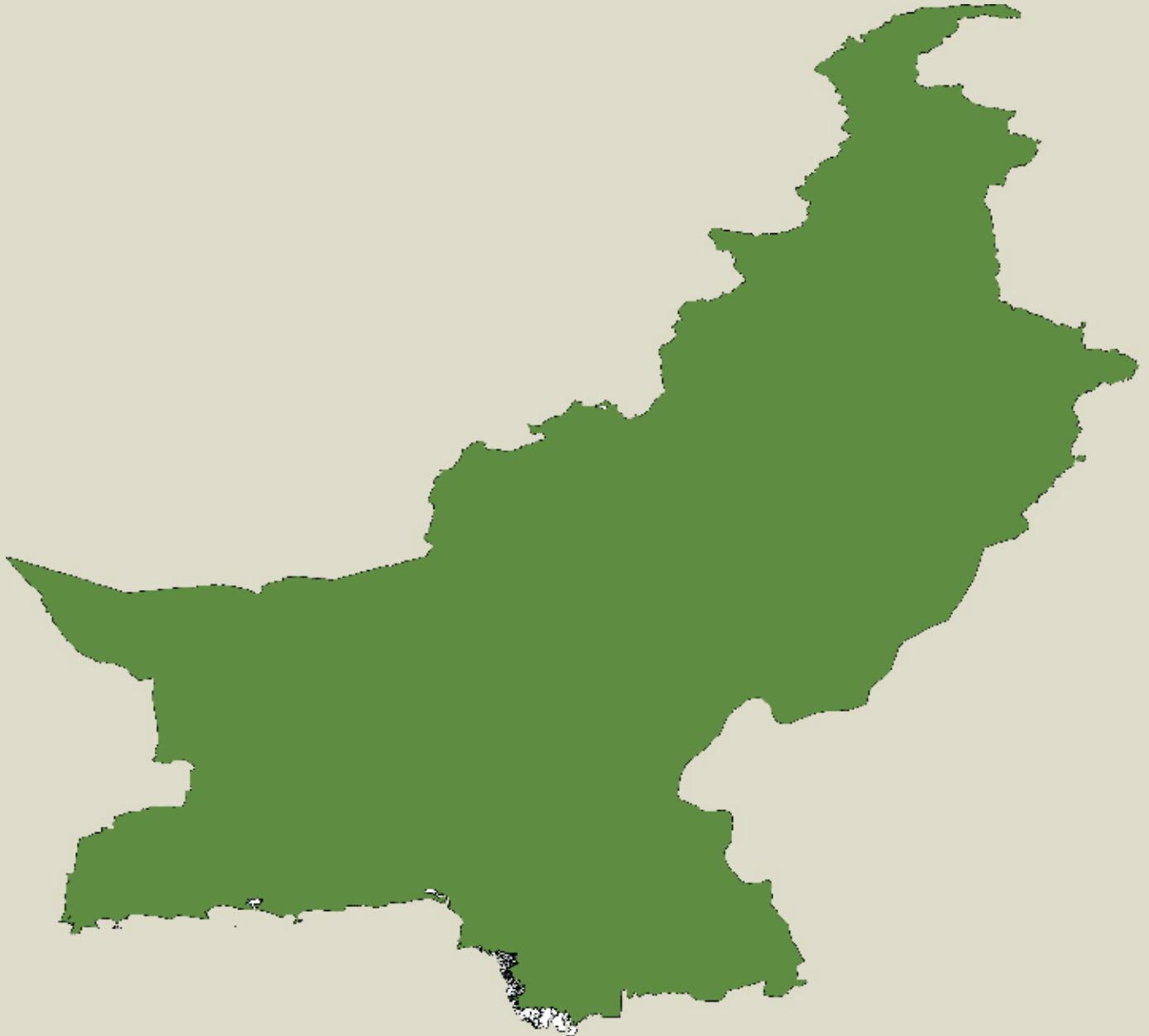


January 2019

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

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

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

January 2019

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

Prepared by

*Dr. Zainab Akhter
Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir
Dr. Mohammad Eisa
Dr. Ashok Behuria*



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

1-Development Enclave, Near USI
Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi-110010

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, January 2019

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	04
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS	07
SECURITY SITUATION	12
PROVINCES & REGIONS	13
BALUCHISTAN.....	14
GB.....	15
KP.....	16
URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA	17
Electronic.....	18
Urdu.....	25
STATISTICS	26
BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES.....	27

Editorial

As the United States is planning a strategy for a graceful exit from Afghanistan by initiating talks with Taliban, the role of Pakistan has certainly come to the forefront. This month Special Representative of the United States of America for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad visited Pakistan on a four day trip during which he met important dignitaries including Prime Minister Imran Khan, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Chief of the Army Staff Qamar Javed Bajwa. During these consultations, both sides mainly reaffirmed their commitment to advance the Afghan peace process and Khalilzad emphasized on the significance of Pakistan as a mediator for the talks with Taliban.

The Pakistan media, both print and broadcast highlighted this visit as a significant shift from the earlier stand of US that underlined that no talks can be held with Pakistan until it clears the soil of the terrorist groups. Some analysts even concluded that this sudden U-turn by the US towards Pakistan is due to the fact that Pakistan can bring Taliban to the negotiating table. Few others believe that US is using Pakistan the same way it used the country post 9/11 in the war of terror. They are of the opinion that this time also the US want Pakistan to clean the mess in Afghanistan after their exit from the country.

Another prominent event that shook the country was the Sahiwal shooting, in which the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab Police shot and killed a couple and their teenage daughter in Sahiwal. The police were reportedly acting based on intelligence that claimed that the family was accompanied by a terrorist belonging to the militant organization, Daesh. There was a huge backlash from the public as the video footage from the incident was widely circulated and criticized. This brought the brazen police culture and its malpractices under the scanner and social media users, journalists and common public called for hanging the culprit and blamed bad intelligence for the incident. To ascertain facts, the prime minister ordered immediate inquiry into the matter and formed a Joint Investigation team to inquire about the shootings. Both the English and vernacular media brought back the focus on the police culture and need for reforms in their practice.

In yet another turn of events, the Supreme Court of Pakistan unequivocally asserted that Gilgit-Baltistan is part and parcel of the Kashmir conflict and that it cannot be made a constitutional part of Pakistan without compromising its international position with respect to Kashmir. This has cleared any doubts of if or not GB will be made the fifth province resolving the longstanding

confusion of its political status. Some political quarters in GB were also demanding a Kashmir-like set up for the region but the court's decision has negated any of these possibilities. This decision sparked protests and an outrage on social media by students, civil society and political circles about the step brotherly treatment to the people of GB.

Almost after a decade, towards the end of this month Aasia Bibi's ordeal came to an end when the Supreme Court of Pakistan acquitted her of the blasphemy charges dismissing the review petition against her. But shortly after the ruling, a group of protesters mainly belonging to the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) blocked the main road linking the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Similar gatherings and protests were also reported from Karachi and Peshawar. Aasia Bibi's is not the first case; Christians and other minorities have been persecuted to death for blasphemy in the past, and some have also managed to flee the country. It reflects how far bigotry has spread and how deep the bloodlust has seeped. Today, neither the ruling Pak government nor the opposition is ready to talk about the amending this law. They are afraid of the backlash by religious parties and organizations adhering to a right-wing hardline ideology.

Zainab Akhter

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Pakistan in post-US Afghanistan, Editorial, Daily Times, 07 January¹

Year 2019 is feared to have in store a mega conflict between China and the US, which will be nothing like the past. Even if direct conflict is avoided between these titans, this development will have far-reaching implications for Pakistan as it will no longer be able to run with the hare and hunt with the hound. *Pakistan needs to understand that Afghan Taliban are unlikely to appear as the main power player in Afghanistan as they used to be in the past. They will brandish the US pull-out as a trophy that they have won on their own.* For right or wrong reasons, successive Afghan governments have been registering their complaints on international forums that Pakistan harbors Afghan Taliban who unleash hell on Afghan streets. Among other players, Iran is not repeating its past mistakes as it is now in direct talks with Afghan Taliban. Trump's provocative tweets questioning why Pakistan is not fighting in Afghanistan are best ignored since he has lost any logic. When the US itself is pulling out of 'never-ending' war, why it expects Pakistan to burn its scarce resources in that same war. Pakistan has slowly but definitely slipped from the US fold after entering mega infrastructural deals with China. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) unfolds to Pakistan a new world that is beached on its shores and that does not dangle as a distant dream it has spent decades chasing overseas. In the post-US scenario, the more Pakistan focuses on its own progress the better. Time to state that we have had enough of Afghan mayhem.

Taliban's revival in Afghanistan: Lessons for Pakistan, Asif Durrani, Daily Times, 07 January²

More importantly, the ethnic biases have discouraged the emergence of national political parties. This has encouraged narrow nationalistic tendencies all across thus making the country ungovernable. Tribal loyalties to the government depend on what largesse government can offer. Tribes take no time in switching sides when their interests coincide or clash with the sitting government. This situation was visible from the beginning but the Americans could not appreciate it or could not persuade their Afghan partners to address.

¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/341382/pakistan-in-post-us-afghanistan/>

² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/341352/talibans-revival-in-afghanistan-lessons-for-pakistan/>

The ethnic divide in Afghanistan widened as soon as Taliban government fell after the American attack on Afghanistan. Tajik dominated erstwhile Panjshiri group dominated the Karzai government from the beginning. At one point, there were three thousand generals in the armed forces, ministries of Defence and Interior, overwhelmingly Tajiks. Afghans intelligence service, NDS, was manned by Tajiks and ex-communists. The largest ethnic group, Pashtuns, were deliberately ignored due representation in all departments of the government, especially national security institutions. Neglect of Pashtuns was capitalized by the Taliban who reconsolidated their ranks and started their activities by 2004 from the rural areas of the country. The absence of a stable monarchy and failure of Afghan leaders since 9/11 to provide stability in the country, the only alternate left to address the issue of stability are the Taliban, a fact recognized by the American officials and analysts. In order to raise the comfort level of the Americans, Taliban are likely to give assurances of “good conduct” by not allowing Al-Qaida or Daesh/ISIS to take roots in Afghanistan. *The lesson for Pakistan is that while Taliban may be suitable for Afghanistan because of the structure of Afghan society it certainly does not go well with the Pakistani culture and society.*

The way for peace in Afghanistan, Sahibzada M Saeed, Daily Times, 11 January³

A policy shift is observed in Washington DC over Afghanistan. According to reports, after pouring about one trillion USD with no significant output, America wants to stop the Afghan mission and withdraw its troops. Initially, the United States is waiting for upcoming Afghan presidential elections, and then it will roll back with a claim that we have attained our goals here. However, in reality, Washington wants a respectable retreat from Afghanistan. That’s why President Trump wrote a letter to Pakistan for help in solving the problem, bilateral talks with the Taliban and above all the respectable retreat. Recent discussions are a part of this particular American plan. *All critical stakeholders including Pakistan are very much optimistic about these talks, but few of them are pensive about the fate of the negotiations as well. Now, it is necessary to not make the recent move a formality, but it should have a solid basis and action. In the realm of International Relations, it is vital to analyse political and strategic culture before examining any political as well as security situation.* The values, norms and traditions which are widely shared by the inhabitants of a state have significant and vital effects on socio-political matters.

³ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/342841/the-way-for-peace-in-afghanistan/>

The angry Pakistani, Arifa Noor, Dawn, 22 January⁴

Perhaps it stems from our long bouts of dictatorships. Denied their due and rightful say in policymaking has made entire swathes of the populace angry, hostile and critical of the state. They are angry at being left out: it's an anger that is accompanied by a sense of helplessness at the direction that the country and society have taken. And in recent times, too, there is a sense of outrage because course correction (if there is any in their opinion) has not included their input. Hence, many refuse to believe that there has been any course correction, or criticise it for moving too slowly. *This is why perhaps the anger is most palpable when it comes to foreign policy, especially relations with India, and the radicalism that has engulfed state and society.* In addition, the rage has turned into hatred of the institution that has disappointed us the most. Indeed, the anger is expressed with malicious glee at times: the Sahiwal incident is a case in point, as was the controversial statement by a former high court judge, Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui, or any terrorist attack which reveals chinks in the armor of the security forces. And, of course, the various JITs revealing the shenanigans of our political ruling class.

Freedom, Finally, Editorial, Dawn, 31 January⁵

But freedom does not mean security: not for the judges and lawyer who braved the odds and acted according to the principles of their profession, not for the family members of the ill-accused who never gave up their struggle, and most certainly not for Aasia Bibi herself. While the court may have freed her, it is now the government's responsibility to make sure her life is out of harm's way, it is now up to the government to facilitate either her safe exit from the country, or grant her security in the unlikely event she chooses to stay on. *A disturbing report sometime ago stated that extremists were going door to door to hunt down the most recognized blasphemy-related victim in the country. The case was an ugly reminder of how far the bigotry had spread, and how deep the bloodlust had seeped.* Two high-profile lives were lost in connection to the case — Punjab governor Salmaan Taseer and minorities minister Shahbaz Bhatti — and countless damage caused in the ensuing protests by the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan, formed after Taseer's killer was executed by the state.

CPEC and opportunities for India, Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Daily Times, 28 January⁶

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1459063/the-angry-pakistani>

⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1460933/freedom-finally>

⁶ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/348558/cpec-and-opportunities-for-india>

However, sane voices in India are arguing in another direction. They are asking their government to be a partner in CPEC and reap the benefits of economic development. CPEC has enormous benefits for India. Shyam Saran, ex-Indian diplomat pointed out that looking at the financial health of India, it is wise for India to be part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and CPEC presents an opportunity. For improving regional connectivity there is a need to improve transport and related infrastructure. South Asia is lagging behind on this by a million miles. *It is also advisable for India to be part of it and reap the benefit. Inclusion of India will also pave the way for other regional countries and there would be smooth sailing for CPEC and BRI. It is also important for India in context of transition of economy from primary to tertiary stage. Right now, India's secondary sector i.e. manufacturing sector, did not show much development.* Fortunately, China and Pakistan are open for inclusion of India or any other country in CPEC. Both countries have reiterated many times that CPEC is a project of the future and for everyone. However, India's self-perceived fears, assumptions and dreams are hindering the inclusion of India. India can decide anything as a sovereign country, but it has to keep in mind that the opportunity cost of missing CPEC and BRI is very high for India and the region.

SECURITY SITUATION

Talking to the Taliban, Editorial, Daily Times, 01 January⁷

US-based pundits are already using the 'threat' of Iranian engagement in Afghanistan as a reason for Trump Town to rethink its anticipated military drawdown. For instead of recognising this as assuaging fears of American strikes on its nuclear sites — the consensus appears to be that this would deliver Tehran undue advantage in terms of regional influence. Thereby possibly explaining the resurgence of accusations of Iran funding the Taliban; while providing training and weapons. If true, this begs the question as to why the US failed to impose sanctions on Tehran for this alleged misdemeanor; preferring instead to punish the regime for playing by the nuclear rulebook. Something somewhere does not add up. When seen through Pakistani eyes, it makes not much sense for the Americans to weigh up the drawdown with potential Iranian geo-political gains. Not if the goal of stabilizing Afghanistan is a serious one. For Islamabad has long maintained that US withdrawal holds the key to regional peace. In fact, this is the only Taliban precondition for talking to Kabul. And if the latter are to form part of a new government it is prudent for the group to make overtures to as many neighbouring countries as

⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/339379/talking-to-the-taliban-2/>

possible. Indeed, the Taliban opened an office in the eastern Iranian city of Zahedan as far back as 2012; one year before the Doha office. Thus it is important to note that Taliban-Iranian talks were conducted in the full knowledge of the Kabul government. His question is now left to the US as to whether it is ready to get on board. For, bluntly put, being the last obstacle to the reconciliation process is not an option. *

Terrorism threat, Editorial, *Dawn*, 08 January⁸

To protect Pakistan against attacks organised or launched from across the border in Afghanistan, the Pakistani state has demanded that the Afghan government take measures to shut down militant sanctuaries along the border with Pakistan, and has also taken up border fencing and border management issues. While such measures may be important, militancy has survived and morphed inside Pakistan because of local facilitation and recruitment networks. On those issues, the Pakistani state has not said much publicly. While counterterrorism operations certainly appear to be continuing, the more wide-ranging National Action Plan is still seemingly of secondary interest to the civil and military leaderships. *Unhappily, the public discourse on terrorism in Pakistan is superficial and polarizing. The evolving threat of militancy and terrorism in Pakistan and the region must be carefully analyzed, and a response methodically crafted. If institutions work together in a true spirit of cooperation, further successes are surely well within reach.*

Extending military courts, again? Editorial, *Dawn*, 10 January⁹

Now, a second consecutive parliament is on the verge of taking up the issue of military courts — once again to extend the life of these courts, rather than to disband them and take up the matter of urgent judicial reform. *What is perplexing is that the PTI — which has signalled that it will consult with the opposition to reach the necessary numbers in parliament to approve another constitutional amendment to extend the life of military courts — has an explicit reforms-based governance and legislative agenda.* Military-court trials for civilians accused of terrorism were justified on the basis of a national emergency and a need to have an instrument to punish the very worst terrorists captured by the state. But the Army Public School attack, in the wake of which military courts were activated, occurred more than four years ago.

How not to fight extremism, Ailia Zehra, *The Friday Times*, 11 January¹⁰

⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1456180/terrorism-threat>

⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1456579/extending-military-courts-again>

¹⁰<https://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/how-not-to-fight-extremism/>

Another development is the reappearance of banned sectarian outfits in the mainstream. On December 30, head of anti-Shia sectarian outfit Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist Fazlur Rehman Khalil, among others, visited North Waziristan with military officials. The visit was not only facilitated by Pakistan Army but also publicized on media. A video later released by the ISPR showed the extremist leaders praising the Pakistan Army for restoring peace in the region. *Analysts suggest that the onus lies on the civilian government for non-implementation of the NAP, but there are others who must share the blame. Without the necessary policy shifts from the military establishment, there is only so much civilian governments can do.* The bitter truth is that extremist groups have deliberately been given an open field to operate. In the July 2018 elections, these banned sectarian groups contested the general elections. ASWJ's leaders participated in the polls under a new group named Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party. The ideological brothers of Taliban, who have the blood of countless Pakistanis on their hands, are being promoted by the state for its own interest. In terms of action against terrorism, we are back to square one because the state still needs to be reminded that killers of innocent Pakistanis should not be used as strategic assets.

Civil-military relations, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Dawn, 18 January¹¹

However, it is equally undeniable that civilian rule in Pakistan has largely failed to provide effective and acceptable governance. Moreover, the necessarily security-oriented nature of the state in its initial years enabled or compelled the military in Pakistan to play a political role beyond its normal remit. Over time, this came to be regarded, especially within the military, as the political norm. As a result, two parallel political narratives evolved; one civilian and the other military. Parallel lines, by definition, never meet! Civil-military relations have, accordingly, become an issue that does not easily allow for productive discussion. Disagreements are often papered over with anodyne 'consensus'. *In a country like Pakistan, which is in dire need of wide-ranging and deep structural reforms to successfully cope with a range of looming existential challenges, any deviation from the path of democratic, inclusive and participatory governance will cast a pall over its future.*

Miltablishment blues, Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 18 January¹²

¹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1458276/civil-military-relations>

¹² <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/miltablishment-blues/>

*By focusing on attacking both the PMLN and PPP, instead of delivering on government, the PTI has compelled the two parties to close ranks while alienating itself from the people. More significantly, the PTI has compelled the Miltabishment to question its own judgment of backing it exclusively to pull Pakistan out of its multiple crises. Indeed, the Miltabishment now suspects that the PTI's accountability policy may be aimed at diverting attention from its failure to address the economic crisis that is threatening to plunge Pakistan into mass discontent and chaos. Consequently, the Miltabishment has pulled back slightly, both from overtly supporting the PTI and covertly harassing the PPP and PMLN, so that it is not tarred by the developing popular backlash against the PTI for its incompetence and stupidities. The "Grand Opposition Alliance", as Mr Zardari bills it, is aimed at denting the aggression of the PTI, exposing its incompetence and inefficiency and seeking relief from victimization and harassment. **The Miltabishment is already grumbling about Imran Khan's lack of leadership qualities and the PTI's lack of management abilities. Another few months of the same fumbling and stumbling by the PTI and the Miltabishment will start developing Plan B. If Plan A was minus Nawaz and Zardari, Plan B would inevitably be minus Imran too.***

What the Sahiwal shooting tells us about police culture, Zoha Waseem, Dawn, 22 January¹³

The shooting in Sahiwal comes on the heels of a much-publicised police reforms event in the capital and, more importantly, barely a year after the killing of Naqeebullah Mehsud and months after the killings of Intizar Ahmed and Amal Umer in police encounters in Karachi — albeit under very different circumstances. Additionally, recent estimates by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan suggest that approximately 3,345 people have been killed in police encounters in the country between 2014 and 2018, including 12 minors. *The Sahiwal shooting is disturbing on multiple levels and, indeed, speaks volumes about police practices and culture in Pakistan and beyond. Such incidents cannot be justified or rationalised or explained away in any straightforward manner.* They are tragic outcomes of processes and institutional cultures that, similarly, cannot be simplified nor understood in isolation of the socio-political contexts in which they evolve and develop. A trigger-happy police force is a symptom of militarism institutionalised within state mechanisms and apparatus. In other words, a state's threat perception particularly one constructed based on domestic security threats — has a direct correlation with how civilian police officials will interact with and view civilians.

¹³<https://www.dawn.com/news/1458908/what-the-sahiwal-shooting-tells-us-about-police-culture>

Stifling the press, Huma Yusuf, Dawn, 28 January¹⁴

State attempts to control Pakistan's independent media are near complete. The Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority, approved by the cabinet last week, is the formal trapping confirming what has long been implicitly known: there is no appetite for press freedom in Pakistan today. The PMRA will bring all media – print, broadcast, digital – under the control of one regulator that will dictate rules, licensing and punitive measures. But the PMRA is not damaging in isolation. It comes as the culmination of a more than a decade-long campaign to stifle the press. This has been multipronged, entailing journalists' intimidation and killing, stoking rivalries between media outlets, issuing backchannel directives about what can and cannot be published or broadcast, clampdowns on papers' circulation, blocking channels and websites, silencing online voices. *History will view the formation of the PMRA as a low for the PTI government, confirmation of its undemocratic agenda and subservience to Pakistan's real power brokers. But it will equally judge the media's response to such draconian measures.*

Border management, Editorial, Daily Times, 29 January¹⁵

However, the fact of the matter is that not all of the attacks that have taken place in our cities emanated from across the border. Militant hideouts along the border and inside our cities facilitated some of those attacks, while others were undertaken by sectarian outfits that continue to remain quite mainstream in the country. Only recently, a delegation of clerics that visited the tribal areas alongside military officials included the head of a notorious Sunni extremist outfit. *The point is: part of our terrorism and militancy problem is home grown and bred, and needs to be tackled regardless of the mechanisms put in place to regulate movement along the western border.* Terrorism and militancy is a problem we share with our neighbour towards the west. Like us, Afghan government officials as well as civilians have suffered countless losses as a result of attacks undertaken by militias including the Afghan Taliban, which have now been brought to the negotiating table to agree on a reconciliation process. The shared nature of the problem is important because once that has been realized, a shared solution will become possible. To arrive at such a solution, it's imperative that stakeholders on both sides of the border, including not only the two governments and their security establishment but also communities residing in the border region are taken on board. At this point, blame game will get both countries nowhere, and they should let history be the ultimate judge of the Afghan jihad imbroglio.

¹⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1460263/stifling-the-press>

¹⁵ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/349003/border-management/>

TTP sanctuaries, Editorial, Dawn, 30 January¹⁶

The fact that the TTP found refuge in areas that were strongholds of the Afghan Taliban over whom Pakistan is believed to exercise considerable influence, speaks even more to the competing strategic interests in this conflict. The Afghan insurgents were unwilling to open up another front; plus, the TTP's presence reinforced their control over the border areas and helped in recruiting Pakhtun tribesmen to fight NATO forces in Afghanistan. *Indeed, Afghanistan has a long history of allowing space on its soil for violent extremists from Pakistan. Hard-core sectarian groups ran training camps in Afghanistan while the Taliban were in power, slipping across the border to carry out targeted killings in this country.* In this wheels-within-wheels scenario, even the Kabul government has used the TTP as leverage to pressure Pakistan into withdrawing its alleged support for the Afghan Taliban, especially the Haqqani network. The gains from the Pakistan military's operations in the northern areas will remain tenuous until violent extremists have nowhere to hide — on either side of the border.

PROVINCES & REGIONS

Balochistan

Political uncertainty in Balochistan, Adnan Aamir The Friday Times, 18 January¹⁷

Since assuming the office of chief minister in August last year, Kamal's government's future has been uncertain. This is because of two main reasons: the dissidents within BAP and the presence of a powerful opposition. *Moreover, for the first time in more than 20 years, Balochistan Assembly has a sizable opposition. The total strength of opposition in Balochistan Assembly is 24 and they are just nine short of forming their own government.* The looming uncertainty has affected the functioning of government machinery in Balochistan. The bureaucracy is reluctant to make decisions, given that there seems no guarantee that the government will survive in the next few months to come. Most of the major decisions are being stalled till the time when political certainty returns to Balochistan. *An official of Balochistan government confided to this scribe on condition of anonymity that the political uncertainty was preventing the government machinery from working effectively.* Furthermore, if BAP dissidents form a government with the help of BNP-Mengal and JUI-F, then this government will also be weak. This situation will

¹⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1460709/ttp-sanctuaries>

¹⁷ <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/political-uncertainty-in-balochistan/>

result in another strong opposition in the form of BAP and PTI. Therefore, it is likely that they will also be unable to take any major decisions.

Death chambers of Balochistan, Editorial, Daily Times, 23 January¹⁸

The case of mine field workers in Balochistan is a reminder of this failure of our state institutions. There is provincial department of mines and minerals resources that is directly responsible for work conditions in mines. Then, there are several other provincial and federal bodies that ought to ensure decent work environments. Despite these bureaucracies, we continue to get reports of deaths of miners in accidents. Political parties in the province have also yet to raise the issue effectively in the corridors of power. The parties in power and in opposition in the provincial assembly must jointly take up the issue and use the parliamentary forum to push for necessary reforms. Balochistan has many grievances against the federation, and its political parties are rightly taking those up with the powers that be in Islamabad. *However, the plight of mine workers of the province is a matter that involves negligence of the government machinery from top to the bottom, meaning Islamabad and Quetta are both to blame. And, therefore, provincial political parties would do well to begin fixing the issue at the home turf until they can push for changes needed at the federal level.*

GB

SC word on G-B status, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 20 January¹⁹

Taking up a set of petitions challenging the Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018, the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Order 2009 and demanding the right of the citizens of the region to be governed through their elected representatives, the court makes it clear that no part of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan can be abolished or amended without proper legislation. And that means that the region will — until an amendment to the Constitution — continue to be administered through presidential orders as against the demand of the residents to declare the region a part of Pakistan. The proposed reforms draft says that the federal government intends to grant G-B the status of a provisional province, “subject to the decision of the plebiscite to be conducted under the UN resolutions”, with all privileges provided by the Constitution. *But the grant of such a status, the federal government argues, requires an amendment to the Constitution by a two-*

¹⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/347106/death-chambers-of-balochistan/>

¹⁹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1892214/6-sc-word-g-b-status/>

thirds majority in parliament which is time consuming. Therefore, as an interim measure, the government plans to give such fundamental rights to G-B residents as enjoyed by the people of any other province.

G-B youngsters' protests, Editorial, Daily Times, 21 January²⁰

These youngsters demand autonomy for the G-B region, like that afforded to other provinces in the country, within the federal framework. They want the country's leadership to extend to them the social contract they are supposed to extend to Pakistanis in other parts of the country. They seek the rights and responsibilities laid out in the country's constitution. Pakistan has for far too long tied the fate of G-B with that of the Kashmir dispute. It has felt reluctance to pursue meaningful reforms in the region on the pretext that once a resolution to the Kashmir dispute is reached, it will pave the way for substantive reforms in G-B as well. *On the other hand, the civil society of G-B has become increasingly vocal in its demand for greater autonomy and strengthening of democratic structures in the region. While Pakistan remains committed to the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, there is no reason why we must continue to turn a deaf ear to the youth of the G-B.* We have seen how federalism has strengthened Islamabad by improving its relationship with provinces. A similar approach should be taken in the G-B region. This will only further strengthen the federation by boosting the confidence of the G-B youth in Islamabad's ability to deliver.

No Order: Gilgit-Baltistan's Demand for Internal Autonomy, Zaighum Abbas, The Friday Times, 25 January²¹

The highest court in the land has unequivocally asserted that Gilgit-Baltistan is part and parcel of Kashmir's dispute and the territory cannot be made a constitutional part of Pakistan, without comprising its international position vis a vis Kashmir. Moreover, words like 'disputed' and 'occupied' were somewhat regarded as suspicious in the popular political vocabulary in GB, but the court's decision now has given a legal cover through its verdict. The decision of court has settled the question whether or not GB can be made the fifth constitutional province. The court's decision has also negated any possibility of a Kashmir-like set up for the region which had been a

²⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/346317/g-b-youngsters-protests/>

²¹<https://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/no-order-gilgit-baltistans-demand-for-internal-autonomy/>

longstanding demand from some political quarters of GB. *Naturally the top court's decision has sparked protests and generated a lot of resentment on the treatment being meted out to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Without any representation in the national institutions and being systematically deprived of civil and political liberties, the outrage on social media is evident and reveals brewing discontentment among students, civil society and political circles of Gilgit-Baltistan.* It would be foolish to anticipate any meaningful structural change owing to Pakistan's deep stakes in Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly after CPEC, but it is important to state that political grievances and blatant authoritarianism have generated great dissatisfaction in Gilgit-Baltistan. *The use of predatory laws such as Anti-Terrorism Act and Schedule Four against political activists and students hints to an indifferent attitude of praetorian powers in Gilgit-Baltistan.*

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

Genuine engagement, Editorial, Dawn, 29 January²²

While there have been criticisms about some of their more provocative rallying cries, none can dispute the fact that their agenda is constitutional and their protest nonviolent. The PTM's message has resonated among many — not only Pakhtun citizens across the country, particularly the youth who desire a more equitable relationship between society and the state. And within just a few months of its emergence, two PTM-affiliated candidates from Waziristan were elected to the National Assembly in last year's general election. Its presence and impact on the national stage cannot be ignored. For all these reasons, therefore, it is regrettable that, barring some initial steps to address their concerns, the response to the PTM by the state apparatus and mainstream political classes at both federal and provincial levels has largely been paranoid and counterproductive. Indicative of this were the blanket arrests on terrorism charges of scores of PTM leaders and supporters in Karachi recently. *Such heavy-handedness towards the movement can only lead to what is most feared — the hardening of their disaffection and the potential for violent factions to emerge. Pakistan can only benefit from the diversity and plurality of public discourse — even dissenting — but it cannot from further bouts of violence.*

URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Electronic

²² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1459471/genuine-engagement>

Jirga with Saleem Safi, Geo News, 12 January²³

On this episode of Jirga Saleem Safi Invites Afghan President's representative and special regional convey, Mohammad Omar Daudzai to discuss the overall relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the talks with Taliban. It has to be noted that Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has visited Kabul during last week of December, therefore Daudzai's visit is seen as a reciprocation by the Afghan government to strength the bilateral relations between the two countries. *The envoy emphasized on the episode that he is in Pakistan to make consensus on the agenda of peace. He brings to light that the high peace council is formed to play a role of mediator and provide platform for negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban.* He says that there main aim is to bring the Taliban to the talking table and reach to a political settlement. When asked that there is so many councils and advisory formed by the Afghan government which makes things confusing, the envoy replies that although the advisory board is formed to bring peace by inviting both the Jihadi leaders and political leaders together for dialogue but the name can soon be changed to decision making body. When asked if the Afghan government is serious for the talks with Taliban? He replies that yes, the government is absolute serious for talks. He adds that in fact the talk between Taliban and the US happened because of the permission of the Afghan government. *He informs that each time Zalmay Khalilzad visits Afghanistan for talks with the Taliban, briefs and debriefs the government before and after the meeting with Taliban. He underlines that Pakistan is an important ally not only a mediator for talks between the Afgan government and Taliban but beyond that. He says that soon high level talks will be held between the two countries.*

Jirga with Saleem Safi, Geo News, 19 January²⁴

Salim Safi invites Mulana Fazal Ur Rehman to the Jirga and discuss about his position in the joint opposition towards Imran Khan Government in Pakistan. Safi asks the guest why he is hell bend to unite Asif Ali Zardari of the PPP and Nawaz Sharif of the PML-N. He replies that Imran Khan has pushed Pakistan in a deadly trap of debts, economy is shrinking and the role of democratic institutions are shrinking. Therefore in order to pull back Pakistan from this blunder the opposition parties need to come together and unite against the PTI led government. *He informs that although at this point he is not able to bring the two leaders on the same page, but he is sure if there is a voice from among the public for them to unite, it will happen in the future days to come. He further adds that only a united opposition can give voice to the public*

²³ <https://www.geo.tv/shows/jirga/224927-jirga-12-january-2019>

²⁴ <https://www.geo.tv/shows/jirga/225662-jirga-19-january-2019>

grievances of Pakistan. When asked about Imran Khan Government, and why he oppose him so bluntly, he replies that Imran Khan is the agent of Israel and is working to fulfil the overt policies of Israel in Pakistan. He said that in future his party JUI is keep to organize an all party conference to char out a policy to make the Imran government to work towards the fulfilment of their electoral promises.

Urdu

Capability of finance minister? Editorial, *Ummat*, January 01²⁵

The Government has decided to impose tax worth Rupees 1.55 trillion through a budget in the middle of January 2019. *The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has done the ground work for the same in which common people will be burdened with further taxes.* There are plans to track down big thieves who do not pay their taxes. It is said that selling tax will be uniformed which ranges from 5 percent to 22 percent at the moment. ... What further steps is the PTI led government taking to drain the pockets of common people? This becomes obvious from the policies that the government has taken so far. The slogan of change by the PTI is fading away with every policy of it in which it burdens the common people. It has shrunk breathing space for them. *Amir of Jammat-i-Islami, Siraj-ul-Haq has rightly said that the PTI and the government led by the party is filled with the people of PPP and PML-N who were involved in loot. It is not wrong to say that their presence in the PTI has emboldened thieves in the party to carry out their activities.* On the name of accountability, two big political parties are being targeted. But no step is taken against the corrupt lot present in the PTI. ... *History is witness to the fact that the FBR has always put its hands on small fishes and big fishes have been never touched.* Even the idea to uniform the general selling tax is not without problems. If it happens it is possible that the commodity that has 5 percent selling tax, will be sold at 22 percent of selling tax. ... It should be remembered that the Finance Minister Asad Umar had flagged the idea of 'mini budget' on last Friday by saying that in the mid of January there would be major financial policy rolled out which would last for three years. *Asad had cleared that the mini budget and large economic policy had nothing to do with the bailout that is sought from the IMF. If the Finance Minister is not able to run the ministry, he should pack his things and leave the office.* The nation can no longer be betrayed. Asad Umar's competence stood exposed at the time when he accepted the conditions of the IMF before they were presented.

²⁵ <http://ummat.net/2019/01/01/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

Disappointing and hurtful, Editorial, Ummat, January 02²⁶

PPP talks about to bring down the federal government. But now it is the PTI that has started to chase the Sindh Government of the PPP. *None of the parties is delivering. They are busy in bringing down others' and saving their own government.* PML-N leadership, Sharif family and other members are facing accountability. If these three major parties of the country act as patriotic, honestly and sensibly and make each their party member to work, it will not take much time to change the fate of Pakistan. However, where personal interests are preferred over all other interests, expecting something there to happen is too much. For over seventy years, the nation has been watching the same drama happening. *The hopes that the people had associated with the judiciary have also been not met. Though the Supreme Court and other lower courts are independent to take decisions, but they are supposed to follow the law and constitution. Thus when the judgements are announced, their implementation is never carried out. Rulers and politicians put blame on the army by saying that if the establishment does not interfere in the democratic process, the country would progress.* Though the politicians have failed, still they do not give up their arrogance. Bilawal Bhutto said recently that if his father Asif Ali Zardari allows him, he would bring down the PTI led government and would send the rulers in jail. He says that PTI has just six-vote majority at the center and in Punjab it is further weak. Bilawal is talking like this because after the Sharif family, his family is going through accountability for corruption and other charges. The PPP led government in Sindh is facing uncertainty as the governor rule is being talked about in the province. On the other hand PTI spokesperson Fawad Chaudhry has said that Bilawal should stop day-dreaming. We want to change the chief minister in Sindh and do not want the governor rule. The attacks and counter attacks of the PTI and PPP are enough to prove that they want to prove themselves by proving the other wrong. ... However, Chief Justice Saqib Nisar has warned Fawad Chaudhry that if the governor rule is imposed in Sindh, the Supreme Court would rejected it. The language that Fawad Chaudhry has used is indeed disappointing, like the language that Bilawal used, then what is the difference between the two!

Army chief meets deputy defence minister of Saudi Arabia, Editorial, Nawa-i-Waqt, 02 January²⁷

Pakistan Army Chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa met the Deputy Defence Minister of Saudi Arabia at the GHQ in Rawalpindi. Mutual interests of the countries and regional situation was discussed in the meeting. *The relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are as old as Pakistan. It is unfortunate, apart from the*

²⁶ <http://ummat.net/2019/01/02/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

²⁷ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-01-02/page-10/detail-2>

wars, Pakistan has been caught in floods, earthquakes and other natural calamities. Even during these difficult times, brotherly country Saudi Arabia helped us a lot. Out of the over a crore immigrants working in Saudi Arabia, about 25 lakhs are from Pakistan. After the July 25 election results when Imran Kahn became the Prime Minister, the treasury of the country was empty. The country was in economic crisis. *Even then Saud Arabia helped us to come out of the crisis. Whenever Saudi Arabia faces any internal or external challenge, Pakistan is there to help it.* Pakistan has helped the Kingdom from the beginning. The two countries have full understanding of the international and regional problems. The deputy minister's recent visit will further strengthen the relations between the two brotherly countries.

Accountability and PPP's politics of protests? Rao Ghulam Mustafa, Daily Khabrain, 07 January ²⁸

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) took the helms of affairs when the country was going through a severe economic crisis. National treasury bequeathed to Imran Khan's government was empty. *It took Imran Khan only few months to reach out to friendly countries like Saudi Arabia and China and bring the country back on track. Also, serious efforts are being made to bring back looted wealth and hold the looters accountable.* The credit for this goes to chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice (R) Javed Iqbal. Some steps that the current government is taking are putting burden on the common people. ... Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif do not care about the people of Pakistan. If their bread and butter were to get affected, they would have raised the issue. *Asif Ali Zardari openly said in a rally in Hyderabad that he does not know cricket but politics. He was signaling that instead of Imran Khan, he should be given chance to rule the country. For that he also flagged the idea of mid-term elections.* He warned the current government that it is surviving on seven votes only. I think that if Asif Zardari is arrested, there will be no protests or a large movement in Sindh. He is not like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto nor is his sister Faryal Talpur like Benazir Bhutto. They have no support. When Dr. Asim and Aziz Baloch were arrested Zaradri had criticized that army saying that the chief would go in three years' time but he would stay. *On the arrest of Anwar Majid, Zardri issued same kind of statements to signal that if he were to be arrested, people will oppose army and judiciary. Zardari called the PTI led-government a puppet as he thinks that the actions against him are taken by the establishment.* ... PPP, a party known for its compromises and political correctness, has criticised the state institutions means that first time fair

²⁸ <http://epaper.dailykhabrain.com.pk/popup.php?newsrsrc=issues/2019-01-07/76477/07.jpg>

investigation is carried out against corrupt, like Zaradri. ... A country that has been looted by its leaders is unlikely to prosper and cater to needs of its poor citizens. Unless and until the country is corruption free, there can be no investment and no end to unemployment. This can happen only if the looted wealth is brought back and fair accountability is held of guilty.

First time in history, Saleem Safi, Jang, 09 January²⁹

'First time in history' this has become Imran Khan's favorite phrase. Whatever he does, Imran claims it has been done first time. *This personal trait of Imran has been picked up by PTI's spokespersons' also. They have this misperception that first time in Pakistan's history a unique political role is played by some leader, ignoring the fact that before Imran leaders like Hasil Bezenjo, Nawaz Sharif, Chaudhry Shujaat, Zafarullah Jamali have played this role.* ... I am experiencing a strange thing happening on the name of government. Like it is first time that U-turn is considered a positive trait; first time a Prime Minister is saying that he came to know about fall of the value in rupee from media while the State Bank says the Finance Minister knew it; it is first time that despite having senior leaders present, two new and inexperienced faces were chosen as Chief Ministers in two provinces who cannot work; it is first time that in Punjab and KP some ministers have more powers than the Chief Ministers. Prime Minister Imran Khan kept announcing that he would change the Prime Minister House into a university knowing the fact it was not feasible. Some money is spent to establish an ad-hoc office. Then comes the Crown Prince of UAE. He is welcomed at a high level. While PM House is decorated and the office of the non-extant university is thrown out, costing more money. *One minister says that the Sindh Government lacks confidence. Second says that there will be governor rule in the province. Third says that the PTI led government has no such intention. There are so many contradictory statements.* Then the Prime Minister allows a committee led by Pervez Khattak and other federal ministers to talk to the opposition. Subsequently a deal is made and Shehbaz Sharif is accepted as the chairman of Public Accounts committee (PAC). ... There are so many other contradictions. People like Zulfi Bukhari and Iftekhar Durrani are 'angels'. Provincial governors like Shah Farman and Imran Ismail are 'honest people.' Then there are claims that Pakistan will be made a state like Madinah. This mockery with the name of Madinah is also seen happening first time.

Govt. under pressure over Mohmand Dam, Report, Ummat, 16 January³⁰

²⁹ https://e.jang.com.pk/pic.asp?npic=01-09-2019/Karachi/images/06_004.png

³⁰ <http://ummat.net/2019/01/16/news.php?p=story2.gif>

The government is feeling pressure over the Mohmand Dam controversy. The inauguration ceremony for work on the dam has been postponed second time because of the protests from opposition and some civil society sections. *Some say that the Government is waiting for retirement of Chief Justice Saqib Nisar, whose tenure as Chief Justice of Pakistan ends on 17 January. After the retirement, Prime Minister Imran Khan can alone inaugurate the work. According to a source, the ceremony was postponed because, apart from the opposition, there has been strong resistance from some business sections and legal experts about the transparency of the contract.* The government either wants to distance itself from the controversy or end it. Though the federal minister for water resources and power and the Chairman of WAPDA have rejected the allegations, they have failed to convince different protesting groups. ... According to the source Razak Dawood has said that after his resignation from the DESCON Company, he did not try to use his influence to get the contract for the company. ... The government is keen to construct the Mehmond Dam for which it has called the 309 billion rupee bid as fair. *Engineer Shams-ul Mulik said that it is better to issue a new tender and resolve the issue. That will give the government clean chit and also foreign investors will try to get the contract which will be good for the country.* ... Answering a question, Engineer Shams said that 'a project of this significance should not be controversial. I hope that Prime Minister Khan will take a fair decision given the sensitivity of the matter.' It should be remembered that the Mohmand Dam, 37 kms in the South of Peshawar, can store 1.2 million acre feet water which can be used to generate 800 mw electricity. The water will be available to irrigate 1,800 acres of land. After the construction of the dam, areas like Peshawar, Mardan, Charsaada and other districts will be safe from floods.

PTI and integration of FATA, Saleem Safi, *Jang*, 17 January³¹

First guilty for the suffering of the tribal people are those policy-makers who made these areas as laboratory for confrontations of the Arab and Ajam extremists. The second guilty stand those people who overlooked the concerns and rights of the tribal people. *Mian Nawaz Sharif tried to act as sympathetic towards the tribal people and convened a committee to look into how to integrate the FATA region in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP). But he also failed and left the matter halfway. If the report, prepared by Tariq Aziz, would have been implemented immediately, the integration would have been completed and constructive.* It was not clear and not implemented properly. Imran Khan had also supported integration at the last and it was expected he might do something in that regard. But what Asad Umar has done to Pakistan's economy, Imran has done to the integration process. Imran was supposed to

³¹ https://e.jang.com.pk/pic.asp?pic=01-17-2019/Karachi/images/06_005.png

allocate 3 percent from the NFC award for the integration which he did not. Second option would have been that the federal government would have allocated 100 crores but it did not even give 20 crores. Unfortunately Imran Khan is also victim of the old politics. ... *Instead of reinstating the committee appointed by then Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Imran decided to form a new committee under the leadership of the minister for religious affairs. The committee has such members in it who had opposed the integration till last point.* Also, the politics in KP is having strong effect on the integration. Chief Minister Mahmood Khan is weak and the governor and the group of former Chief Minister Pervez Khattak are strong. Mahmood Khan wants to prove himself to Imran Khan. *The division is such that in the morning the governor will hold a meeting and in the evening there will be meeting at the CM's office, coming with different statements on same issue.* In such circumstances, there will be no progress on the integration. ... It is better to make Sartaj Aziz the head of the committee. Also Imran should promise at least 100 crores for the integration. Otherwise, there are chances of crisis in the tribal areas.

Further expansion in China-Pak relations, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 17 January³²

China and Pakistan have agreed to lay foundations for Gwadar airport and other social development projects in three months. *They together have declared the year 2019 as the 'year of industry, trade, agriculture and social cooperation'.* The Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Makhdoom Khusro and the Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing met the other day in Islamabad and agreed on the common projects in CPEC and increasing Pakistan's exports. Matters related to the CPEC are moving ahead smoothly. The decisions taken in the Islamabad meeting are a sign for that. Also, reservations and rumours spread about CPEC by enemies are fizzling out. *Opponents had called the visit by Prime Minister Khan a failure which was their mistake. China came up with an agenda to help Pakistan which is visionary. Beijing did not order its businessmen to go to Pakistan but provided a recipe. The Chinese ambassador said that in next few days a good number of Chinese businessmen would visit Pakistan to find out where investments can be made that either can be exported or would meet Pakistan's import requirement.* The cooperation has expanded to agricultural sector. The sector was ignored so far. Pakistan can over take countries like Australia and New Zealand in dairy products. It is time that we utilize the help provided by friendly China.

³² <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2019-01-17/page-10/detail-3>

Govt. surprised over the relaxation given to Zardari by the court, Report, Ummat, 18 January³³

The Government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is worried that Asif Ali Zardari and his accomplices have gotten relaxation from the court. *PTI is restless to send the former president to jail. PTI thinks that if the case goes to NAB, 'the king of deal-maker' Asif Zardari will find a way to get free.* According to the source this is the reason that the Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry had directed his criticism towards the NAB. The Minister and the NAB are issuing statements against each other at the moment. *It should be remembered that Fawad Chadrury had asked the NAB to pursue the proceedings of the cases against Zardari so that they can be arrested. He said that the court had given two months to NAB but its progress was slowly. Answering to Fawad the NAB had said that it cannot arrested Zardari, Murad Ali Shah and Faryal Talpur because someone asks for that. ...* On 7 January the Supreme Court had given two more months for carrying out investigation. Though two weeks have passed but the NAB has not started yet. This is what worries the PTI, according to the source. *... The source said that the confrontation between the PTI led government and the NAB can increase in future. The statements of Fawad are a sign of frustration. Such 'attacks' have backing of Imran Khan. Imran himself is not happy with the work of NAB which he has expressed in in his private meetings, according to the source. ...* Considered to be close to the establishment and military expert Lt. Gen. (R) Amjid Shoib said that it is unlikely given the situation that Asif Ali Zardari will be arrested. From its side, the PPP and its senior leaders have taken a sigh of relief after the Supreme Court's decision to refer the fake-account case to the NAB and remove the names of Bilawal Bhutto and Murad Ali Shah from the Exit Control List (ECL). *... Shoib said that after the case being sent to the NAB, it will go through inquiry again. Then it will be decided whether it summons references or not. Inquiry in the NAB happens generally at the lower level which can be easily influenced. What seems to be happening is that cases are being dismissed through the courts so that they would not be opened up again. Same is happening with Zardari's fake-account cases. If a fresh inquiry is carried out, then arrest about what?*

Afghan-talks, Assadullah Ghalib, Nawwa-i-Waqt, 23 January³⁴

³³ <http://ummat.net/2019/01/18/news.php?p=story1.gif>

³⁴ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-01-23/page-3/detail-1>

Afghan-talks have started in Qatar. It is positive development that America finally wants to talk to the Taliban before withdrawing from Afghanistan. *Though the talks were supposed to happen in the beginning of January but did not. Pakistan tried to hold talks in Islamabad but the Taliban refused. However, during this the American representative Zalmay Khalilzad met the Taliban. He then left for Qatar where the talks took place on Monday. The two parties have agreed on some points.* There is one positive development for Imran Khan also: He had kept saying that solution to the problem is the Taliban and the US direct talks. America has come to terms after it faced strong resistance from the Taliban. The US could not occupy Afghanistan after its invasion in 2001. ... Pakistan fell in line with the American narrative. Still the US accused Pakistan of hosting terrorists. Pakistan never accepted the accusation. *Over 70 per cent of Afghan-territory is controlled by the Taliban. Why would they need sanctuary in Pakistan? Prime Minister Khan has made it clear that Pakistan would not fight anyone else's war.* The army has also said that it would not let Pakistan's territory to be used by someone else. ... After America's talks with the Taliban, no country can call any active group in some country a terrorist group. America called Yasir Arafat a terrorist. It calls Palestinians fighting for their cause and Kashmiris fighting for freedom as terrorists. Pakistan has repeated it time and again that peace and security in the country depends on situation in Afghanistan. *However, there are apprehensions that even if the US withdraws from Afghanistan, it would keep irritating Pakistan on CPEC. That means America would keep meddling in Pakistan's affairs.* America also has eyes on Pakistan's nuclear weapons and missiles. ... All the same, at the moment, focus should be Afghanistan talks as at least one issue would be settled. Pakistan has the potential to safeguard itself.

Taliban ready for intra-Afghan dialogue, Muhammad Qasim, Ummat, 30 January³⁵

The Afghan Taliban has agreed to talk to other Afghan-groups. *It has announced that as soon as the foreign troops withdraw from the country, it would start talking to all other Afghan-nations. However, the Taliban has retained that there would be no compromise on the Islamic laws' implementation and Afghan-authority.* According to a statement released by the Afghan-Taliban, many powerful countries of the world and the neighboring countries want that the Taliban should give up its demand for creating an Islamic welfare state and implement the western democracy in Afghanistan. To demand this is like wasting 18 years' struggle of the

³⁵ <http://ummat.net/2019/01/30/news.php?p=story6.gif>

Taliban. *After the withdrawal of the American troops, Afghanistan will be an Islamic welfare state based on unity of the God, rising against cruelty and supporting oppressed and weak, and on economic, political and social issues, Islamic law would be followed.* America and other countries should throw away any of their plan to introduce democracy in Afghanistan. ... *On the other hand, neighbouring countries are worried about the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Russia fears that Afghanistan might become breeding ground for the Islamic Movement for Uzbekistan and other extremist groups that might affect the Central Asian region.* That is why Zamir Kabulov is visiting Pakistan and planning to meet the civilian and military leaderships to stop any such situation from unfolding. ... This is the reason that Russia, Pakistan and China should come together to restore peace in Afghanistan after the US withdrawal. *According to a source, to counter any such Russia-China alliance, US may use its resources in Afghanistan and fund them for the same. This can create difficulties for Afghanistan.* However, the decision by the Taliban to talk to other Afghan-groups has given a ray of hope.

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Punjab				
Dera Ismail Khan ³⁶	11/01/2019	Two cops injured in IED blast in DI Khan	00	02
Sahiwal ³⁷	19/01/2019	Parents, teenage daughter among 4 killed during CTD 'encounter'	04	00
Gujranwala ³⁸	21/01/2019	CTD kills two more 'terrorists' in Gujranwala	02	00

³⁶ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/417353-two-cops-injured-in-ied-blast-in-di-khan>

³⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1458520/parents-teenage-daughter-among-4-killed-during-ctd-encounter-in-sahiwal-pm-seeks-report>

³⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/346472/ctd-kills-two-more-terrorists-in-gujranwala/>

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Peshawar ³⁹	06/01/2019	Six injured in Peshawar bomb attack	00	06
Balochistan				
Quetta ⁴⁰	01/01/2019	Pakistan military: Taliban fighters kill 4 security forces	04	00
Quetta ⁴¹	11/01/2019	Charity worker gunned down in Loralai	01	04
Hub ⁴²	21/01/2019	26 killed in coach-tanker crash in Hub	26	16

³⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1455796>

⁴⁰ <https://www.apnews.com/1075eb6a66f641039e7fa539f997ea60>

⁴¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1887184/1-charity-worker-gunned-loralai/>

⁴² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/346782/26-killed-in-coach-tanker-crash-in-hub/>

