilgit-Baltistan can be won, and it should win a provincial status without much further loss of time. *It has been a very long wait for a territory and its people who believe they joined Pakistan, and must be extended full citizenship rights.* The rights would include a provincial government, representation in the National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan. *Over the past decade or so, impatience of the people of the formerly Northern Areas of Pakistan has grown with the governments of Pakistan.* On my two visits, the last about eleven years back, people talked to me on trek, in the restaurants and in the buses about their frustration and disappointment over non-recognition of their legal and ethnic identity. Diverse, as they are, many local and regional identities define them — Hunza, Nagar, Gilgit, Baltistan and Skardu. Many beautiful valleys, mountains, hills, streams, rivers, glaciers, peaks and deserts at the highest altitudes, add to the wonderful heritage of the globally acknowledged polite, civilised and hospitable people of the region. ...

US-Taliban dialogue: a test for the stakeholders, Asif Durrani, Daily Times, 10 December⁴

The US is ready for a withdrawal and that it is now hinting for a pull-out before April 2019. *The US would not mind if the next presidential elections slated for April next year in Afghanistan are postponed for a later date. However, before such an arrangement is agreed to between the US and all Afghan stakeholders a couple of important issues need to be sorted out.* First, the US is keen to seek Taliban's consent for a token presence of its troops in Afghanistan. According to the US officials, "This is being asked to ensure that al-Qaeda or their associates do not reassemble in Afghanistan." Apparently, Taliban have not agreed to the US proposal arguing that they do not entertain an overseas agenda implying that there would be no room for al-Qaeda or Daesh/ISIS. Second, the US would like to have some kind of understanding between Taliban and existing setup in Afghanistan led by Ashraf Ghani. Afghan

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1862872/6-another-province/>

⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/331762/us-taliban-dialogue-a-test-for-the-stakeholders/>

commentators have been complaining that by completely ignoring the present dispensation, the US or Taliban would be committing a mistake as unless all stakeholders were given a place at the negotiating table, peace in Afghanistan would remain elusive.

Sidhu's role welcomed while Jindal's was scorned, Baber Ayaz, Daily Times, December 12

Indian politician and former cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu is to Imran Khan what Indian steel tycoon Sajjan Jindal was to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Both have been playing the role of mediators between the two estranged cousins — Pakistan and India. *Jindal helped Nawaz Sharif in softening the hawkish Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but the difference here is that when Jindal arranged the meeting between Modi and Nawaz Sharif, all hell broke loose in the media prompted by the establishment.* This time around, when Sidhu came to the swearing in ceremony of Prime Minister Imran Khan, he was welcomed by the establishment with open arms, which was indeed a more sensible stance. The quick progress on the opening of the Kartarpur Gurdwara clearly shows the goodwill that is enjoyed by Imran Khan with the milt-establishment. More than once, he has himself taken credit for the harmonious relationship with the establishment, which was conspicuous by the open support given to him by them even before he won the elections. *When Imran Khan says that he is on the same page with the establishment on the issues of foreign policy and national security, he is referring to the page written by the milt-establishment. ...*

CPEC and Balochistan, Raosen Taj Raisani, The Express Tribune, December 13⁵

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been hailed as a game changer for Pakistan and for its most restive and underdeveloped province, Balochistan. It is deemed the new project of development and connectivity with all entailing perks and privileges. ... *It is no doubt a fact that the insecurity and disaffection in the province have been reduced by the efforts of government and military. But it is quite wrong to assume that everything is hunky-dory in the region.* The project with its progress and exclusion of local populace is creating a festering of ill-treated, age-old wounds of peoples of

⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1887033/6-cpec-and-balochistan-3/>

locality. There exists no representative data to depict the popular sentiments of public on this topic, roughly because of the hyper-sensitivity of the topic. Agreed that the project is going to bring happiness, but how and when is the question? *Nobody knows of the gains of the implementation of the project. Except for completion of projects of road networks that have been in the pipeline since the start of this century, there are no new employment centres, technical institutes and educational infrastructures to meet the needs of the mega project that is hailed as the initiative of eternal blessing for the local people. ...*

Is Pakistan's foreign policy paradigm shifting? Babar Ayaz, Daily Times, 24 December 2018⁶

Earlier, Pakistan's attempt to arrange quadrilateral talks between Afghan-Taliban, the US, China and Russia had failed because the Afghan intelligence leaked the story that Mullah Omar, the supreme leader of Taliban, had died months ago in a Pakistan hospital while a fake letter of Mullah Omar in favour of the talks was circulated anonymously. So this time around, Pakistan has brought the Afghan-Taliban leaders to the negotiating table in Abu Dhabi. It seems that they have really changed the policy to keep supporting the Afghan-Taliban and Haqqani group insurgency in Afghanistan and stopped believing that they can install a Taliban-led government in Kabul like in the 90s. Besides Pakistan, only KSA and the UAE had recognised the Taliban government in the 90s. *Another reason for Pakistan's shift in policy is that Afghanistan has given shelter to Pakistani terrorists who ran away after the operation against them. The Afghan intelligence is using Pakistani-Taliban to pressurise the Pakistani establishment to push Pakistan to tame the Afghan-Taliban, who have been actively attacking Afghan and US forces' camps. A significant role in this change of heart seemingly has been played by China and Russia, which have been also telling Pakistan to stop relying on the non-state actors to further its national security policy.*

U-turn's Justification Is a Betrayal, Asif Mahsud, Daily Times, 25 December⁷

⁶ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/336661/is-pakistans-foreign-policy-paradigm-shifting/>

⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/336951/u-turns-justification-is-a-betrayal/>

Considering Prime Minister Imran Khan's vindication of his innumerable U-turns on his core political ideology, the term 'honesty' in Pakistani politics has lost its relevance. For when the torchbearers of change provide alibis for their unprincipled acts then nothing is left to feel sanguine about. In other words it's tantamount to the end of optimism in the land of pure as IK was considered to be the last hope. The reason behind pinning hopes on him was his uprightness and ability to call a spade a spade. Presently, when IK assumed the saddle then all he has to offer was a justification for taking U-turns. Moreover, he reasoned that a leader who doesn't take U-turn isn't even a leader. Here the words of Nelson Mandela needs to be quoted who said "For anybody who changes his principles depending on whom he is dealing, that is not a man who can lead a nation". The words of Mandela nullifies IK's vindication of his uncountable U-turns. *The crux of the matter is that IK's attempt to rationalise his U-turns is a sheer betrayal of his diehard followers' trust, who expected dearly from him in terms of correcting the system that breeds corruption. By going back on his words IK has put out the last glimmer of hope that Pakistanis had.*

Political accountability, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 27 December⁸

No wonder there is a widespread perception that the law is being mauled to eliminate Mr Sharif politically and that NAB is acting in a high handed and discriminatory manner. Indeed, the ubiquitous Miltablishment is accused of engineering his downfall by pulling the judiciary's strings. This impression is unfortunately reinforced by the dubious and sometimes objectionable manner in which all his trials have so far been conducted, the way the JITs have been appointed and monitored and the embarrassing hurry in which the judges have tried to conclude the cases to his disadvantage. Mr Sharif's disqualification for life by the Supreme Court on the fig leaf of an "iqama" indiscretion, nor imprisonment in the Avenfield case without proving corruption, certainly did not diminish his appeal amongst the masses. If anything, this treatment has given an opportunity for his heir apparent Mariam Nawaz to emerge as a resilient and courageous heroine in their eyes. *The cases against Shahbaz Sharif are also perceived to be unfair. On the other side, the stumbling performance of the PTI so far hasn't endeared it even to its own supporters. Indeed, the eagerness of PTI spokespersons to predict the outcomes of NAB*

⁸ <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/political-accountability/>

cases against the top PPP/PMLN leaders casts a shadow on the fairness of the trails.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

CPEC on the pivot, Khurram Husain, Dawn, 13 December⁹

The Chinese do not seem to be budging on the financing terms, and within the government of Pakistan, there are sticking points about which government department will actually bear the full cost. How far down the road we are already is difficult to determine, but the fact is that behind all the rhetoric of brotherhood and friendship, interests are being tightly secured by the Chinese side. The PTI government came to power promising to bring transparency to Pakistan's dealings with China. They promised to review all agreements because they sounded like they were convinced the projects are riddled with wrongdoing and cost inflation. Lahore's Orange Line Metro was a particular target of this ire. *Now comes the time to redeem this pledge. Already, the PTI government has climbed down from its pledge to place all CPEC agreements before parliament, or to even review them with the aim of bringing about any changes.*

To go to IMF or not? Ajaz Haque, the Express Tribune, 19 December¹⁰

To go to the IMF or not is the question? Initially the PTI government's position was that going to the IMF would be the last resort. *Finance Minister Asad Umar also declared a few weeks ago that the government had secured enough funding to meet the country's needs for the next fiscal year without the IMF's help. But lately several measures have been taken by the government which are in line with the IMF's requirements.* The sudden weakening of the rupee, the increase in interest rate by the State Bank of Pakistan and the raise in gas and electricity tariffs, all imply following the IMF line, even though these measures are detrimental to Pakistan's industrial growth and are not likely to spur export growth, which is essential for bringing Pakistan's balance of payments in order. *With the SBP rate at 10.5%, the commercial bank lending rates will range from*

⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1451151>

¹⁰ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1869858/6-go-imf-not/>

12% to 13.5% which is extremely expensive for any industry. Instead of making goods competitive for exports, the increase in gas and electricity tariffs will increase the cost of production. *Depreciating the rupee to increase exports has not worked in the last 12 months even though the rupee has been depreciated at various stages.* It is a fallacy to think that 32% depreciation in one year will help jump exports while increasing the cost of production at the same time. High rupee value is only a partial reason for the failure of export growth, major structural problems are the root cause of this failure. Major changes are required to produce goods exportable at competitive prices. ...

Playing IMF hardball, Editorial, Daily Times, 28 December¹¹

Even before Imran Khan and his team swept to power back in the summer, it was evident that the country would have to approach the IMF; begging bowl in hand. Naturally, the fact that Pakistan has been here a dozen times before has given way to trepidation. For as everyone knows global lending institutions are not friends of the poor. The challenge for Finance Minister Asad Umar is to stop equivocating on the question of a bailout package — which have included such reckless statements about how the country can take or leave an IMF loan as well as dangerous projections regarding timeframes before which the begging bowl will not have to runneth over. What is needed now is concerted lobbying for the softest package possible. Economic experts here at home are urging that this be concluded at the earliest so that the cash will start flowing sometime next month. And they are right. There is no more time to lose. *It is therefore hard to see what kind of soft deal the PTI can bargain for with the IMF. But going forward, one thing is clear. The economic crisis will not be resolved by relying on overseas remittances or by choosing Made in Pakistan.*

US hyperbole on CPEC, Editorial, Daily Times, 30 December¹²

It is a similar story when it comes to China's control of Gwadar Port. Even as India has just taken over operations at Chabahar on the Iranian side; securing a waiver from US-imposed sanctions as it did so. Or else, when talking about satellite stations the hyperbole turns to the Beidou Navigation System that is set to challenge the American GPS network. Most crucially, this will render

¹¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/338091/playing-imf-hardball/>

¹² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/338091/playing-imf-hardball/>

more difficult US moves to potentially monitor the military actions of those nations linked to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Thus the main point of contention is that Beidou is set to undermine US dominance in this area. And the mainstream western narrative recasts natural competitors as rivals with deliberate malicious intent. The national interest always drives foreign policy. This is just the way the geo-strategic cookie crumbles. Something that naturally causes upset to the unipolar world order. But the days of this set-up are clearly numbered. China has been softly rising for some time. A fact that prompted the Americans to embrace New Delhi as their strategic partner for this century. Russia, too, is resurgent. Elsewhere, non-state actors such as ISIS and Al Qaeda seek to overthrow entrenched US hegemony. And what cannot be overlooked is how Washington's own violent march towards empire has afforded these terrorist groups the breathing space to do so. *At the heart of the story are the Dragon's regional ambitions. Including plans to expand here on Pakistani soil co-manufacturing of Chinese military jets; among other big boy war toys. The concern is that this would afford Beijing a certain leverage.*

ON INDIA

Pakistan losing Afghan medical tourism to India, Mubarak Zeb Khan, Dawn, 22 December¹³

Until 2016, Pakistan remained the top destination for Afghan medical tourists because of common culture and language and less expensive treatments than anywhere else in the region including India. However, the patient influx to Pakistan considerably decreased and was diverted to India since 2016. The ministry listed several reasons for diversion including the border management policy of Pakistan, issues in getting Pakistani visa, unnecessary security checks at border crossing point, compulsory police report, and security clearance. Other reasons of diversion included difficulties in getting doctors' appointments and accommodations. According to the ministry, thousands of Afghans travel to India each month in search of medical treatment. However, Afghan patients prefer treatment in Pakistan. *It was suggested that Pakistan will have to organise, coordinate, facilitate and develop health tourism in the country. China's investment in deep water seaport at Gwadar and India's*

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1452926>

partnership with Iran for Chabahar port, impact the optics and orientation of trade between the two countries.

URDU MEDIA

We cannot fight war with India, Ahmad Awan, Jasarat, December 03¹⁴

Continuing with its tradition, Pakistan gave peace a chance again. It opened the Kartarpur corridor on 28 November 2018. Yet again Pakistani government is in a mad rush to be friends with India (*magar Pakistani sarkar ko aik bar phir Bharti dosti ka bukhar chadha he*). ... **One retired general, Amjad Shoaib said clearly in a TV discussion that we cannot fight war with India as India's army is superior in every term** (*hum Bharat se jang nihe kar sakte, hum se uski army har lehaz se zeyada hai*). Same way late General Nasrullah Babar described the army in words if repeated here, they will be censored. **It is known fact among people that civilian rulers want to have friendly relations with India while Pakistani generals always keep themselves ready for war.** But if one returns to the pages of history, she will be shocked with adverse results that every military ruler not only tried their best for good relations but did something which civilian rulers may not even think of. There is perception that if General Zia had lived some more years, he would have freed Kashmir. ...

New mode in US-Pak relations, Editorial, Jang, December 07¹⁵

There is no precedence of human killings and loss of property in the Afghan-history that has happened in the last three decades in Afghanistan. These two wars, first by the Soviet Union and second by the US, have ravaged the country. **In this regard, the efforts of the US along with the Afghan-Government and in consultation with Pakistan to end long coldness in the process for restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan, is welcome initiative.** This is a positive step to bring peace and stability in the whole South Asia region as well. President Trump has given the responsibility to break the deadlock and bring the Taliban on the negotiation table to Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special Representative. **Khalilzad visited Islamabad on Wednesday and handed over the message of the US President to Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said that the US wants to resolve the Afghanistan issue with the help of Pakistan.** Pakistan has always

¹⁴<http://www.jasarat.com/2018/12/03/181203-03-5/>

¹⁵<https://jang.com.pk/news/584204>

supported dialogue over the use of military power to resolve the conflict. Imran Khan has welcomed the offer. Both the parties emphasized upon to improve trade, investment, education, health and social relations. It is a positive development from the US side to acknowledge Pakistan's role in ending Afghan-Conflict. ... It is also a geographical fact that US-Pakistan alliance is necessary to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Indian media blames Pak for Chabahar attack, Ahmed Najeebzade, *Ummat*, December 08¹⁶

Indian media has started to blame Pakistan for the Chabahar attack in Iran. The attack was carried out on Thursday, 6 December, 2018. *According to the Indian media reports, the real target of the attack in the Iranian Southern port city was New Delhi's economic interests in Iran. According to the Indian media, Pakistan's intelligence agencies are trying to sabotage India's access to the Central Asian countries.* On the other hand, News Asia channel has said that more than six militant groups are active in Iran. The responsibility for the Chabahar attack was claimed by Ansar-ul Furqan group. It claimed that the attack was carried out to revenge the killing of its leader Moulvi Jalil Ghanbar Zehi, who was killed in June 2017 by Iranian security forces. According to an online news-magazine *Global Village*, in the last few years Sunni militant groups and the Kurd militant groups have increased their activities in Iran. ... The main target of the groups, like Ansar-Ul Furqan, is the Sistan-Balochistan province where they carry out activities against Iranian state. ... *According to Indian journalist Dipanjan Chaudhury, India has offered Iran support in carrying out investigation on the attack. A columnist in the Economic Times wrote that if Pakistan does not take action against these terrorist groups, Iran can enter in Pakistan's sovereignty and target them.* The magazine wrote the Furqan group was involved in the 2001 Indian Parliament attack. Therefore India and Iran can cooperate on the issue.

PTM to face action, Report, *Ummat*, December 11¹⁷

¹⁶<http://ummat.net/2018/12/08/news.php?p=story3.gif>

¹⁷<http://ummat.net/2018/12/11/news.php?p=story1.gif>

Finally the government has decided to take action against the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM). The action can start in few days. *According to a source from security establishment, the decision in this regard has been taken and every state institution has been taken in consideration.* The reason for the action is the crossing of redline by the PTM leaders. It is being decided what kind of action should be taken against the PTM; options being considered are arresting of the leaders and banning of anti-state activities. *According to the source, earlier efforts were made to bring the PTM in the mainstream. For that, first talks were held with the PTM leaders in April. The talks did not produce much success.* But there was a hope when the PTM decided to cancel its one rally and also decided to not to target army in its rallies. . However, soon the PTM leaders broke its promise and targeted the army and raised anti-army slogans. *Then it was decided to bring the PTM into the mainstream and its leaders were allowed to fight the July 2018 elections.* ... Even Imran Khan had said that many of the demands of Manzoor Pashteen were genuine. Despite the fact that two leaders of PTM, Mohsin Dawar and Ali Wazir winning the elections, it did not stop its agenda and kept targeting the state institutions. *Few days back Ali Wazir targeted the state intuitions in a protest in a way that was more provocative. The video clip of the protest is taken seriously and action is being taken against the PTM.* Manzoor Pashteen was an unknown activist. He came to limelight in the last year when Naqeebullah Mehsud was killed. ... It is unfortunate that to just save a corrupt inspector, the state allowed the Pushtun Movement to become a strong anti-state force.

America blacklists Pak on religious freedom, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, December 13¹⁸

America has put Pakistan in the blacklist for violating religious rights of the minorities in the country. It had put Pakistan in the watch-list last year on the bases of same allegations. *US secretary of the State Mike Pompeo while invoking the International Religion Freedom Act 1998 put Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China, Iran, North Korea, Burma, Eretria, Sudan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in the black list. He has said that Pakistan has been put in the list to increase pressure on the country to stop violation of religious freedom in the country.* ... If the condition of the minorities is not that bad across the

¹⁸<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-12-13/page-10/detail-0>

world but it is not satisfactory either. But in America the minorities are not safe. After the 9/11, without any solid proof or investigations, many Muslims were expelled from the country. Some priests even burnt copies of the Quran. Does that not count as violation of religious freedom or terrorism? ... *Whatever Pompeo talked about Pakistan, it was all eyewash and baseless. It is meant to build pressure on Pakistan to force it to 'do more'*. Religious freedom is violated across the world. Instead of acting like a *thanadar*, America should strengthen the UN. Islamabad has given an apt and prompt reply to the America's latest action. It rejected the decision and said that Pakistan does not need any country's advice about how to treat the religious minorities. Pakistan is a diverse country where the Hindus, Christians, and Buddhist constitute 4 per cent of the total population. The constitution of the country has enunciated rights of the minorities clearly. The judiciary has taken judgments about the places of worship of the minorities which are exceptional. The American representative for the religious freedom Samuel Brownback said in a function that in Pakistan 'more than six people are arrested because of the blasphemy law.' He said that the government is using force against the minorities. The number is just six to seven people and the law and the constitution take due course when it comes to such incidents. When protests were held in the country on the acquittal of Asia Bibi, the law enforcing agencies arrested many protestors. ... *If America adopts an unbiased approach, it will truly come to know in which country religious freedom is being violated.* ... America may have been gotten angry on the statement made by the Prime Minister Imran Khan. But that is reality. If America wants to promote human rights, it needs to be unbiased.

America fails to bully Pakistan, Editorial, Jang, December 14¹⁹

America has failed to put pressure on Pakistan on the name of violation of religious freedom of the minorities. It was its second failure after it could not get Islamabad to submit to its demand of 'do more' against terrorists. American Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had put Pakistan in the blacklist of the countries where some countries are accused of curbing religious freedom of minorities. *Islamabad summoned the deputy in the American embassy in Pakistan to register a strong protest against the move by Washington. After*

¹⁹<https://jang.com.pk/news/586841>

this America relaxed the sanctions which are imposed on the counties that are included in the list by the Commission for Religious Freedom. One letter was handed over to the embassy in which the decision by the US was regretted and it was said that minorities have full freedom in Pakistan. America was asked how it can gloss over India's treatment of the minorities and atrocities committed by Indian security forces in 'occupied' Kashmir. The spokesperson of the Foreign Office said that in the Constitution of Pakistan minorities have been given equal rights and complete religious freedom. He said that Pakistan does not need anyone to lecture it on assuring religious freedom of the minorities. The report by the US was a trick to build pressure on Pakistan in which Washington has miserably failed. In Pakistan there are, according to the NADRA report, 14 lakh Hindus, 13 lakh Christians, 6 thousand Sikhs and 70 thousand followers of other religions. They amount to about over 2 per cent of the total population. Minorities are safe in Pakistan and their places of worship are provided enough support. In contrast, minorities and the Muslims in particular are under threat in India. Hindus are killing Muslims on the name of protecting cows. But still it is not in the list! In the US and West, 'Islamophobia' is on the rise. In Pakistan, the leaders of minorities are praising the country for its measures to assure safety of the minorities. America should enlist India, instead of targeting Pakistan, for violation of religious freedom.

Governor rule likely in Karachi after deteriorating security situation, Report, Ummat, December 27²⁰

Sindh Government has grown worried after the killing of the MQM leader Syed Ali Reza Abdi. It was sixth terrorist act in six weeks' time. *According to the reports, the provincial government of PPP is seeing these incidents as conspiracy. The government is worried that if the crisis continues, that may led to governor rule in the province.* In the background of deteriorating peace and security situation in the province, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah convened a meeting the other day and expressed concerns over the increasing terror attacks. In Karachi in last six weeks, six attacks were carried out: the attack on the Chinese consulate, attack on the MQM-P meeting to celebrate birthday of the Prophet, a blast in a car, firing on the office of PSP in which two party workers were killed, and the assassination of Ali Reza Abdi. Murad Ali said

²⁰<http://ummat.net/2018/12/27/news.php?p=story1.gif>

that he has given full authority to the law enforcing agencies without much success. *According to a source, the assassination of Abdi was carried out at the time when the special powers of the Sindh Rangers are going to end on 5 January 2019.* According to the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act, the rangers with special powers can carry out free activities against terrorists. ... *There are reports that the rangers are unlikely to get extension to use the special powers because of the rift between the federal and provincial governments over the action being taken by FIA and NAB against Asif Ali Zardari and other PPP leaders.* PPP leaders are accusing that one more time the federal agencies are being used to interfere in the provincial affairs. ... *PPP leaders are saying that they do not believe in rumours of governor rule. Or at worst they do not fear it. However, within the party circles, they do seem to be concerned.* Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said few days back that there is no question of governor rule in Sindh. ... On the other hand, it is not only money-laundering cases that Zaradri and other PPP leaders are facing. There are many other cases which are pursued by the NAB.

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Punjab				
Rawalpindi ²¹	03/12/2018	One policeman killed, another injured in gun attack in Rawalpindi claimed by Hizbul Ahrar	01	01
Dera Gazi Khan ²²	08/12/2018	2 dead, 1 critically injured in attack on cement factory van in DG Khan tribal area	02	03
Karachi				

²¹http://www.itct.org.uk/archives/itct_news/one-policeman-killed-another-injured-in-gun-attack-in-rawalpindi

²² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1450227>

Karachi ²³	03/12/2018	Explosion near Karachi's Khadda Market, <u>no casualties reported</u>	00	00
Balochistan				
Mach ²⁴	01/12/2018	Pakistani Shia coalmine worker martyred in terrorist attack in Mach area	01	01
Gwadar ²⁵	14/12/2018	Six FC men martyred, 14 injured in Kech attack	06	14
Quetta ²⁶	06/12/2018	FC soldier martyred in Kohlu	01	02

²³<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/468704-Explosion-near-Karachi-Khadda-Market-no-casualties-reported->

²⁴http://en.abna24.com/news//pakistani-shia-coalmine-worker-martyred-in-terrorist-attack-in-mach-area_918931.html

²⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1451525>

²⁶ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1861014/1-fc-soldier-martyred-kohlu/>