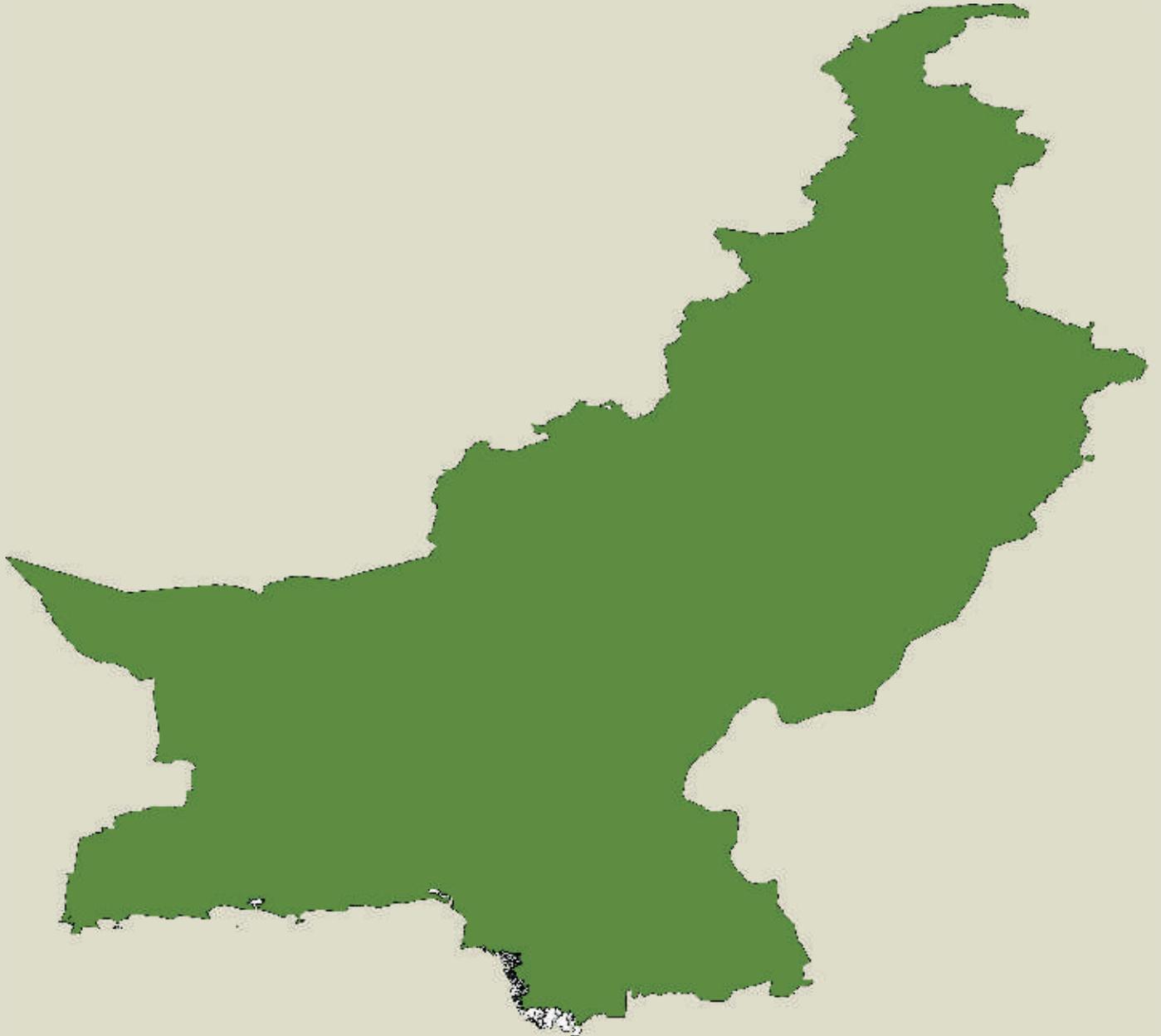


January 2022

# 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  
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## CONTENTS

<b>POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS</b> .....	06
<b>ECONOMIC ISSUES</b> .....	09
<b>SECURITY SITUATION</b> .....	13
<b>URDU &amp; ELECTRONIC MEDIA</b>	
Urdu .....	17
Electronic .....	20
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES .....	21

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### **Border Fence Drama, Editorial, *The Daily Times*, 05 January<sup>1</sup>**

*People were already well aware of what Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi was forced to accept on Tuesday which differences indeed exist with Kabul over the border fence.* The government initially kept quiet even as news reports revealed that Taliban soldiers destroyed part of the border fence between the two countries, and also when they threatened Pakistani soldiers putting new barbed wire in place with dire consequences. All this makes for a very strange situation. *Pakistan's been the loudest voice lobbying for international recognition of the Taliban regime as well as the resumption of aid to the war-torn country, while all this time Taliban soldiers have been provoking Pakistan at the border.* And, if that wasn't enough, the Pakistani government is warning against making too much of the Taliban's actions because that, for some reason, would not be in the interest of this country. *The fact is that the Taliban are not happy with the fence because they've never recognized the Durand Line, which forms the formal international border.* They didn't do it during their last time in power, yet for some reason, Islamabad expected them to this time around. And now that they've refused to accept it once again, why is the Pakistani government appearing on the back foot?

### **About Video and Audio Leaks, Editorial, *The Daily Times*, 06 January<sup>2</sup>**

The country's main political discourse has been degenerating for quite a while but now things have deteriorated to the extent that targeted audio and video leaks have become quite the norm. So now we have a leaked phone conversation exposing Maryam Nawaz and Pervez Rasheed talking trash about certain journalists on a certain TV program on a certain channel. *And while that raises yet more questions, which will ultimately have to be answered, it's also left people wondering just what is going to be next. For, the one thing that one can be certain of amid all this uncertainty is that whichever side is targeted makes it something of a mission to do the same, or something similar, to the other.* PML-N leaders should now expect loaded questions at their press conferences. How was it, when all the time they made such a fuss about freedom of expression, etc., that they were so dead against some sections of the press? And media barons mentioned in the leak should also be made to explain their obvious, voluntary tilt towards political parties doesn't that amount to the media violating its impartiality and playing into the hands of politicians instead of acting as their social, political and moral compass?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/863743/border-fence-drama/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/864304/about-video-and-audio-leaks/>

**Murree tragedy and fractured state institutions, Imtiaz Gul, *The Express Tribune*, 11 January<sup>3</sup>**

*The Murree tragedy clearly denotes Pakistan's fractured governance system. It has exposed the underlying conditions that various arms of governance the district administration under the Deputy Commissioner, the disaster management authorities both at national and provincial levels, and the police suffer from.* The tragedy also reflects the lack of planning and preparation on the part of common citizens. The death of around two dozen helpless tourists left stranded in the snow has exposed the propensity of politicians for using such tragedies for political point-scoring. The way the opposition hurled all sorts of innuendos at the federal and the Punjab government has betrayed the self-serving instincts of these leaders. Equally pathetic was the lack of coordinated response by key members of the federal cabinet as well as the cabinets in Punjab and K-P provinces. For hours, they were contradicting one another, leading to more and more confusion on the matter. The PDMA was missing altogether while the NDMA chief took to the media later in the afternoon to explain what all it had done. *What does all this underline? Well, it simply highlights the massive fractures in our governance structures where dozens of public sector enterprises (PSEs) loaded with thousands of employees cannot build or develop.* Led by in-service or retired civilian/military bureaucrats, these institutions are merely a source of hefty salaries, perks and privileges. But cumulatively they are bleeding the national exchequer.

**Vicious cycle of politics, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 19 January<sup>4</sup>**

There's never a dull moment in Pakistani politics. It's now a season of conspiracy theories. It's dirty politicking with no winner in the game. It's more about who gets the blessings of the powers. *Pakistani politics has never managed to break out of the vicious cycle of back-room deals. The rhetoric one hears from political leaders is extremely deceptive. With the general elections approaching, the political atmosphere has become more pernicious.* While the PTI government is riven by internal discord, the opposition parties are too much in a state of disarray to present any serious threat to the current dispensation. But nothing is certain given the ever-shifting sands of Pakistani politics. If conspiracy theories are to be believed the game is on. Not surprisingly, the security establishment remains the final arbiter of power as the squabbling political forces vie with one another to earn its blessings. Interestingly, the entire political discourse revolves around whose side the establishment is on. *The rumours about the establishment stepping back from its support to the Imran Khan government seem to have given the opposition*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2338061/murree-tragedy-and-fractured-state-institutions>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1670287>

*significant political impetus.* Failure to deliver on both the political and economic fronts has already caused a decline in PTI's political support base. Reliance on the security establishment cannot improve governance.

**Military inductees, Editorial, Dawn, 20 January<sup>5</sup>**

A heated debate of this nature has taken place in the Senate over what the opposition terms as the “militarisation” of civil institutions. The sectors where the 1,027 security personnel were working on civilian posts included communications, minority affairs, health, agriculture, and social and women development, among many others. *Matters may not be as extreme at present as they were then, but there are still a significant number of military inductees in civilian posts, a situation at odds with a democracy and bound to create disgruntlement among civilian officers qualified for these positions.* The fact is, those that fight wars are not always best suited for tasks outside their specific expertise; if that were the case, and then Pakistan should have emerged from every dictatorship with governance running like clockwork. Moreover, at a time when the courts are increasingly underscoring the military's constitutional role, the PTI government by extending overtly preferential treatment to military personnel while considering appointments in civilian roles, is exposing them to unnecessary controversy.

**Ask the PM, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 25 January<sup>6</sup>**

After a lapse of nearly six month, Prime Minister Imran Khan resumed interaction with the general public via telephone that went on air in the form of a live TV programme called *Aap Ka Wazir-e-Azam, Aap Kay Saath*. Since assuming the Office of the PM, Khan has had four such programmes, the last of which was telecast on August 1, 2021. However, like earlier such interactions, *this one too was more of an address to the nation rather than a question-answer session, as the PM mainly used the occasion to highlight his government's “achievements” over the last three and a half years and his “commitment” to not let his “corrupt” political rivals escape the process of accountability.* While the PM was critical of the opposition parties and the media, he also mentioned the role of the judiciary in a complaining tone, asking them to be “merciful to the people” and not to support “mafia and cartels”. However, he hardly admitted his own weaknesses and failures. While the government's performance is not up to the mark, it does not justify any undemocratic moves to send it packing. The incumbents have been given a five-year mandate by the people, and we wish Imran Khan to complete his term as Prime Minister and be the first elected chief executive of Pakistan to do so.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1670488/military-inductees>

<sup>6</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2340232/ask-the-pm>

### **Failure of accountability, Editorial, Dawn, 27 January<sup>7</sup>**

*The resignation of PTI government's accountability czar Barrister Shahzad Akbar is a blow to the party's central political narrative and could not have come at a worse time for the government.* Mr. Akbar tweeted on Monday that he was resigning from his position as head of the Asset Recovery Unit but would remain associated with the party. He gave no reason for his resignation. However, it has now been reported in the media that he was in fact asked to resign by Prime Minister Imran Khan. The PM was reported to be dissatisfied with his performance. The PTI had repeated time and again for years that once in power it would bring back money looted by previous rulers and stashed abroad. The PM as well as Mr. Akbar had kept on claiming regularly that they had identified this looted money and the nation would soon hear the good news. However, more than three years later, the whereabouts of this money remain a mystery and the government has failed to explain why its claims are just that and nothing more. *Shahzad Akbar's unceremonious departure is the latest evidence that the government's accountability drive is slowly coming undone. This should surprise no one. It is by now fairly obvious that this drive has been politically motivated and aimed primarily at netting the opponents of the ruling party.*

### **Rising corruption, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 27 January<sup>8</sup>**

Pakistan's sliding down in the corruption perceptions rankings is quite unfortunate. The 2021 Transparency International report has placed the country at 140th among 180 states it reviewed, making a sharp slump of 16 units from its previous rating. *Reports by the global watchdog are much-awaited by governments as well as financial institutions and donors agencies, to take a jibe on tangibles and formulate their policies, accordingly.* Though not an official barometer for gauging the exact phenomenon in terms of corruption and good governance, the report certainly makes a point in all sincerity and professionalism, as it uses eight competitive data sources to calculate the indexing. Pakistan's continuous fall on the parameter for the third consecutive year is an open and shut case of ours half-hearted efforts at curbing malpractices while doing business at the state level, and also indicates the necessity of reforms and retribution. It is also a fact that accountability drive in Pakistan has been a non-starter as weak prosecution, rampant political interference and loopholes in the system make it a ridiculous affair. *This aspect has also been acknowledged by the PM when he said the anti-corruption drive was not making any headway.*

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1671557>

<sup>8</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2340581/rising-corruption>

### **From Lahore to Gwadar: Flawed Development Model Undermines Citizens' Rights, Raza Rumi, *The Friday Times*, 02 January<sup>9</sup>**

Towards the end of 2021, thousands of people in Gwadar, Balochistan protested for their right to livelihoods that seem endangered due to the 'developmental' putsch in the southern port town. The sit-in continued for a month and for the first time in Gwadar's history, women also took to the streets. The lack of clean drinking water and the abysmal social services in the region had bedeviled the local population but now they face the stark prospect of losing livelihoods due to the mechanization of fishing and entry of larger corporate players. *Gwadar has witnessed increased operations of fishing trawlers from the neighbouring Sindh province and China that are threatening local incomes. For years, the local Baloch population has been complaining about their non-inclusion in the medium- and long-term development plans.* The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a major part of the Belt and Road Initiative, potentially opens tremendous opportunities for infrastructure development and economic growth. But the cost of such development is an old theme in development research and practice that continues to inform policy debates and programming globally. Pakistan is no exception. *The development model from Lahore to Gwadar is questionable as it repeats the mistakes of the past and undermines the constitutional guarantees that citizens are entitled to. This situation can only be rectified if a rights' framework and not the interests of narrow corporate elites drive policy and planning.*

### **Understanding inflation, Dr Kamal Monnoo, *The Nation*, 12 January<sup>10</sup>**

Inflation has become central to the Pakistani zeitgeist in 2021-22 in a way that it hadn't been in decades. Debates today revolve around currency devaluation, rising import bills and supply chain issues, as inflation in Pakistan starts to bite the common man like never before in the history of the country. *However, trying to understand it can be a mind-bending task. So, in essence when it comes to inflation in Pakistan, it is really the people who face the brunt, no matter how it is calculated.* Central banks (primarily responsible for keeping the inflation under check) of responsible economies in general try and keep PCE increases under 2/3 percent annually while setting a slightly higher tolerance (around 3/4 percent) for the CPI, just to give the companies the room to manoeuvre, if required. Clearly, the inflation levels in Pakistan tell us why our central bank and the government have failed their people in recent years!

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<sup>9</sup><https://www.thefridaytimes.com/from-lahore-to-gwadar-flawed-development-model-undermines-citizens-rights/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://nation.com.pk/12-Jan-2022/understanding-inflation>

Additionally, inflation can be tough on the underlying business itself. Companies that lack pricing power meaning that they cannot easily pass costs on to customers suffer the worst, because they are forced to absorb input cost increases by taking a hit to their profit margin. *Finally, high inflation invariably spurs the central bank to increase interest rates, in the name of cooling off the economy by slowing demand.*

**Fate of the IMF program, Editorial, *The Daily Times*, 13 January<sup>11</sup>**

Even after all the trouble the government has gone to accommodate IMF's demands-practically unravelling the ongoing fiscal's expansionary budget-there's still no telling when, or even if, the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) is going to be revived. The centre clearly thought it was more or less in the bag, and went ahead with blaming the previous administration for the present one's desperate need to get more loans to deflect all the criticism, but then the Fund made it mandatory to pass the so-called mini-budget and SBP amendment bill through parliament; failing which would mean no greenlight. This is where, quite expectedly, a new Pandora's Box has fresh problems have arisen. For one thing, the opposition isn't going to have any of it. After all, why would any opposition party willingly waste the opportunity to attack a sitting government, especially when it can claim to be moved by the people's suffering? *At stake is a lot more than just \$1 billion. Failure to clear "prior actions" would kill the EFF, make loans from other bi- and multi-lateral donors more expensive, push up yields of Pakistani bonds, and also risk losing the Saudi loan and oil facility. The government has its work cut out for it indeed because it has just a few more days to decide about the fate of the IMF program.*

**Pakistan's tryst with the IMF, Dr Khaqan Hassan Najeeb, *The News*, 24 January<sup>12</sup>**

Second chances are rare. Pakistan has had innumerable chances of participating in loan programmes supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). *But this is half the truth. Most of the programmes the country signed onto were abruptly abandoned.* Pakistan could not complete the programme stipulations during the tenure and opted out of them. Coupled with these several incompletions is the fact that the design of Pakistan's programmes with the IMF is at times overshadowed by expediency, deals more at the periphery, and remains short of tackling the fundamental issues. The actions envisaged in the current programme for managing SOEs are hardly transformational. There has been a debate on a potential compromise of Pakistan's sovereignty. Going to the lender of last resort may at times infringe on sovereignty. Where one had always argued for the sovereignty of parliament, that space seems to have been

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<sup>11</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/867796/fate-of-the-imf-program/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/927574-pakistan-s-tryst-with-the-imf>

lost. *The submission of laws to parliament as a condition of the MEFP has been converted to 'approval' by parliament as seen in the case of the two current bills the mini-budget and the State Bank of Pakistan autonomy law. An uneasy disposition.*

**Islamabad eyes \$3b loan from Beijing, Shahbaz Rana, *The Express Tribune*, 31 January<sup>13</sup>**

*Pakistan has set its sight on a loan to the tune of \$3 billion from China to stabilize its dwindling foreign exchange reserves and also seeks an investment bonanza in half a dozen sectors during the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Beijing next week. Government sources said that in addition to political engagement, the premier would also seek Chinese support in areas of finance, trade and investment. A final meeting to shape the agenda of the visit would take place on Tuesday two days before the scheduled visit, the sources added. The prime minister will depart for Beijing on February 3 and attend the inaugural session of the Winter Olympics there.* A senior finance ministry official said the government was considering requesting China to approve another loan to the tune of \$3 billion in China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange, known as SAFE deposits. China has already placed around \$11 billion with Pakistan in the shape of commercial loans and foreign exchange reserves support initiatives, including \$4 billion in SAFE deposits. The Chinese money is part of the country's current official foreign exchange reserves recorded at \$16.1 billion. In the last fiscal year, the country had paid over Rs26 billion in interest cost to China only for using a \$4.5 billion Chinese trade finance facility to repay the maturing debt.

## SECURITY SITUATION

**New national security policy, Kamran Yousaf, *The Express Tribune*, 03 January<sup>14</sup>**

Last week the federal cabinet approved, what the government claims, Pakistan's first-ever national security policy. The policy has yet to be made public but is believed to have covered all internal and external aspects. National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf is the man behind the new national security policy. He must have given a true assessment of the situation and suggested a way forward on the current precipice given the fact that before taking up the

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<sup>13</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341112/islamabad-eyes-3b-loan-from-beijing>

<sup>14</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2336832/new-national-security-policy>

government job, Moeed used to say all the right things through his writing and opinions. In fact, his views were not different from those who are often branded as anti-state or traitors. *The key issue we need to figure out first and foremost is whether Pakistan is a security state or welfare state. Certainly, the founders of Pakistan wanted to see it as a welfare state but because of our internal follies and external factors the country has for decades been seen as a security state.* Use of religion for the purposes of advancing political goals is another disease that has wreaked havoc in our society. The policy of relying on non-state actors and religious groups to pursue strategic objectives has cost us dear. This fact has been admitted not only by our civilian leaders but also those in uniform. *In the new security policy there has been a greater emphasis on human security. The policy seeks transformation in Pakistan's role from being a geo-strategic to geo-economic hub. But for that, some key decisions have to be made.*

**Pakistan downplaying fencing issue? Kamran Yousaf, *The Express Tribune*, 10 January<sup>15</sup>**

*Pakistan has finally given its official reaction to the recent incidents along the Afghan border where Taliban soldiers tried to remove a portion of the fencing. But Pakistan, instead of giving a reaction, tried to cool down the situation through efforts behind the scenes.* The Foreign Office kept mum despite a statement by an Afghan defense ministry spokesperson that they would not allow the “illegal fencing” which “divides families on both sides”. A senior official downplayed the incident at the time and said both sides agreed to mutually resolve the issue. However, a few days later more such incidents took place where local Taliban fighters were seen removing the fence. More Taliban officials spoke against the fencing. This finally led the DG ISPR to give a formal reaction at a press conference on Wednesday. Major General Babar Iftikhar made it clear that the fencing along the Pakistan-Afghan border would be completed as planned as the “blood of Pakistani martyrs” was involved in the crucial initiative. *The bigger picture is to ensure that there is some semblance of stability and sustainability in Afghanistan, something that directly benefits Pakistan. Pakistan even tried to mend fences with the US-backed previous administrations despite their public hostility towards Islamabad and would go the extra mile to avoid any strain in ties with the Taliban government.*

**Exit of TTP terrorist, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 12 January<sup>16</sup>**

*The extermination of TTP leader, Khalid Balti alias Khorasani, reportedly in Nangarhar is a pleasant piece of news. The dreaded terrorist was Therik-e-Taliban Pakistan's operational commander, as well as its spokesperson on the run in Afghanistan.* He is also said to be the condemned and disgusting

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<sup>15</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2337901/pakistan-downplaying-fencing-issue>

<sup>16</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2338228/exit-of-ttp-terrorist>

character who claimed the 2014 terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, which killed and maimed more than 149 children. His exit is a shot in the arm in the ongoing war against terrorism, and furthers the impetus that non-state actors are intolerable in the changing circumference of geopolitics. Though Kabul is non-committal on Khorasani's fate, it inadvertently hints at the role of infighting among various militant factions that led to his killing. The notorious TTP activist grew in the rank and file of terror hierarchy, and was cajoling for reorienting splinter groups. *Hailing from Gilgit-Baltistan, he was also part of the impugned uprising in Swat, and also instrumental in uplifting the face of the TTP. He also ran a terrorist hideout in Miramshah and had fled to Afghanistan in the aftermath of operation Zarb-e-Azb.* But the fact that the so-called ceasefire with the TTP had fallen out, and the overtures of peace talks failed, are factors that are being studied behind his sudden exit.

**Off to Kabul, but for what?** Editorial, *Daily Times*, 19 January<sup>17</sup>

*National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yusuf is a lot in the news these days. Buoyed by the success of his new security policy, which finally embraces the now pretty old doctrine of geoeconomics and economic/financial security, he's now leading a high-level inter-ministerial delegation to Kabul as part of Pakistan's efforts to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan.* It's no secret that Islamabad has done a lot to lobby for the Taliban since their takeover of Kabul a lot more than any other country and perhaps even more than was due. But it's not immediately clear what flying a whole delegation, with an unelected NSA leading a bunch of elected ministers, to the suffering country itself is going to accomplish. *Quite literally the only thing that can help Afghanistan right now is the resumption of aid to it, and that is not going to happen till the Taliban themselves honour promises about minority and women rights made to the international community ahead of the US departure from their country.* Such things ought to be handled at the embassy level and do not really need aero planes full of ministers going from here to there to deliver messages. And most likely, it's not as if these things have not been tried already. The last thing anybody needs is for Taliban foot soldiers to vent their personal grievances about the age-old Durand Line in this manner and their commanders, themselves non-believers in the border, not checking them; that too at this sensitive time.

**National Security Policy: a perspective,** Talat Masood, *The Express Tribune*, 19 January<sup>18</sup>

Since independence, Pakistan has not been able to develop a self-sustaining economy. Realising how adversely it has affected its people and compromised national sovereignty the PTI government has taken the right policy decision of

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<sup>17</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/870269/off-to-kabul-but-for-what/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2339324/national-security-policy-a-perspective>

giving economy the highest priority. *Dependence on the IMF, World Bank and other global and regional monetary institutions for indefinite periods and awaiting desperately for their approval to release the periodic tranches make a mockery of Pakistan being a nuclear power and the second most populous Muslim nation, and having an enviable geo-strategic location.* It lowers the image of the country in the eyes of its own people, and the world at large, and provides an opportunity for major powers to exploit us. Needless to mention the treatment meted out to our workforce in some of the rich Muslim countries. In short, it is an unsustainable position and could push us permanently in the ranks of the dependent and ungovernable countries. This is despite the fact that we clearly can claim to have a talented and hard-working population as well as any and a country blessed with immense natural resources. The PTI government would need to seriously change its orientation if it is serious in prioritizing economy. During the three years of being in power it has focused on an education policy that would literary lower national educational standards rather than raising them.

**NSP: Content and Challenge, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 21 January<sup>19</sup>**

The PTI government claims to have formulated a National Security Policy after consulting key stakeholders, including hundreds of intellectuals, experts, businessmen, teachers and students. *Unfortunately, however, opposition political parties and leaders were kept out of the loop and parliamentarians, even on the treasury benches, were all but ignored. To top it, the policy is classified as "Secret".* We have only been told that "traditional security" is to be buttressed by "human security" by increasing the size of the pie that is to be distributed among these two categories. But not to worry. We already know what our National Security Policy has been for over seven decades and we are not shy of asking how and why the new policy should deviate from established wisdom. *Perforce, a new National Security Policy has to be fashioned to withstand the loss of American aid and goodwill; to restore representative and credible legitimacy to the political system; and to step back from perennial conflict with India over Kashmir. The trillion dollar question is how.* Only a massive transfer of wealth from the super-rich rentier classes to the poor, and a return to a representative civilian system of governance, will stem the rising economic and political discontent and religious militancy that threatens to overwhelm the state; only a prolonged period of peace with India and a profound retreat from militarism will yield the required space in which to accomplish this task. But any overnight attempt to stand the old National Security Policy on its head may unleash a formidable backlash from vested stakeholders among the institutions, groups and classes that have benefited from it for seven decades.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/nsp-content-and-challenge/>

### **TTP attack, Editorial, Dawn, 21 January<sup>20</sup>**

*Monday night's assault on a police party in Islamabad, which left one cop dead and two injured, marks a significant uptick in the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan's resurgent campaign of militancy.* By carrying out such an audacious attack in the capital where there is a heavy security presence on account of numerous sensitive locations, including dozens of diplomatic missions, the banned terrorist outfit indicated its capacity to wreak mayhem in 'mainland' Pakistan if and when it chooses to. Responsibility for yesterday's *IED blast in Lahore's Anarkali area that killed at least two people and injured 26 may have been claimed by Baloch insurgents,* but it nevertheless underscores the multidimensional nature of the militant threat that Pakistan is once again facing. *Until now, in its latest iteration, the TTP had mainly been targeting security forces in the former Fata area, as well as tribal leaders, peace campaigners and government officials. For locals, the violence has revived memories of the nightmare years when the area was a terrorist hub, and a target of US drone attacks and Pakistan Army offensives.* If reports are to be believed, the TTP has been chomping at the bit to unleash full-scale attacks but has so far been 'restrained' by the Afghan Taliban who have, however, refused to take action against the terrorist group. *Sadly, the emerging scenario speaks of a monumental failure of policy in which the Pakistani state willfully refused to gauge the extent of affinity between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP and what could transpire in the event of a US withdrawal from Afghanistan.*

## **URDU MEDIA**

### **The fence on Afghan border, Editorial, Jasarat, 05 January<sup>21</sup>**

Pakistani and Afghan officials are trying to resolve differences over the border fencing issue. But the situation is such that the government of Pakistan cannot agree to remove the fence unless it receives a signal from those who have erected the fence. Much of the fencing work was done at the behest of the United States, but the Pakistani government and military acted on it. The British had tried to close the border with Afghanistan but in the days of Afghan *Jihad* there was no border but the guards on the border used to stand with a stick and say that the border is in Kabul. But the government of Pakistan under General Pervez Musharraf had accepted the order to erect a fence on the border. It fenced two and a half thousand kilometers and set up more than two

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1670666/ttp-attack>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.jasarat.com/2022/01/05/220105-03-2/>

hundred and fifty check posts. On August 21, the completion of the fence was announced. *Recently, a video of Taliban operatives tearing down a Pakistani border post and removing a fence went viral. The Taliban's position is that there is no need for a fence and a fence is tantamount to dividing a Muslim nation.* There is only one nation on both sides of the border. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that the matter will be resolved at the diplomatic level. *The foreign minister and Pakistani officials still do not believe that the realities of Afghanistan have changed.* More important than the opening or removing fences is the opening of border posts. Traffic between the two countries should be restored. It is the duty of the authorities to keep an eye on visitors and protect the interests of their country. This is not a trivial matter; it should be resolved as soon as possible.

### **Murree incident and the after, Editorial, Daily Pakistan, 11 January<sup>22</sup>**

The government of Punjab has announced an ex gratia 8 lakh PKR for the dead in the Murree incident. Also a four member committee has been set up to investigate the incident. The committee wondered why precautionary measures were not taken despite the strict warnings by the weather department. *The investigation is like looking at the matter post facto instead of doing something to prevent them from happening. Rather than that Pakistanis need to follow precautions before any storm.* It is said that when Shehbaz Sharif was the chief minister there were proper SOPs in place to be followed. *Incompetence and irresponsibility of the local management of Murree apart, the reports from hotel owners and occupants are also alarming. It is reported that when the snowfall began, the hotel owners increased prices of their hotel rooms like anything.* According to some reports, a hotel owner confiscated jewelry from a family whose children were hungry. Even vehicle owners were charged for pushing their vehicles off the snow. According to the latest reports, the rescue operation has been completed. All the stranded tourists have been taken to safe camps. It is hoped that the committee would present its report in a week and the guilty would be punished. There needs to be proper rules and regulations for the hotel owners in Murree as well. They should not charge inflated prices, even in times of crisis like the recent one. *Prime Minister Imran Khan keeps repeating to promote tourism in the country. It is true that the tourism economy plays an important role in the country's economy. Economies of many countries in the world are based on tourism. If the PTI led government is serious about promoting tourism in the country, it needs to create better facilities for tourists.*

### **Pak Army chief meets Saudi defense minister, Editorial, Nawa-i-Waqt, 12 January<sup>23</sup>**

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<sup>22</sup> <https://dailypakistan.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2022-01-11/page-9/detail-0>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Gawadar/2022-01-12/page-4/detail-7>

For decades the friendly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have grown stronger only. *Two countries support each other on important matters.* Saudi Arabia has supported Pakistan in dire situations many times. Similarly Pakistan has always assured Saudi Arabia that it would always stand by the kingdom. *This is the reason that the two countries trust each other more than any other country.* High officials of the two countries keep meeting and exchanging views on important matters from time to time. In the latest Saudi defense minister's advisor Maj. Gen. Talal Abdullah Al-Otaib met the army chief of Pakistan at GHQ Rawalpindi on Monday (10 January). *According to DG ISPR, matters of common interest like regional security, the situation in Afghanistan and defense relations between the two countries were discussed in the meeting.* Army Chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa said that there is a need to set up a mechanism for providing aid to the Afghans to deal with the situation in Afghanistan. On the other hand Gen Talal Abdullah praised the professionalism of the Pak Army and expressed the will to expand cooperation in various sectors. He praised Pakistan for its role in dealing with the Afghan situation, border management and efforts for regional security.

#### **Diamer-Bhasha Dam, Editorial, Jang, 13 January<sup>24</sup>**

The Mangla Dam and Tarbela Dam are important for Pakistan's economy. *Similarly one more important project is the Diamer-Bhasha Dam. However, locals are fighting on the dam because of which the work has been stopped.* In 2014, bloody scuffles had taken place between various tribe groups. *In 2019, a 26 member tribal grand Jirga was formed which, after two years, came up with a solution to the Diamer-Bhasha Dam issue. In this regard the other day a meeting was held in which two tribe groups, the Thor and Herban were handed over checks of 40 crore PKR. Thus the Diamer-Bhasha Dam was resolved.* But the water resources that were supported to be constructed have been delayed to 2028-29. With the completion of the dam, 1.6 million acre-foot water can be stored which can irrigate 1.23 million acre of land and also can generate 4500mw of electricity, giving cheaper electricity to the country. *The construction of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam can increase the life span of the Tarbela dam by 35 years.* Pakistan is full of natural resources as well as water resources. But the water is wasted because of the lack of small dams. These dams can store water but also generate electricity. Like the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, many small dams are facing a problem which need to be addressed to construct these dams to be used for development and other purposes.

#### **Something is going to happen! Saleem Safi, Jang, 19 January<sup>25</sup>**

Everyone is worried. Everyone knows that neither the country is running nor is the system working. Let's talk about *the most important institution (the*

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<sup>24</sup> <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/30569>

<sup>25</sup> <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/33985>

*army) first which decides everything in the country and that has brought Imran Khan to power or makes it to survival. What has it done for Imran Khan in the last four years has not been done for any other leader in the past.* The player inserted leaders in Imran Khan's party, saved them from the court and from the opposition. It stitched an alliance of PTI with MQM and PML-Q by pressure. In short what the player did for Imran Khan even a mother cannot do that for her son/daughter. *This institution asked Imran Khan for the larger interest of the country to go easy on the opposition. However, Imran, for his survival, thought that the opposition should be busy in confronting the institution.* When the institution understood Imran's game, it gave some relaxation to Asif Zardari and the Sharif's which made Imran Khan angry and sabotaged the process. *The institution also claims that it stands neutral. No party believes this. Whether the opposition or the government, both judge it by its role in the last four years.* When the captain sees that the institution is no longer using the media, judiciary and politics in his favor he doubts that he is being sent packing. On the other hand the opposition thinks that if the institution is truly neutral then why is not Imran Khan being sent packing and a deal provided to us? *Both Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto are at the door of the institution and are ready for doing everything. But the issue with PPP is that it has no presence in Punjab. Zardari and Bilawal expect that the PTI members in Punjab who are ready to leave the party should be brought in PPP.* Question is that if so many leaders of PTI could break away from PTI, why can't someone from within the party make the prime minister, like Asad Omar who is trying hard to be the one?

### **Increase in FDI, Editorial, Jang, 21 January<sup>26</sup>**

In the current world order it is not possible for any country, rich in resources and potential it may have, to develop on its own. It is necessary to have international trade and financial relations with other countries. *For Pakistan having trade relations with other countries is necessary; without it can't run its economy. It is welcome news that in the financial year 2021-22 foreign direct investment (FDI) has witnessed a rise of 20 percent. According to an English Daily, in the first six months FID was \$87.97 billion.* According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in the month of December FDI increased by 29 percent and reached up to \$21.87 billion. *According to some media reports, Imran Khan is likely to visit China which is expected to increase foreign funds.* Reality is that for any country FDI remains for economic development. It can increase production, income and employment. *Pakistan's imports are increasing. To bring imports down Pakistan needs to invite international companies to invest in the country, like India has done.* Bangladesh also adapted the way to increase production in the country. Then it will have to

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<sup>26</sup> <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/35569%22>

invite foreign investment with protection and incentives. These measures remain important for the country's economy.

### **NSA Pak visits Kabul, Editorial, Jang, 31 January<sup>27</sup>**

A stable and peaceful and progressive Afghanistan is essential for the region and the world at large. This is the position of Pakistan which is informed by the ground reality. For this Pakistan's efforts are well known. *It was part of such efforts when NSA Pakistan Moeed Yusuf visited Kabul along with his delegation to meet the interim Prime Minister of Afghanistan Abdul Salam Hanafi. Mr. Abdul Salam assured the visiting delegation that the Taliban would not allow using the Afghan territory against any regional or other countries.* The assurance came at a time when the banned TTP has increased its terror attacks in Pakistan. Abdul Salam asked Pakistani traders to invest in Afghanistan in the areas of energy, mines and agriculture. *The visit of the Moeed Yusuf's delegation took place at a time when the tension remains high at the Af-Pak border area.* Prime Minister Imran Khan and the Army chief have been asking the international community to help Afghanistan to avoid any humanitarian crisis in the country. *According to the UN, more than 90 lakhs Afghans are homeless. If immediate aid is not provided, more than 10 lakh five-year and below kids will lose their life. If something like this happens, the international community will be responsible for that.* These countries made the lakhs of Afghan refugees for their own vested interests. Therefore, the responsibility lies with the international community to help Afghanistan to deal with this dire situation.

## **ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

### **Off the Record with Maria Memon, ECP Confirms PTI received foreign funding! ARYNews, 04 January<sup>28</sup>**

*A report compiled by the scrutiny committee of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has confirmed that Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) received funding from foreign nationals and companies, under-reported funds and concealed dozens of its bank accounts. The report was though made public but there was some bias in the media to present the true figures and facts of the report added the host. The PTI government has also requested the ECP to bring forward similar reports related to the PML-N and PPP and scrutinize them too. The host asked why the foreign funding case of the PTI has been delayed. What about PML-N & PPP? Guests: Farooq Habib-PTI, Senior Analysts-Arshad Bhatti & Mazhar Abbass. Farooq Habib pointed out that the scrutiny committee*

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<sup>27</sup> <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/41874%22>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWiYTy26frc>

for the PTI, PML-N and the PPP was formed in the same year in 2018. The PTI fully cooperated with the scrutiny committee and therefore the report has now come to a conclusion, whereas the PML-N and PPP did not support the process. Out of the 18 accounts mentioned in the report by the ECP, 8 are party central account through which the PTI collected donations, from within and outside Pakistan. *In the report its nowhere mentioned that the PTI has foreign funded by companies and that the money was misused for anti-national activities.* There was no delaying tactics from the PTI government. *Arshad Bhatti* agreed that there should be scrutiny of all the political parties in Pakistan. Even there were talks and blames in JUI-F and TLP that they are also involved in foreign funding, they should also be investigated. It is also true that the PTI adopted a delaying tactic in the foreign funding case since seven years; they went to high court and then Supreme Court. *Mazhar Abbass* pointed out that the political parties do not give the calculation of their funds to the internal party members, how will they give to the Election commission of Pakistan. PTI could not manage the foreign funds, this is very true and some internal party members have agreed to it. *There are no democratic structures in the political parties in Pakistan; the PTI has stopped the internal elections.* There is no provision of elections in other main parties like PML-N and PPP.

**11<sup>th</sup> Hour with Waseem Badami, The issue of Mini Budget approval?**  
*ARYNews, 12 January<sup>29</sup>*

The government is seeking the approval of the finance supplementary bill, generally known as the mini-budget, while the opposition has vowed to resist it. The National Assembly on Tuesday formally began a general debate on the controversial Finance (Supplementary) Bill 2021, known as mini-budget, *which saw the coalition partners in the ruling alliance under the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) joining their voices with the opposition over possible implications of the new taxation measures which, according to them, would bring more economic miseries for the people of the country.* The host asked why there is too much noise on the mini budget Guests: Mohammad Zubair-PML-N & Muzamal Ismail-PTI. *Muzamal Ismail* pointed out that the opposition should contact the standing committee and it was passed from there and then it came to senate committee and it was debated. It emerged that the mini budget is adjustable and four five points were noted on which we will be working. We have imposed tax on high end products and it will not have an impact on the common man. If there is a tax on the common people and it's been brought out to notice, we will revive it. There is lot of private sector investment under the PTI government. *The idea of taxing the rich is not a bad idea.* *Mohammad Zubair* pointed out that there is an additional tax and it will be imposed on the common people of Pakistan. When the government set the tax target, expenditure could not control and therefore it created fiscal deficit. How the

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IKcKzG-yj4>

common man is effected by inflation, first by the price rise and second the mini budget will impact them. The lower middle class people, there is no wage increase and therefore it will impact them. There were double tax growth under PML-N government in the five years. No one can take positions in the market where there is a wild swings. The sugar scandal under PTI government was all about the rich man extracting money from the lower middle class.

**Program Breaking Point with Malick, Is the opposition serious in bringing down the PTI government? *Hum News*, 18 January<sup>30</sup>**

The host underlined that the political temperatures in Islamabad is soaring high with government and opposition blaming each other of making deals with the establishment. On one side the opposition is trying to put pressure on the government by announcing marches in the coming time, on the other hand government is busy giving statements on bringing back Nawaz Sharif from UK. He also informs that the government is busy in making an image for itself, *according to a survey by the Institute for Public Opinion Research (IPOR), the people of Punjab and KP are happy and content with the respective governments of PTI in both the provinces.* The host questioned the timing of the survey and asked is a new political storm on the cards in Pakistan? **Guests:** Senior Analysts & anchorpersons-Mazhar Abbas, Musharraf Zaidi & Zarar Khoda plus Tariq Junaid-Executive Director IPOR. *Tariq Junaid* informed that this survey is not the first time, since ten years we have been doing surveys on the government's performance. The institute conducts the survey itself without any commission and with no funding. Our men is present in all provinces and they send the data which is collected and examined, therefore the cost of the survey is less. We asked among the four provincial chief ministers who is performing better, than the CM of Punjab and KP topped the list. Overall PML-N party is ahead in the same survey. *Musharraf Zaidi* pointed out that on ground cost of the survey is less for the IPOR. He asked the logic of taking out March on 30 March by PDM when there is only two days after that for Ramadan. There is no logic in that, the real drama will be in Parliament and not on roads. This indicates that the opposition is not so serious, they are silent in the Parliament and just talks about March on roads. On one side they help in passing money bill and on the other hand they talk about brining PTI government down. *Zarar Khoda* pointed out that there is an orchestrated chaos and it is not a new thing. The government is going is a rant used by oppositions in all governments but nothing happens. DG-ISPR will not express the facts in the public and if they meet leaders he will not disclose in the public. The question is does the opposition really want to bring down the government? Because they know it that no one can run this government which is in a mess under PTI. Even if there is no confidence motion, and government comes down, inflation will still remain the same. *Mazhar Abbas* underlined that there can

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXZXbppwBCQ>

also be some issues within the agencies, this has happened in the past in Sindh. When DG-ISPR has categorically saying they are not involved in the political matters or deals, then it indicates to something else. Are the leaders talking to someone else? There is a gossip that in the coming three months the PM will take some decisions, is this connected to the 30<sup>th</sup> march long march. Will this be an only march or more than that?

**Analysis by Saleem Safi, Is PM Imran Khan using name of Riyasat-e-Madina for his Interest? 20 January** <sup>31</sup>

The host pointed out that a few days back PM of Pakistan Imran Khan wrote a column titled Spirit of Riyasat-i-Madina: transforming Pakistan which was largely republished by leading dailies in Pakistan. In this episode the host asked Saleem Safi what is the vision of Imran Khan Vis a Vis Riyasat-e-Madina and why he focusing too much on this aspect? There is no denying the fact that in Pakistan from a long time, religion is used as a political tool to fool the people and to appeal to their emotional and religious side. General Zia Ul Haq is an example of how to use religious card and even the creation of Pakistan somewhat was based on religion, even though if it was positive. *Imran Khan is a self-centered person and can do anything to fulfill target, even if he has to criticize the army he has does in the past.* Jahangir Tareen was his close aid, but PM has even gone against him for his own self-interest to make his image. He was an atheist in the past, and to be on top of cricket he has done anything he has to do. Imran Khan is goal oriented and is brutal in his persuasion of his goals. He is a one man show and used both cricket and his hospital for his own self-interest. How the Riyasat-e-Madina was started by Prophet Muhammad is an example for the whole Muslim community, but Imran Khan is doing the opposite of everything, he is sitting on a large land and is the most elite person in Pakistan and does not criteria of the original Riyasat-e-Madina (REM). He has the most corrupt group who has nothing to do with religion and REM. The foreign funding case against Imran Khan has not been persuaded just because he is in power. *Rehmat ul Al min Authority*, what is this for, how you are treating the minorities? Who is heading this authority, it has to be checked. Why there is a witch hunting against the opposition party leaders? There is no clarity on the funding of PTI, then how Imran Khan can talk about REM.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RiXQgYUut0>

## BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

*(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)*

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
<b>Balochistan</b>				
Dera Murad Jamali <sup>32</sup>	10/01/2022	Three killed in attack on tribal elder's convoy.	03	01
Kech district <sup>33</sup>	26/01/2022	Ten Soldiers martyred, one militant killed	10	01
<b>Punjab</b>				
Lahore <sup>34</sup>	20/01/2022	Three killed twenty injured in a motorcycle bombing in Anarkali market.	03	20

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1668592/three-killed-in-attack-on-tribal-elders-convoy>

<sup>33</sup> <https://defence.pk/pdf/threads/10-soldiers-martyred-1militant-killed-and-3-apprehended>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/926705-12-injured-in-lahore-blast>