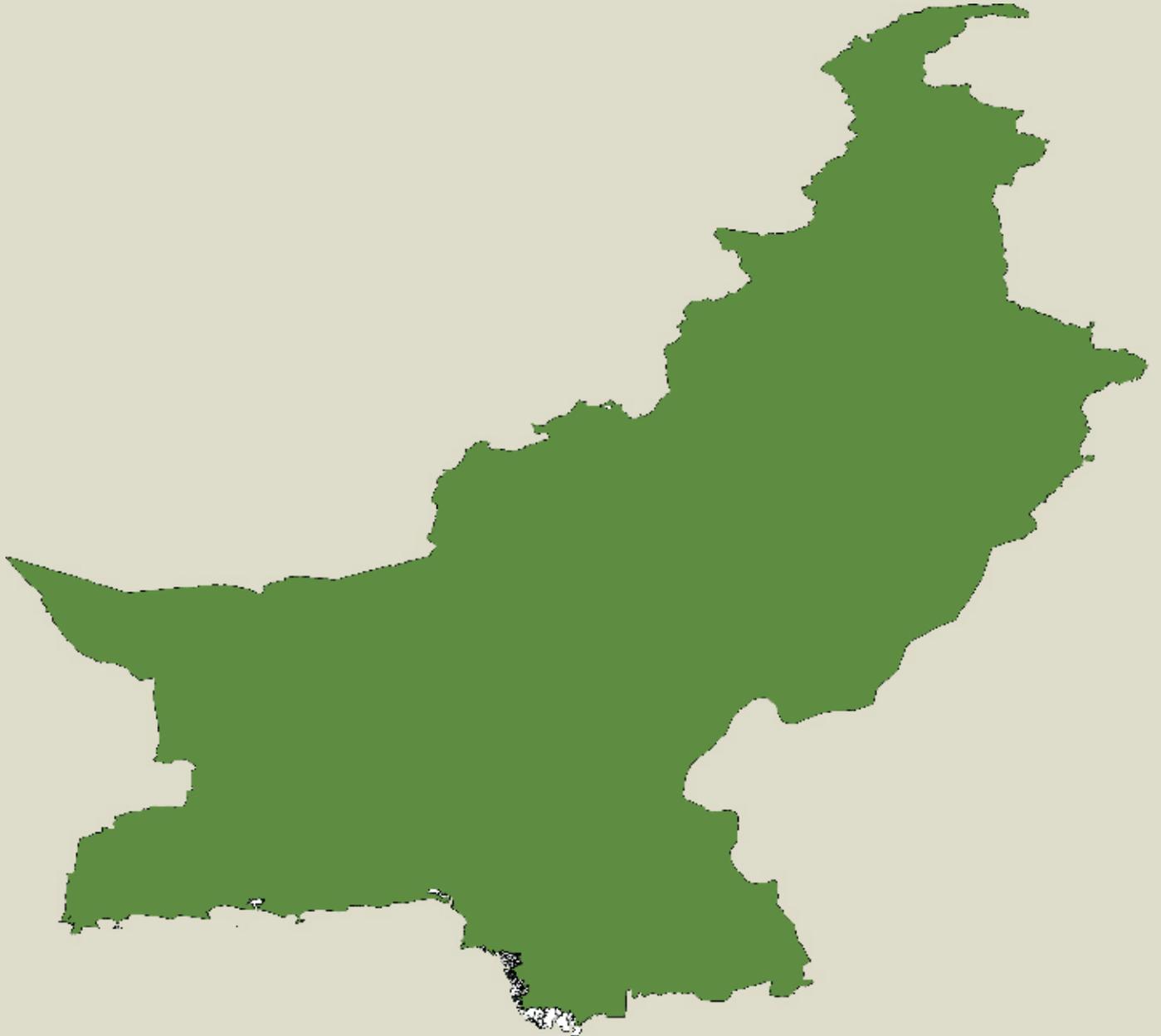


FEBRUARY 2018

# 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

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE  
STUDIES & ANALYSES  
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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## PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, FEBRUARY 2018

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## Editorial

In yet another jolt to the ruling PML-N, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified to head the party by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Additionally, the court also declared null and void all the decisions taken by him as party chairperson after his disqualification as Prime Minister. Adopting an aggressive political stance, Nawaz strongly criticized the decision claiming that an attempt was being made by the military establishment and judiciary to oust him completely from politics. This controversial judgment intensified the clash between the apex court and the ruling party. In the meantime, while Nawaz Sharif remained defiant and went on publicly criticizing the judiciary, the judiciary struck back again sending contempt-of-court notices to him, his daughter Maryam and some members of the federal cabinet.

Interestingly, playing the victim card, Nawaz Sharif seemed to have gained public sympathy to a large extent. People who were not pro-PML-N but opposed forces unsettling the democratic process in Pakistan, also lent their support to PML-N. A glimpse of this shift in the support-base could be seen in the gaining momentum of the party's public processions. Some experts were of the opinion that if this level of popularity continued, with no more convictions against the Sharif family and no major upsets taking place, the PML-N would better its performance the upcoming general elections compared to the previous one!

In a major setback to Pakistan, this month, the multilateral Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to put Pakistan back on its *grey-list* of countries suspected of financing terrorist activities and groups. It has to be noted that Pakistan was on the list for three years until 2015. This decision by FATF came after a motion was moved by the United States to pressurize Pakistan to stop terror financing and housing Islamic militants targeting India and Afghanistan. This move by US was part of its broader strategy to put pressure on Pakistan to sever its links with Islamist militant groups and take action against the terror groups operating out of its soil. Being on the grey list would mean that it will become tough for Pakistan to access funds from international markets which will also affect the economy of the country.

In a major turn of events, China, Pakistan's all-weather friend and ally, removed its earlier objections to FATF's move to put Pakistan on its grey list of terror financing. Security hawks in Pakistan strongly criticised China's 'opportunistic move' and termed it as an attempt by the US to put pressure in alliance with India. They have further argued that there is a need for Pakistan to build stronger relations with other regional and international powers that

are more sympathetic to it. Yet some experts in the media have argued that the internal political turmoil and fights between the ruling party, opposition, judiciary and military establishment has engulfed the whole country and left Pakistan inactive on the foreign policy front.

The extra-judicial killing of Naqeebullah Mehsud, a young Pashtun, by Karachi police started a debate over the identity of Pashtuns and the atrocities of the state against this ethnic group. It triggered a ten-day long peaceful sit-in in Islamabad by the Pashtun youth from Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). This was one of the longest March, and unlike past protests, this was completely youth-based without any political backing. It was a spontaneous outburst of anger and resistance against the step-motherly treatment of its people and against the flawed policies of the state. The key demands included, “punishment of Rao Anwar, the infamous encounter specialist from Karachi, clearing of landmines, recovering missing persons and withdrawal of such other unfortunate policies of the past that have aggravated the marginalization and vulnerability of the Pashtuns especially those who live in FATA”.

This event was not debated in the virtual and electronic media in Pakistan but the print-media carried a number of editorials and articles on the Pashtun issue. They mainly underlined that the protests were an eye-opener for Pakistan’s civilian and military leadership, “who have been dealing with the FATA as a strategic space, rather than recognizing the genuine needs and rights of its inhabitants”. Some experts believe that the protests have not only generated awareness among the tribe about their rights but has also provided them a chance to disprove the tag put on them that they are “*pro-Taliban, pro-jihad, and extremely religious*”.

In yet another thought-provoking decision by the ruling government, Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi decided to abolish the Gilgit-Baltistan Council and transfer its powers to the GB Legislative Assembly within a month. According to this reform, if implemented, the powers currently exercised by the GB Council would be shifted to the elected GB Legislative Assembly. The focus of the reform will be to empower the regional legislative assembly by devolving powers and by announcing major structural reforms in the region’s judiciary. If approved this will be one step closer for PML-N government’s effort to bring the people of GB in the manifold.

**Dr. Zainab Akhter**

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

**Who is damaging democracy in Pakistan?** Qamar Cheema, *Daily Times*, 12 February<sup>1</sup>

*Political leaders are democratic authoritarians if they show weak commitment to democratic rules, deny the legitimacy of political opponents, tolerate violence or if they show willingness to curb civil liberties and media freedom.* In the 21st century, the threat is not from military interventions and violent revolutions but from a lack of democratic culture. This is known as illiberal democracy or hybrid regimes. The threat of withering democracy is from within those who are insiders and control the system. First they gain power and then with their power they change laws for personal advantages. Pakistan's powerful political elite does this and the opposition supports them, knowing they will share the same slice. These electoral authoritarians are a real threat to democracy.

**Rethinking Afghanistan,** Riaz Mohammad Khan, *Dawn*, 16 February<sup>2</sup>

Pakistan has its own catalogue of errors. Since the days of the Mujahedeen infighting and the Taliban rule, Pakistan's policy was caught between Afghanistan's notorious ethnic fault lines. Non-Pashtun factions did not trust Pakistan. The US intervention catapulted them into power in Kabul. *Perceived Pakistani support for the Taliban only pushes Kabul into the embrace of Delhi and lends credence to the Indian and Kabul narratives that Pakistan uses non-state actors as instrument of its policy.* To counter Indian subversion from the Afghan soil, Pakistan will have to work with Kabul and Washington.

**The future of PML-N,** Syed Zeeshan Haider, *Daily Times*, 18 February<sup>3</sup>

There was a noted change in the political atmosphere after this. Nawaz Sharif, had to suffer a host of appearances in court after his disqualification. Instead of being defensive, he adopted an aggressive political discourse. Because of Mian Sahib's strategy, the people, who had no love for the PML-N, but were against the supremacy of the undemocratic forces in Pakistan, also lent their support to the PML-N. The party's public processions are gaining momentum with each passing day, while its rivals are losing public support. Recently, the former senator of the PML-Q, Mushahid Hussain Sayed, an astute and intelligent politician, joined the PML-N. This is testimony to the fact that the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/199969/damaging-democracy-pakistan/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1389627/rethinking-afghanistan>

<sup>3</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/203993/future-pml-n/>

popularity of the PML-N is rising. *However, if the performance of the Punjab government were to be compared with the performance of other provincial governments, its performance has been better on all fronts.* The PTI and PPP governments lag far behind the PML-N in delivering development and improvement to their provinces.

**Battle to no end, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 21 February<sup>4</sup>**

*Sharif's victim narrative, however distorted it may be, seems to be gaining public traction. His frontal assault on the judiciary and jibes at the security establishment seem to be working.* His daughter and heir apparent Maryam Nawaz has certainly drawn a populist response with her rabble-rousing speeches. Both father and daughter are on the warpath playing a game of dangerous brinkmanship. The clash of institutions is getting uglier with Sharif's unrelenting onslaught against the country's top judges. It seems a calculated move to bring the judiciary under pressure. The provocation may not bring the judges under pressure but it certainly has made the credibility of the court controversial. The Supreme Court has already completed proceedings on two petitions, one on determining the period of disqualification under Articles 62 and 63 and the other on the changes made by parliament in the electoral law allowing Sharif to continue as president of his party despite his disqualification as prime minister. These two Sharif-specific rulings are expected to be announced in the next few weeks.

**Our strategic blunders, M Ziauddin, Daily Times, 22 February<sup>5</sup>**

Defence Minister Khurram Dastgiron stunned the Senators by refusing to disclose the location of the deployment of the troops being sent to the Kingdom even in an in-camera session beyond that the troops would be located within the geographical boundaries of Saudi Arabia. He also claimed that the decision was taken within the confines of the joint parliamentary resolution of April 2015 which had proposed that Pakistan "should maintain neutrality in the conflict (between KSA and Iran which is alleged to be supporting Yemen Houties) so as to be able to play a proactive diplomatic role to end the crisis". *Perhaps this is Pakistan's too quick-fire response to Tehran leasing to New Delhi the other day operational control of part of the Iranian Chabahar port for 18 months. If that is what is it then perhaps a second look at our decision would not be inappropriate just to calculate its strategic cost-benefit ratio.*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1390690/battle-to-no-end>

<sup>5</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/205854/our-strategic-blunders/>

**FATF reprieve, Editorial, Dawn, 22 February<sup>6</sup>**

*Security hawks inside Pakistan have interpreted the move in the FATF as an attempt by the US to heap further pressure on Pakistan in alliance with India and have argued that it further demonstrates bad faith on part of the US while underlining the need for Pakistan to build stronger relations with other regional and international powers that are more sympathetic to it. There are no obvious circumstances in which countries such as China or Russia, for example, will in perpetuity avert their gaze from the presence in Pakistan of militant and terrorist elements that can destabilize the region. Robust regional competition does not mean regional powers will accept dangerous levels of regional conflict.*

**Double jeopardy for Mr. Sharif, Yousaf Amanat, Daily Times, 23 February<sup>7</sup>**

In the present scenario, the Federal Government did not deem any matter anti-Pakistan with regard to Mr. Nawaz Sharif's heading of PML-N nor did they refer the matter to the Supreme Court of Pakistan to deliberate upon. If we go by this reasoning, then what breach of the Fundamental Rights under Chapter I and II of the Constitution of Pakistan then led to the Supreme Court taking up the Petitions and allowing them? In fact, is it not the fundamental right of Mr. Nawaz Sharif that has actually been usurped by the passing of this Order? Nawaz Sharif's dismissal as party head and in fact could also have led to disqualification of other leaders convicted from courts from heading political parties; a category under which would also have fallen Mr. Pervez Musharraf. *By virtue of the order disqualifying Mr. Nawaz Sharif as party head, the position of Mr. Pervez Musharraf has also now become questionable.*

**Regrettable verdict, Editorial, Dawn, 23 February<sup>8</sup>**

It is with profound regret that this caveat has to be stated the judgements of the Supreme Court of Pakistan need to promote the rule of law and constitutional democracy, not add to the national confusion. The ruling is extraordinary and seemingly pits a fundamental right, Article 17 of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of association, against the qualification and disqualification criteria for parliamentarians, also part of the Constitution. The responsibility of the judiciary, however, is to interpret the law, not invent it. The retrospective effect of the court's decision, nullifying all decisions taken by Mr. Sharif since his re-election as party president, is also

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1390855/fatf-reprieve>

<sup>7</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/206204/double-jeopardy-mr-sharif/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1391170/regrettable-verdict>

deeply troubling. The judicialisation of politics should be resisted by the judiciary itself.

**Embarrassments & isolations, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Dawn, 27 February<sup>9</sup>**

...But the rot lies deeper. India has not isolated Pakistan. The US has not isolated Pakistan. Afghanistan has not isolated Pakistan. They cannot. Only Pakistan can isolate itself and it has done so repeatedly looking towards China to bail it out every time. The bitter truth is that Pakistan's vigorous denials are seen by most countries as blatant lies, and part of a pattern going back decades which reflects a sustained emasculation of the democratic process. *While India and the US are often criticized for their domestic and international conduct, and Afghanistan is seen as a failed state*, none of this translates into much international sympathy and understanding for Pakistan's protestations about its role in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

**The Nawaz Show, Editorial, Daily Times, 28 February<sup>10</sup>**

Sadly, beneath this bravado lies an ugly truth. What we have is a ruling party that is being perpetually prevented from focusing on the business of governance. *Meaning, at a time when it should be putting all its energies into coming up with an action plan to ensure that it will not be put on the infamous grey-list in three months' time it is burning itself out with relentless palace intrigues.* This is to say nothing of the apparent absence of a political manifesto for this summer's elections. With less than six months to go, the electoral process has, thus far, been hijacked by a former PM. Yet as it stands, by the time polls roll around Pakistan will have endured an entire year of the Nawaz Show; with all the opposition parties never once moving from their cheap seats. And the citizenry will be left standing once more.

**From disgrace to supreme leader, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 28 February<sup>11</sup>**

Shahbaz's ascendancy is not likely to tilt the balance of power within the ruling party to the other branch of the family as is being anticipated. It is hard to envisage how much influence and power the younger Sharif could have under the overwhelming shadow of his elder brother that is not going to fade away and the niece who has emerged as the party's populist face of defiance. In this situation, Shahbaz will just be a figurehead in his capacity as the party's interim head. *It will still be Nawaz Sharif calling the shots. This dichotomy of power within the party may have its own perils.*

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1391973>

<sup>10</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/208308/the-nawaz-show/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1392225/from-disgrace-to-supreme-leader>

## ECONOMIC ISSUES

### **South Asia in 'Thucydides Trap', Sheraz Zaka, *Daily Times*, 16 February<sup>12</sup>**

In the present scenario, it is for the benefit of the US to strengthen its ties with Pakistan to gain maximum economic and political leverage. On the other hand, Pakistan, in order to achieve economic targets and political leverage, is looking towards regional powers like Russia and China. *Secondly, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's severing of ties with the US and moving towards Russia is an indication that the US' interference in Asia would be constrained and kept under constant surveillance.* China's pursuit in Asia in the form of OBOR and CPEC projects would provide it further opportunity to expand its influence to get access to Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East markets. On the other hand, India feels threatened by the presence of China and its expansionary interests in Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean, as it is likely to endanger the strategic interests of India in South Asia.

### **Iran-India deal on Chabahar port, Munir Ahmed, *Daily Times*, 21 February<sup>13</sup>**

It is remarkable that even after comprehensive strategic and defense pacts with Israel, India has still managed to gain the Iranian's trust. While it is true that every country should have positive relation with its neighbours, this economic cooperation between Delhi and Tehran is more than business as usual. The strategic consequences of port-sharing with India would be larger in extent than what is being considered. *The question that immediately pops up here is if Iran will ignore the Israel-India nexus just for economic benefits without taking into consideration that it would be strengthening an alliance between two extremely anti-Muslim states.* Would it really be wise for Iran to give India access to Afghanistan and through it to the Central Asian Muslim states where it could also be strategically maneuvered by Israel? This is the time for Pakistan to cross-check the Iranian support to many of the religious and social elements in the name of social and religious cohesiveness. Everyone knows the hands behind the fiddling of unrest being created in the Balochistan province that needs to be tackled with stringent interventions.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/202932/south-asia-thucydides-trap/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/205338/iran-india-deal-chabahar-port/>

### **Will CPEC alter Balochistan? Mushtaq Rajpar, *The News*, 22 February<sup>14</sup>**

Why aren't federal packages producing results in Balochistan? Balochistan is a classic example of the regional imbalance and inequality within Pakistan. The center's domination over the politics of the province is a reality that has been reinforced every now and then. The recent shake-up in the government has only turned the people's worst fears into reality: that in addition to their natural resources being exploited, they also have little control over politics and the government in their province. *India's involvement in the Chabahar Port adds a layer of complexity in the regional geopolitical games.* If the idea of socioeconomic inclusive development is not given serious thought, CPEC will result in discontent among locals and produce regional tensions.

## **SECURITY SITUATION**

### **Banning terror groups, Khurram Husain, *Dawn*, 15 February<sup>15</sup>**

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is all set to take up the question of whether Pakistan is complying with international commitments to prevent its financial system from being used by groups that have been designated by the United Nations as terrorist entities, and early indications are that it is going to be a bumpy ride. The move was widely seen as an attempt to come into partial compliance with the requirements of FATF. The actual requirements go much further, requiring an asset freeze and a ban on all organizations headed by those who are listed by the UN as terrorists, *but any attempts to ban the JuD and the FiF meets with stiff resistance within the country, because they are engaged in charity work.*

### **Pakistan getting to grips on terror, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 15 February<sup>16</sup>**

American scepticism points to the timing of this latest move. Pakistan, after all, is readying to participate in next week's Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in Paris. The worst-case scenario for Islamabad is to find itself on the list of nations that have been deemed non-compliant with terror financing regulations as set out by FATF; which sets global standards for combating illicit finance. *And this distrust is fueled by those at the Pakistani helm promising the whole of the moon when the heat is on and then delivering nothing when the lights go off; which is often.* Quite literally. Islamabad, for its part, sees New Delhi's hand in this. But be that as it may, Pakistan needs to keep calm and carry on. For the devil is always in the detail of the follow-

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/283994-will-cpec-alter-balochistan>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/NEWS/1389433/BANNING-TERROR-GROUPS>

<sup>16</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/202273/PAKISTAN-GETTING-GRIPS-TERROR/>

through. Meaning that the government must do its best to keep a lid on the usual knee-jerk responses.

**Terror financing, Editorial, Dawn, 17 February<sup>17</sup>**

It is in Pakistan's own interest to ensure that crackdowns and bans on specific organizations have the desired effect and that these groups are defanged permanently and do not have any opportunity to resurrect themselves under a different name. *The actions being taken now, which include the seizing of the financial assets of the groups, hopefully indicate a change of heart at the top levels of government;* but the state should ensure that these extend to all militant groups in the country — and not only to those proscribed internationally. The organizations in question have struck deep roots in Pakistani society with their charity work, and making a meaningful change in their modus operandi will require a sustained, detailed strategy.

**International impact of blasphemy laws, S M Hali, Daily Times, 17 February<sup>18</sup>**

Pakistani lawmakers remain reluctant to revisit the Blasphemy Laws because of pressure from religious groups, and this state of affairs is being exploited by special interest groups in other countries. The US administration said Islamabad had failed to crack down on Islamist terrorist networks operating in the country and was supporting, among other groups, the Afghan Taliban. Critics also say the draconian blasphemy laws reflect how Pakistani leaders have permitted radical Islamic thought to infiltrate the justice system. It now appears that a concerted effort is being made by the U.S. to corner Pakistan from every angle. *Talk shows blaming Pakistan for the insurgency in Afghanistan, citing alleged support for the Taliban and not doing enough to contain the Haqqani Network have become the order of the day.* Bringing the harsh blasphemy laws in to the discourse appears to be a deliberate attempt to denigrate Pakistan.

**China, Pakistan and the anti-India lot, Zarnaab Adil Janjua, Daily Times, 20 February<sup>19</sup>**

With increasing economic involvement in the region, China is what the Diplomat Arushi Kumar calls, "reorienting its internal calculus and tightening its grip on security in Pakistan." New Delhi is already perturbed over the fact that the CPEC passes through Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. The BRICS declaration might be a move to appease the Indians, even though it seems that China is now cognizant of the threat that

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1389873>

<sup>18</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/203433/international-impact-Pakistans-Blasphemy-laws/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/204737/china-pakistan-anti-india-lot/>

even the anti-India groups will pose to its interests in the region. However, dealing with the anti-India lot is what presents the Pakistani state with significant challenges. They are not like the Haqqani network which can conveniently be nudged into Afghanistan when the situation calls for it. For the anti-India lot, Pakistan is home. When will the military's misguided notion of 'strategic depth' be updated? Sporadic action against the Jamaat-ud-Dawa and the Filah-e-Insaniyat Foundation persist but no long-term shutting down is in sight. *With Pakistan abandoning the American eagle for the Chinese dragon, Islamabad may not even have to heed to the US pressure regarding these anti-India groups.*

### **Militias are a threat to Pakistan, Raza Rumi, Daily Times, 25 February<sup>20</sup>**

This time we are dealing with a different US administration. Unlike the Obama-led presidency, the Trump administration will not stop at hard talk. This is a reality that Pakistan has to contend with. But the more worrisome development was how Saudi Arabia and China, our key allies, were persuaded by the US to remain silent at the end of FATF deliberations leaving Turkey as the only country clearly on our side. The intimation that Pakistan will be 'grey listed' in June implies that our financial system will be seen as a risk to the international financial system due to its "strategic deficiencies" in thwarting money laundering and terror financing. The government will collaborate with FATF to build an "action plan" to fix the deficiencies and the June session of the taskforce will review that. Our poor policy choices in the past have only made the nation more insecure. *But we are yet to accept a simple principle of internal security. Direct and indirect support to non-state actors, howsoever useful they may be, is against the basic tenet of statehood.* We also know that JuD is a vital instrument of our Kashmir policy and is not going anywhere.

## **PROVINCES & REGIONS**

### **GB**

### **GB reforms report submitted to federal cabinet for approval, Jamil Nagri, Dawn, 08 February<sup>21</sup>**

The federal ministry of Kashmir affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan recently submitted a report, based on the recommendations of a parliamentary body, to the federal cabinet, seeking its approval to bring political reforms in GB. *It was mandated to (1) review the current constitutional and administrative*

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<sup>20</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/207107/forget-world-militias-threat-pakistan/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1388108/gb-reforms-report-submitted-to-federal-cabinet-for-approval>

arrangements in GB and analyze any shortcomings in relation to aspirations of the people; (2) after studying the historic record and relevant treaties, examine whether the existing eternal boundaries of the territories that constitute GB overlap with territories that formed part of the state Jammu and Kashmir and if so, make recommendations for corrective measures; (3) recommend constitutional and administrative reforms for GB, keeping in view the implications of these recommendations vis-a-vis the UN resolutions on Kashmir.

**PM decides to abolish Gilgit-Baltistan Council, Jamil Nagri, Dawn, 17<sup>22</sup>**

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has decided to abolish the Gilgit-Baltistan Council and transfer its powers to the GB Legislative Assembly. The powers currently exercised by the GB Council would be shifted to the elected GB Legislative Assembly. For this purpose, the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan would prepare a draft which would be sent to the law ministry for approval. The committee recommended de-facto integration of GB with Pakistan but not a de-jure change since that would affect the country's principle position on Kashmir. *The committee also advised to bring the GB Legislative Assembly on a par with other provincial assemblies, all legislative subjects, other than those enumerated in Article 142 of the Constitution and that its fourth schedule might be devolved from the GB Council to GBLA.*

**Political prisoners in Gilgit Baltistan, Editorial, Daily Times, 19 February<sup>23</sup>**

That our law enforcement apparatus can charge GB residents with terrorism for exercising civil liberties that the rest of us, in mainland Pakistan, take for granted should be a moment of shame for those representing the Pakistani public in Islamabad. Instead of trying to address the grievances of the region, the authorities continue with their undemocratic practices. Meanwhile, protests have been held against his arrest in GB as well as in major cities across the country. The protesters, including a large body of students from GB, have sought an end to our double standards vis-a-vis the region. The authorities in Islamabad will do well to listen to these youngsters of GB for this lopsided relationship of Islamabad with the region and its people needs to end. The case against Advocate Ali needs to be annulled and he must be released immediately. *The occasion should also be used to reflect on the undemocratic impulses in the recently passed controversial legislation on electronic crimes.*

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1389970/pm-decides-to-abolish-gb-council>

<sup>23</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/204430/political-prisoners-gilgit-baltistan/>

**Interpreting G-B council's dissolution, Masud Ahmed Khan, *The Express Tribune*, 20 February<sup>24</sup>**

Rumours are swirling that the G-B council's powers are going to be shifted to the ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan. Still there is confusion about the kind of system that will replace the G-B council. Members of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council have shown their concern over this decision and they are of the view that a vacuum will be created as they were acting as a bridge between the Gilgit-Baltistan Council and the Legislative Assembly. *The ongoing tendencies of organizing protest rallies/strikes may benefit sub-nationalists in the area.* Though sub-nationalists do not enjoy any significant support, they are gradually gaining support among the youth. Some of them are exploiting the issue of G-B's status with the help of their 'foreign masters'. The popular demand in G-B is representation in parliament and other federal institutions of the country

**AJK-GB democratic deficit, way out, Manzoor Gilani, *Daily Times*, 21 February<sup>25</sup>**

AJK and GB, though governments in name, are practically non-entity and hostage to federal structure. Democrat deficit in both the areas and resentment against it, is more than loud. GB Assembly has passed two resolutions and all factions of AJK political leadership and civil society led by its prime minister Raja Farooq Haider from front are vociferous in demand. Although they differ in details, but agree in substance. *The formula of quantum and extent of autonomy is very simple and comprehensible i.e. scraping the colonial authority of AJK GB councils, devolving all those (+tax powers in addition to them) to these areas which are given to provinces of Pakistan under 18th amendment in particular, in return all powers of federal nature should vest in federal parliament and Government, give provisional representation equal to the provinces pending final resolution of Kashmir dispute to these areas in parliament.* Indian claim over these areas under the disputed accession deed by the former ruler, cease-fire violations throughout the CFL, its propaganda of subjugation of the rights of the people of these areas fueled by some self-styled human rights activists in Europe and America, absence of any constitutional linkage between these areas and mainland of Pakistan, besides many other reasons, are very sensitive issues which make the constitutional empowerment, linkage and reforms inevitable and, time is running out.

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<sup>24</sup><https://tribune.com.pk/story/1639182/6-interpreting-g-b-councils-dissolution/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/205337/ajk-gb-democratic-deficit-way/>

## FATA

### **Fata as a province, Mohammad Ali Babakhel, Dawn, 08 February<sup>26</sup>**

A Fata province would also mean another Pakhtun province, which may be exploited by Pakhtun nationalists on the basis that they are being divided. It may also propel the Hindko-speaking, Hazara-based community to advocate for a Hazara province and the Seraiki population for boundary readjustments of Tank and D.I. Khan. It may also encourage debate for another Pakhtun province in southern Balochistan. *Without further delay, we need to realize that a social transition from tribe to state is the only viable option for Fata.*

### **Ironies of FATA, Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 09 February<sup>27</sup>**

Several thousand Pakhtuns, young and old, but mostly from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), are camped outside the Press Club in Islamabad. They are protesting the state of displacement, internment, ethnic profiling, disappearances, killings, injury and exile that have been everyday occurrences of their war-torn lives in the last ten years. One curious but unfortunate fact of this protest must also be recorded. *The mainstream media is pretending that this “dharna” is not meaningful in any significant way, hence it doesn’t deserve the 24 hour “breaking news” live coverage afforded day in and day out to mainstream politicians.* Since the media is slavish only towards the military, and since the military establishment seems to be indirectly at the center of the FATA protest also, the conclusion is obvious.

### **Young Pashtuns have shown the mirror to ‘mainstream’ Pakistan, Raza Rumi, Daily Times, 11 February<sup>28</sup>**

Mehsud’s death sparked national outrage and it soon became a metaphor for the historic injustices meted out to residents of tribal areas and the way millions have faced conflict, displacement and landmines since the start of US-led war on terror aided by Pakistan’s elites. For decades, segments of Pashtun elites have played along with the civil-military power wielders to further a sanitized nationalism but it seems that the younger generations are challenging that. Ethnicity-based politics will remain a reality and it needs to be accepted by powers-that-be. Democratisation, howsoever flawed it might be, enables reconciliation of multiple political and social identities. But this was not altogether unexpected. *Much of what was said during the Pashtun long march and sit-in challenged the carefully nurtured myths about*

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1387967/fata-as-a-province>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/ironies-of-fata/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/199383/young-pashtuns-shown-mirror-mainstream-pakistan/>

*Pashtuns popular in 'mainstream' Pakistan.* The 'other' told its story and reminded of the national disregard for the lives and livelihoods of Pashtuns.

**Calling a spade a spade: Asma Jahangir's bold stance on Balochistan,** Malik Siraj Akbar, *Dawn*, 12 February<sup>29</sup>

Putting things in perspective, she explained that the people of Balochistan had stood up for their rights because Islamabad treated the region as a colony, extracted its mineral resources without sharing the benefits with the local people, and, on top of that, illegally picked up Baloch activists and tortured them in official custody. "Why should the Baloch feel obligated to stay with us when we don't treat them as equal citizens and keep referring to them as anti-national and traitors?" *she had questioned during the show. She cited the issue of disappearances as one of the significant factors that fueled resentment in Balochistan and also singled out different state actors for acting beyond their constitutional mandate while operating in the country's largest province.*

**Pashtuns' parlat, Shaheen Buneri, Daily Times, 13 February<sup>30</sup>**

Pakistan's recent military adventures in the tribal region caused unmeasurable sufferings when millions were displaced from their homes. Meanwhile, this whole region from Waziristan to Swat Valley remained the prime target of terrorist attacks resulting into large scale death and destruction. Hundreds more were either disappeared or target-killed. Even schools and places of worship were not spared. Furthermore, exclusion in the decision-making process and exploitation of their resources have created an acute sense of alienation among the Pashtuns. This had forced them to raise their voices and ask is it a fight against Taliban or a campaign against them? Over the years, Pakistan security establishment tried to stifle voices of dissent and we never knew how the people of FATA view the ongoing military and intelligence operations in their areas. On the mainstream media their side of the story was either ignored or twisted 'in the larger interest' of the State. *Tribesmen have no rights under the draconian FCR. The few schools and healthcare units they had were also destroyed in recent conflicts.*

**Post Pashtun Long March, Talimand Khan, Daily Times, 15 February<sup>31</sup>**

For the first time the Pakhtun opened the lid on the can of FATA and other militancy affected areas which were made as no go areas with the media feeding the official narrative to the rest of the people in the country and the world. Through the March and sit in the youth blew that cover and gave firsthand information to the world about their plight and miseries caused by the so called war on terror. The march also systematically shattered the

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1388963>

<sup>30</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/200637/pashtuns-parlat/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/202278/post-pashtunlongmarch/>

stereotypes and an engineered image of the Pakhtun as unruly, religiously extremist, intolerant and intrinsically prone to violence and militancy. They proved to the world that they were the victims of the geo-strategic game of their own state as well as of the world powers. The youth uprising defeated the narrative of war on terror and exposed it as a war of terror for Pakhtun. It posed many tough questions for the state with no easy answer. *If the people of Swat and FATA left their homes and provided every opportunity and cooperation to the army to clear the area from terrorists, why were they treated like hostile population on their returned?*

## RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

**Luckily Modi is not Nehru**, Jawed Naqvi, *Dawn*, 13 February<sup>32</sup>

Well-meaning editorial writers have periodically criticized Prime Minister Modi for speaking irresponsibly in parliament and outside. Such criticism is usually about the style, not so much about the substance of his politics. Why should Mr. Modi be different from who he essentially is, particularly when he seems to be popular in being who he is? Why should he not say what his opponents don't want him to say and say only things they want to hear? He turns a blind eye to rampaging Hindutva mobs, cow vigilantes and so on, so his opponents complain. But people elected him for that, or possibly worse.

**More attacks in IHK**, Editorial, *Dawn*, 13 February<sup>33</sup>

The attack on an army camp in Jammu on Saturday and another on a Central Reserve Police Force camp in Srinagar yesterday have so ratcheted up tensions between the two countries that IHK Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, has been forced to speak out. Ms. Mufti has said on Twitter, "Dialogue with Pakistan is necessary if we are to end bloodshed. I know I will be labelled anti-national by news anchors tonight but that doesn't matter. The people of J&K are suffering. We have to talk because war is not an option." *Her words should be heeded by the Indian government. Strident response of Ms Sitharaman may satisfy anti-Pakistan hawks in India, but such sentiments can only pave the way to greater conflict, not less.*

**Readying a saffron generation**, Latha Jishnu, *Dawn*, 19, February<sup>34</sup>

Is of one the biggest banking swindles came to light, a scandal involving one of the prime minister's charmed circle of business friends, Narendra Modi was putting on another of his rockstar performances in Delhi, this time for the

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1389062/luckily-modi-is-not-nehru>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1389057/more-attacks-in-ihk>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1390241/readying-a-saffron-generation>

benefit of a stadium full of schoolchildren rounded up for advice on how to beat the exam blues. Keeping the citizenry distracted appears to be what the BJP's ideological mentors, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh expects from Modi these days while it goes about quietly pushing its agenda of creating a Hindu India. *While the Modi regime flounders, the RSS is succeeding in its agenda of creating a Hindu India.*

## URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

### Urdu

**277 districts under Taliban control in Afghanistan, Ahmed Najeeb Zaade, Ummat, 01 February<sup>35</sup>**

Despite spending billions of dollars, America and its allies could not end the Taliban control in Afghanistan. *In survey carried out by a British Broadcasting Services, hundreds of Afghans have said that they were happy under the Taliban rule. And now they feel insecure. The BBC report mentioned that 177 districts in Afghanistan are under Taliban's control.* While the American troops with their aim to defeat Taliban at any cost have started doing opium trade. *The Special Inspector General for Reconstruction, John Sopko has revealed in secret report that Afghan army and police have been involved crimes against children in Afghanistan.* And the American Army is silent on the issue. The report said that though the American led troops have spent billions of dollars in Afghanistan, the Taliban control 70 per cent of the country where they collect taxes for water, electricity and other facilities provided by the government in Kabul. ... *One female teacher Muss Gul in North Kabul has said in the survey that peace is so elusive that we are thinking we should sell off all our property and join the Taliban section where we can find some peace.* Umer Khan from Helmand has said that Taliban can provide justice, not the puppet government in Kabul. ... *The report came just after when the NDS chief Masoom Stanekzai said in an interview that the intelligence and spy-system of Taliban is so strong that they even get information about our meetings in minutes. The recent attacks is an example for that.* ... It should be kept in mind that no one has commented on the child-abuse apart from the American officer. Voice of America has said that the American watchdog has accused the Pentagon that it is secretly publishing reports on Afghanistan to hide its failure.

**The image problem of Pakistan, Sikander Khan Baloch, Nawa-i-Waqt, 02 February<sup>36</sup>**

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<sup>35</sup><http://ummat.net/2018/02/01/news.php?p=story7.gif>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2018-02-02/page-14/detail-8>

There is an old saying: notorious is worse than the bad. It takes long to make an image; but few moments to destroy it. *Pakistan is suffering from a bad image. It is unfortunate to say that Pakistan does not count in the list of 'good countries'. India is really bad. It does not leave any chance to show it. Still it is known as a democracy and peaceful country in the world (Baharat pura badma'ash hai. Badma'shi ka koi bhi mu'qa haath se jane nhi de'ta).* Pakistan is a 'peace-loving' country and has never shown aggression against anyone. But no one is ready to accept that. India calls Pakistan a terrorist state and 'mother of terrorism'. Even if a firecracker bursts or someone dies in an accident in India, it blames Pakistan. It raises such a hue and cry that whole world believes it. For instance, *in Kashmir India has committed worst and every kind of crime but still human rights' champions are silent. Kulbhushan Jadhav has accepted his role in terror activities in Pakistan but we could not convince the world till now.* ... President Trump calls Pakistan 'liar and deceitful' country because after getting \$33 billion we did not act against terrorist but cheated the US. To make India happy Trump made India regional *thanedar*. It was attack on our autonomy, pride and national prestige. *All this is happening on India's behest. Where are our diplomats sleeping! It means a big deal: It means that our military is a rentier military and fights for dollars and this is our diplomatic failure.* ... We are being seen as beggars. This is our external image. How can we expect respect with such image? *Our leaders have brought us to this position. These leaders made fortunate by siphoning off public money but let the public in destitute.* These so-called leaders have served the country in way that today our security is under threat. We need to correct our image.

**One more proof for disqualification, Editorial, Ummat, 02 February<sup>37</sup>**

Whatever the ruling Muslim League may brag about its achievements, but people know that it has not given any relief to them from inflation and unemployment. *Its claims on peace and security are also false. Because this has not been achieved by the political government but by the army. It also remains a fact that the federal and provincial governments have created hurdles in army operations to fight terrorists and looters.* Otherwise operation 'Zarb-e-Azb' and 'Radd-ul Fasaad' would have cleared all terrorists and looters from the country. What more evidence should be provided for the disqualification of the former prime minister that despite all advertisement of big projects, these have not provided people food, shelter and cloth? *Though the elections are nearby, the rulers have increased fuel prices. It is open anti-public move. And if still Mian Nawaz Sharif keeps saying that why was he removed, what proof does he want from the public?*

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<sup>37</sup> <http://ummat.net/2018/02/02/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

**Afghanistan again accuse Pak of helping Taliban, Daesh, Editorial, Nawa-i-Waqt, 06 February<sup>38</sup>**

Interior Minister of Afghanistan Wais Barmak has said in an interview to BBC that the purpose of targeting civilians in Kabul is to raise a rebellion in the country. *The Taliban and Daesh want to make people against the Afghan-government. Pakistan is centre and patron for the both.* ... Taliban is targeting Kabul again and again. So far more than four hundred people including foreigners have been killed. ... The Afghan-administration is right: These are handy works of Taliban and *Daesh* and these groups claimed them. *President Ashraf Ghani has closed doors for talks with such dangerous groups. He is better positioned to judge what it requires to restore peace in Afghanistan. But there is no alternative to holding talks with Taliban.* ... Has he realized it now that Taliban have crossed redline? Taliban is not right either. It should fight who have grabbed their authority (not the civilians). *Ashraf Ghani is putting blame for his failures on Pakistan. Now his interior ministry does same. Sixty per cent of Afghanistan is under Taliban control. Will Pakistan allow to these people to stay in the country who have killed 23 soldiers in Sawat?*... Attackers are in Kabul. Find them there. If Afghanistan suspects Pakistan, it should allow Pakistan in border management so that such movements are controlled.

**Guardian of interests of common people, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Qayum Nizami, Nawa-i-Waqt, 07 February<sup>39</sup>**

A state runs on a social contract. Pakistan's constitutions is a social contract in which the citizens are given basic rights. State institutions and leaders are supposed to support the constitution. *Problem arises when the powerful prefer personal wealth instead of welfare of people. In last ten years (2008 to 2018) common man has been ignored.* ... It is after seeing pride and arrogance of 'materialist terrorists' that Allah removed all fears from the judges of the courts and bestowed them with the blessing of *Jihad* against the corrupt. Chief Justice Saqib Nisar has started new movement by initiating taken *suo motu* notices. He is determined that people should get water, clean environment, good education and good things at cheap rates. *If the black money of the looters is brought back, Pakistanis will get these facilities.* ... *In this era of lack of good men, chief justice is a reward of Allah for helpless Pakistanis. This implies that Allah has finally had mercy on Pakistan and has given the nation a good man.* ... Chief Justice is carrying out his constitutional duties. He does not support any political group. Any propaganda against him is wrong. *Nawaz Sharif's way is immoral, undemocratic, and unconstitutional. He is destroying Pakistan's political*

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-02-06/page-14/detail-2>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-02-07/page-14/detail-7>

*culture by targeting the judiciary. He is instigating criminals to target judiciary. ... If Nawaz Sharif continues his melee, his speeches will be banned like Altaf Hussain. ... Chief Justice and the NAB chairman will clear all 'dirt' from Pakistan. Pakistan army will stand by them. People will finally abandon supporting corrupt politicians. God-willing, there will be new Pakistani.*

**One more issue in politics, Editorial, Ummat, 07 February<sup>40</sup>**

Three aspects of Pakistan's politics are prominent: one, everyone wants to bring other down by hook or by crook and capture power; second, count on one's 'achievements' and delegitimize other for her ineligibility and failures and; third, when in power, loot all natural resources for accumulating wealth to sustain generations of the family. *There is a fourth aspect that is found only in the two largest parties, PML N and PPP: That is rather than thinking that the authority belongs to people and the God, make it a family property.* The Bhutto family almost for sixty years and Nawaz family almost for forty years enjoyed power in one way or other. These two family appear more strong and consolidated politically and economically in whole country. ... *Patriots are perplexed that are there only two families capable in the population of 220 million people to rule the country? These families have looted wealth and dynastic authority which they make use of to make their new generations imposed on Pakistan. ... The culture of loot and allegations introduced in Pakistan's politics by the two largest parties has been further worsened by the PTI and MQM. After his defeat in 2013 elections, Imran Khan added the culture of abuse and immorality to Pakistan's politics. Especially, women are very unhappy with him. On the other hand, MQM has been involved in worst kind of terror acts in Karachi and Hyderabad and other cities. ... Asif Ali Zardari has said after seeing Nawaz Sharif's growing popularity after his disqualification by the court that Nawaz Sharif wants to capture vote, bank, water, people and everything to strengthen his kingdom. And Zardari would not allow it to happen. ... He said that PPP is still powerful to correct the country. As far as PPP's power is concerned, it is now limited to Sindh which is reflections of performance. Who are exemplary thieves, looters and obnoxious in the country? Who knows it better than Asif Ali Zardari!*

**More expected in Kulbhushan's case, Nawwa-i-Waqt, Editorial, Ummat, 08 February<sup>41</sup>**

Pakistan has decided to expand Kulbhushan Jadhav's case further. *In this regard, statements of more than two dozen people have been recorded.*

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<sup>40</sup> <http://ummat.net/2018/02/07/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.nawawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-02-08/page-14/detail-1>

*Pakistan has asked India for access to 'Jhadav Network'. Other crimes in which the network is involved, apart from terrorism, will also be identified. RAW agent Kulbhushan Jadhav was arrested in March 2016 in Balochistan when he was a serving officer in Indian navy. RAW had assigned him to lead and supervise terrorists in Balochistan in particular. ... India could succeed in establishing 'RAW Network' in Balochistan because it has support of our both neighbours, Afghanistan and Iran. In fact their relations are brotherly. By creating disturbance in Balochistan, anti-Pakistan agenda could have been achieved. It entailed to sabotage CPEC and to destabilise the country.* RAW and its agents under the supervision of Kulbhushan created conflicts in Karachi, instigated separatist in Balochistan that affected developmental projects. In such a situation, the arrest of Kulbhushan Jadhav was a big success of our security agencies. *His arrest exposed the enemy and it shattered the 'RAW Network'. It is necessary to find out that how far is NDS in Afghanistan involved in anti-Pakistan activities and who are its local supporters and foreign patrons?* Unless this is known, terrorism will not end in Pakistan. This is commendable to expand investigations related to Kulbhushan Jadhav's case.

**Qaidanis declared non-Muslims in 'Azad Kashmir', Editorial, Ummat, 08 February<sup>42</sup>**

The Constituent Assembly of 'Azad Kashmir' has passed Last Prophethood and Protection of the Prophethood Act 2018 in a special session. *In this twelfth amendment thus Qaidanis have been declared non-Muslim minority. They cannot call themselves Musliman now. They are banned from constructing worship places similar to Mosques, cannot read azan (the Muslim call for prayers) and propagate their religion.* Thus first time in 'Azad Kashmir' like Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Parses, Bhai's, Qaidanis are a minority now. ... The reality is that every Muslims keeps Last Prophethood dear than his/her life and children. To declare Qaidanis non-Muslim is different from the followers of other religions. They call themselves non-Muslims while Qaidanis call themselves Muslims. ... *With their headquarters in Israel, Qaidanis conspire against whole Muslim community across the world. They are busy in hurting them. Like other minorities, Qaidanis also enjoy all minority rights in Pakistan, provided that they do not masquerade as Muslims and try to hurt them.* 'Azad Kashmir' retains the prestige of being first to pass the law of last Prophethood in 1973. ... On Tuesday after passing the Last Prophethood and Protection of the Prophethood Act 2018, the Constituent assembly has cleared all haze. On this the Prime Minister of 'Azad Kashmir', Raja Farooq and other member's deserve a big applaud.

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<sup>42</sup> <http://ummat.net/2018/02/08/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

### **MQM against MQM, Azim Chaudhry, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 11 February<sup>43</sup>**

MQM foundationally stands for three main ideas: complete harmony, unity and functionality. These can be achieved only by being realistic and with strategy. ... *MQM wants to bring revolution and for that it has devised three-prong strategy. First, shift of the center of authority and responsibilities from above to the below; second, complete end to the obsolete landlord-system in which two percent decides the fate of 98 per cent; and third, maximum participation of people in the structure of authority.* ... If today's situation is analysed, all the three ideas/values get reflected. Unity is such that a new MQM is emerging from the existing one, like we see every now and then new faction emerging from the PML N. As far as functionality is concerned, electronic media has given full details of the leaders' activities. ... In 1991 the MQM was in power and could do all it wanted. But a dissenter group emerged from it. *It is well-known that the founder of MQM gave a list of 169 people to Sadiq Ali and asked him to arrest the people. Afaq Ahmed and Amir Khan were present in the list and had to flee to the US. They along with Badar Iqbal were accused of conspiring to kill Altaf Hussain.* Then Azeem Tariq accused some of corruption, nepotism and contacting secret agencies because of which the leader was taken ill. ... Brig. (R) Haroon said that it is a fight between two brothers. *The army and police have been recovering weapons from Karachi for a long time, which is proof of RAW's presence. Weapons of serious concerns, like rocker launcher, AK-47, and bombs. Finally came 22 August and a new MQM emerged from the earlier MQM. Mustafa Kamal enters into the scene. A new MQM was against the MQM.* Some MQM ministers are wanted. Amir Khan has joined again his brothers. Let's wait and see what follows.

### **Implications of MQM's split on national politics, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 12 February<sup>44</sup>**

On Senate ticker issue the MQM has almost got dived into two parts and Farooq Sattar has been removed as the convener of the Rabita Committee and Khalid Siddiqui has replaced him. ... *Formed on the name of Muhajirs' in Karachi, MQM is going through its toughest times. It is generally believed in Pakistan that both of its factions are used by the establishment for its interests.* However, Mustafa Kamal and Farooq Sattar were trying to form their own separate political personalities. In past, when the MQM seemed to be disintegrating, its opponents appeared to have taken a long breath. *Despite this, it was believed that Farooq Sattar will be able to retain the Muttahida vote-bank. However on the issue of giving tickets to MQM members for the*

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-02-11/page-14/detail-8>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-02-13/page-14/detail-1>

*Senate, differences between Sattar and the Rabita Committee members have made the party weakest in its history. ... On this time, Farooq Sattar is almost out of the party. And the Election Commission has accepted the Kahlid Siddiqui led Rabita Committee's nominated list for Senators. After dissolving the Rabita Committee, Farooq Sattar has lost all his importance. He will now either have to form a new party or retire from politics.* After Sattar's lost from the MQM, Altaf Hussain's future has become grimmer.

**Allah save Karachi from evil!, Editorial, Ummat, 08 February<sup>45</sup>**

Despite all its crimes of killings, *ba'ata khoori*, drug smuggling, kidnappings, illegal occupation of land and torturing its opponents, the terrorist group Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) still continued to be part of country's politics. *It got high posts in the federal, provincial and panchayat institutions.* ... The leaders of the MQM became so obese after eating up huge amounts of national resources that they can barely walk. When the leader (Altaf Hussain) speaks, the voice that comes out is like a goat's when it is being slaughtered. ... *Finally on 22 August 2017 when this so-called leader spoke against Pakistan and about rebellion, the process of action started. The Lahore High Court banned his speeches.* Dr. Farooq Sattar was remanded for one night and next day he announced his disassociation with his leader and announced MQM-Pakistan. But Sattar continued to remain in contact with some MQM-London leaders. Before this, former mayor of Karachi Mustafa Kamal had parted ways and announced his own new party, Pak-Sarzameen Party. ...

*Farooq Sattar continued to pursue the mission of his leader. Sometimes alone and sometimes along with the Rabita Committee Members, he was busy in breaking deals with the government and extracting money.* Now Farooq tried to strengthen his grip on the party and tried to retain all the authorities. He almost disbanded the Rabata Committee. Then four MQM Senators retired and new ones were to be announced. *Sattar wanted Kamran Tessori, a gold businessman, at the top of the list because he considered Sattar's 'locker'.* ... *After facing opposition, Farroq Sattar showing his authoritarianism, decided to dismantle the Rabita Committee and announced new elections on 17 February. Meanwhile, the Rabita Committee removed Sattar and appointed Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui its convener. The Election Commission has accepted Rabita committee's decision and asked it to send new Senate members.* The situation can grow bleak in which Khalid Siddiqui and Farooq Sattar may try to kill each other. MQM-London can try to exploit the situation. All saves Karachi from these people!

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<sup>45</sup> <http://ummat.net/2018/02/13/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

**Mumbai attacks stand exposed, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 18 February<sup>46</sup>**

Prominent German author Elias Davidsson's book entitles it *The Betrayal of India: Revisiting the 26/11 Evidence*, has exposed the conspiracy behind the Mumbai 2008 attacks. *Davidsson has proved by his research on facts and evidences that the attacks were conspired by the US, Israel and India together. The author concludes that the investigation carried out by the Indian intelligence agencies was not correct and the judicial process on the case was not impartial because it ignored important witnesses and proofs.* Some scholars have already exposed the Mumbai attacks. Elias has no concern for Pakistani Muslims. He has done this rigorous research just to bring truth to light. He did not fear to publish his findings despite knowing that the secret agencies of these three countries are so strong and he could be easily disposed of. *The anti-Muslim propaganda started immediately after the 9/11 attacks. The blame for the 9/11 and the Mumbai attacks was put on the Muslims. An attempt was made to label Islam as a 'terrorist religion'. The 17 year old US-India-Israel alliance has become strong. Trump, to please Modi, is considering to put Pakistan in watch list on the baseless allegation of money laundering and supporting terrorism. ...* Elias Davidsson's work is commendable. But America is obstinate to continue its atrocities. In such a situation, the friendly countries needed to take along and anti-Pakistan alliance of Trump-Modi needs to be diplomatically exposed at the international level.

**America wants Pakistan help to resolve Afghanistan issue, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 21 February<sup>47</sup>**

American Representative on South and Central Asia Ashley Wills has said that peace and security in Afghanistan will come through a political solution. *Pakistan needs to be part of that process.* America had achieved its goals after invading Afghanistan after the 9/11. It toppled the Taliban government and gave the government to its puppets. ... *America should have withdrawn from Afghanistan after killing Osama Bin Laden. But it did not does so because it feared that the Taliban would become strong again.* Even the Afghan-administration is seeing the American presence necessary for its survival. In sixteen years America and its allies have not been able to defeat Taliban. Sometimes it does talk of dialogue but nothing emerges from that rhetoric. *The fighting factions will have to reach a political solution in Afghanistan. Taliban has not denied it. Pakistan can convince Taliban for talks. But issues can be settled by America only. To ask them unconditional drop their weapons is not possible.* If America reaches out to Taliban in a friendly manner and works in real democratic terms, the issue can be resolved. How com Pakistan became

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-02-18/page-14/detail-9>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2018-02-21/page-14/detail-1>

part of the Afghan-issue? *Terrorists from Afghanistan entered in Pakistan. Mullah Fazlullah is in Afghanistan. Why does not America use its drones to kill him?* The solution to Afghan-issue is in Afghanistan. If America allows Pakistan to eliminate terrorists, it can cull out them. But that will not be in America's interests.

## **Electronic Media**

### **On the Front, *Dunya News*, 05 February<sup>48</sup>**

Kamran Shahid asked his guests to discuss Nawaz Sharif's speech at a public meeting in 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir which was meant to show solidarity with the people of 'occupied' Kashmir. *But Nawaz Sharif did even mention India, Narendra Modi or Indian security forces but focused on his removal from the prime minister ship.* Journalist Haroon Rasheed said that Nawaz Sharif has improved a bit. *Before 200 he had said that India has not committed as 'grievous' crimes against the Kashmiris as Pakistan has. Haroon said that since Nawaz sees the army as his enemy, he is following 'Chanakyan' policy of enemy's enemy is friend. Nawaz Sharif has never invited any army chief to his family functions but he invited Narendra Modi.* Analyst Mazhar Abbas said that Nawaz Sharif should have started his speech with Kashmir issue. But unfortunately, no national political leader in Pakistan has any 'Kashmir policy'. He said that despite all what Nawaz Sharif is doing if he is elected tomorrow by the people of Pakistan, we will have to accept that result.

*Haroon intervened saying that people in Pakistan like to see 'princesses' and former kings. There is no way Nawaz Sharif will come to power gain.* These gathering are rather ephemeral. *He said there is not a single person in army who does not hate Nawaz Sharif.* Senator Shibli Faraz of PTI said that Nawaz Sharif makes everything personal. That is why he said in his speech that he is ready to serve in 'AJK'. And that is why the PTI issued a statement calling him 'mentally unfit'. *On Nawaz Sharif's statement that he would change the constitution when he would get overwhelming majority in the next elections and five people have taken decision against your (people who voted for him) decision, Haroon Rasheed said that Nawaz Sharif has committed blunder. His fate is going to be like that of Altaf Hussian.* He is not going to win next elections. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry of PML N said that the Parliament is supreme. He said that we are likely to get two-third majority in the next elections. We will correct the controversial articles.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://pkpolitics.com/talkshows/on-the-front-with-kamran-shahid-5-february-2018-dunya-news/>

### **Is Nawaz Sharif's narrative strengthening? Cross Check, 04 February<sup>49</sup>**

Owais Tohid in the latest episode of cross check invites his guest to discuss over the topic *"Is Nawaz Sharif's narrative strengthening?"* In reference to his recent speeches and attacks on Judiciary. The speeches and attacks were so powerful that the Chief Justice of Pakistan conducted a press brief in its defense and issues statement which said that the court will not let democracy to collapse in Pakistan. Mubashir Zaidi senior journalist in this regard opines that the upping of ante by Nawaz Sharif is to keep the Party floating in reference to the upcoming elections in Pakistan. In a way, Sharif knows that it is time to make grounds for the launch of Maryam Nawaz for the future politics therefore he is creating situations in which he is playing the victim card to win support of the people. He adds that by attacking the judiciary in a way, he has been able to decrease the trust of people in courts setting an example the peoples leaders have no trust in judiciary how common people will have trust in the institution. Imtiyaz Alam, journalist and columnist says that Nawaz Sharif and PML-N has succeeded in maligning the image of judiciary and termed it as *Intemqami Addalat* (courts that take revenge).

The narrative is although politically motivated but will become a factor that will make people loose trust in the judicial system. Also, Nawaz Sharif playing the victim card has forgotten that he was also party to the uprooting of many politicians in the past. On the question wheatear this is political awakening of Nawaz Sharif? Mansoor Ali Khan senior writer explains that it is not political awakening but the need of the hour for the PML-N to remain relevance, they have no option. Both Sharif and his brother Shabaz has taken the same line of attacks and looking at its impact they are making the ground for a grand launch of Maryam Nawaz. Therefore the more judiciary and military reacts to the allegations of Nawaz, it will be more gain for the party and the PML-N.

### **How serious is the crisis in the MQM, Cross check, 09 February<sup>50</sup>**

In *cross check* Owais Tohid invites his guest to discuss on the topic, *"How serious is the crisis in the MQM"* given the differences in the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) that almost reached a no point of return. Ahmad Shah (National arts council of Karachi) informs that the infighting within the party for absolute control over the party has intensified. The Rabita Committee appointed Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui as its convener in place of Farooq Sattar, and in retaliation, Sattar dissolved the Rabita Committee and announced fresh intra-party elections to be held

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN71rlhf-gc>

<sup>50</sup> [http://dailycapital.pk/program/cross-check-with-ot/q32z\\_KZU\\_Ic/CapitalTV-How-serious-is-the-crisis-in-MQM-Cross](http://dailycapital.pk/program/cross-check-with-ot/q32z_KZU_Ic/CapitalTV-How-serious-is-the-crisis-in-MQM-Cross)

on February 17 (Saturday). According to Shah, since inception, from the last thirty five years, MQM was working within a structure and no matter who endorsed the decision but the body of final say always laid with The Rabita Committee. He underlines that Farooq Sattar is putting the future and the politics of MQM on stack for his personal gains. Commenting on the crisis, Musharraf Zaidi underlines *that there is a leadership crisis and the collective leadership is going in different directions. The structure of the MQM party within which the members work is crumbling and therefore it is indirectly destroying the political structure of the party too.* According to Kiran Khan who has been following MQM since long, there is a clear indication of the split and the party is immersing in a deep leadership crisis. Amid such a political crisis in Karachi she underlines that some religious parties might walk away with MQM's share of votes in the upcoming general elections.

### **Will the rallies of PML-N be translated into elections victory"? Hum Sab,<sup>51</sup>**

In *hum Sab with Anika Nisar* she invites her politician guests from different parties to discuss on the topic, *"Will the huge rallies of PML-N be translated into elections victory"*? She starts the discussion by highlighting how Nawaz Sharif is playing the victim card for electoral gains in the upcoming elections. Mia Abdul Mannan of the PML-N faction rubbishes this and points out that Nawaz Sharif has been wrongly charged and there is a conspiracy going on to isolate him and put a full stop on his political career through unfair means. He underlines that there were many names on the Panama leaks from Pakistan, than why only target Nawaz Sharif. This is a clear case of building a narrative against him because of his influential stature both in politics and otherwise. Sharmila Farooqi of the PPP agrees that Nawaz Sharif is playing the victim card to pull the crowd in his election rallies. *He has cleverly translated his legal battles into political because given the upcoming election PML-N has nothing to lose. PML-N has a committed vote bank which will vote for the party despite of any cases.* So a mere corruption case will not defer these loyalists to vote for Nawaz Sharif. Sajad Ahmad of the MQM informs despite of the internal crisis within the party, MQM is looking forward to the general elections. At the same time he agrees that in order to run a party there should be proper rules and regulations and a leadership to look for guidance. Criticizing the Rabta committee for creating confusion and rift within the party he praises Farooq Sattars efforts to keep the Party intact and believes that the votes which are expected to come the MQM way will surely be due to his popularity among masses.

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<sup>51</sup><http://dailycapital.pk/program/hum-sub/qy3ZjyUqN8c/CapitalTV-Will-huge-rallies-of-PML-N-be-translate>

## Aaj Shahziab Khanzada ke Saath, Zem TV, 21 February<sup>52</sup>

Most of the talk shows of Pak-electronic media had discussions about the Supreme Court's judgement which barred Nawaz Sharif from heading a political party. This decision was taken in the background of Nawaz Sharif's disqualification by the court because he was not 'sadiq' (truthful) and 'amin' (honest). Shahziab Khanzada asked his guests to discuss the latest judgement of the court. He started with some reaction on the judgment. *The PML N called it a 'dictatorial' judgment. Maryam Nawaz said that it was 'again' victory of Nawaz Sharif. The latest judgment more importantly says that the decisions taken by Nawaz Sharif after he was declared 'disqualified' by the court are null and void.* The Election Commission of Pakistan dismissed Nawaz as the PNL N's party president. PML N member Rana Sanaullah said that now Nawaz Sharif will decide who will head the party. He said that the decision has made Nawaz more popular and has not affected his legitimacy. *Rana Sanaullah said that Nawaz Sharif was not given any sort of relaxation which even some dictator rulers were given in the past.* Ali Mohammad Kurd, former President of Supreme Court Bar Association, said that the court's decision are now creating more dissatisfaction and discontent. *Kurd said that now the judiciary has been directly involving itself into politics. Kamran Murtaza, Vice Chairman of PBC, was of the view that the decisions to declare the decisions taken by Nawaz Sharif as party president after his disqualification has increased complications.* The Amendment 203 is still in the parliament and sub judice. He said that ruling or forming a political party is basic right of a citizen that has been taken away. *Barrister Farogh Naseem said that the Preamble of the Constitution says that all basic rights will be enforced according to public morality.* Thus these do not apply in case of Nawaz Sharif who has been disqualified for being dishonest and untruthful.

## STATISTICS

### BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

| Place                 | Date       | Description             | Killed | Injured |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------|---------|
| <b>Sindh</b>          |            |                         |        |         |
| Karachi <sup>53</sup> | 05/02/2018 | Senior Chinese shipping | 01     | 0       |

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.zemtv.com/2018/02/21/aaj-shahzaib-khanzada-ke-saath-21st-february-2018/>

|                                      |            |   |    |    |
|--------------------------------------|------------|---|----|----|
|                                      |            | executive shot dead in Pakistan   |    |    |
| <b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</b>            |            |   |    |    |
| Peshawar <sup>54</sup>               | 09/02/2018 | US drone kills three 'militants' in N Waziristan                        | 03 | 0  |
| Bajaur <sup>55</sup>                 | 9/02/2018  | 2 Afghan-based TTP terrorists killed by security forces in Bajaur: ISPR | 02 | 0  |
| <b>Balochistan</b>                   |            |   |    |    |
| Panjgur <sup>56</sup>                | 06/02/2018 | Bomb kills one, injures seven in Balochistan's Panjgur                  | 01 | 07 |
| South-Western province <sup>57</sup> | 14/02/2018 | Taliban kills 4 paramilitary soldiers in Pak's Balochistan              | 04 | 0  |
|                                      | 28/02/2018 | Two policemen martyred in attack on DSP's vehicle in                    | 02 | 01 |

<sup>53</sup><https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-china-shooting/senior-chinese-shipping-executive-shot-dead-in-pakistan-idUSKBN1FP1UK>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1388283/us-drone-kills-three-militants-in-n-waziristan>

<sup>55</sup><https://www.dawn.com/news/1390390/2-afghan-based-ttp-terrorists-killed-by-security-forces-in-bajaur-ispr>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.geo.tv/latest/180495-bomb-kills-one-injures-seven-in-southwest-pakistan>

<sup>57</sup><http://www.freepressjournal.in/world/taliban-kills-4-paramilitary-soldiers-in-balochistan/1221394>

|                      |            |  |    |   |
|----------------------|------------|--|----|---|
| Quetta <sup>58</sup> |            | Quetta   |    |   |
| <b>Punjab</b>        |            |  |    |   |
| Lahore <sup>59</sup> | 20/02/2018 | Two dead as lawyers exchange fire at Lahore Sessions Court | 02 | 0 |

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<sup>58</sup><https://www.geo.tv/latest/184047-two-policemen-martyred-in-attack-on-dsps-vehicle-in-quetta>

<sup>59</sup><https://dailytimes.com.pk/205096/two-dead-as-lawyers-exchange-fire-at-lahore-sessions-court/>