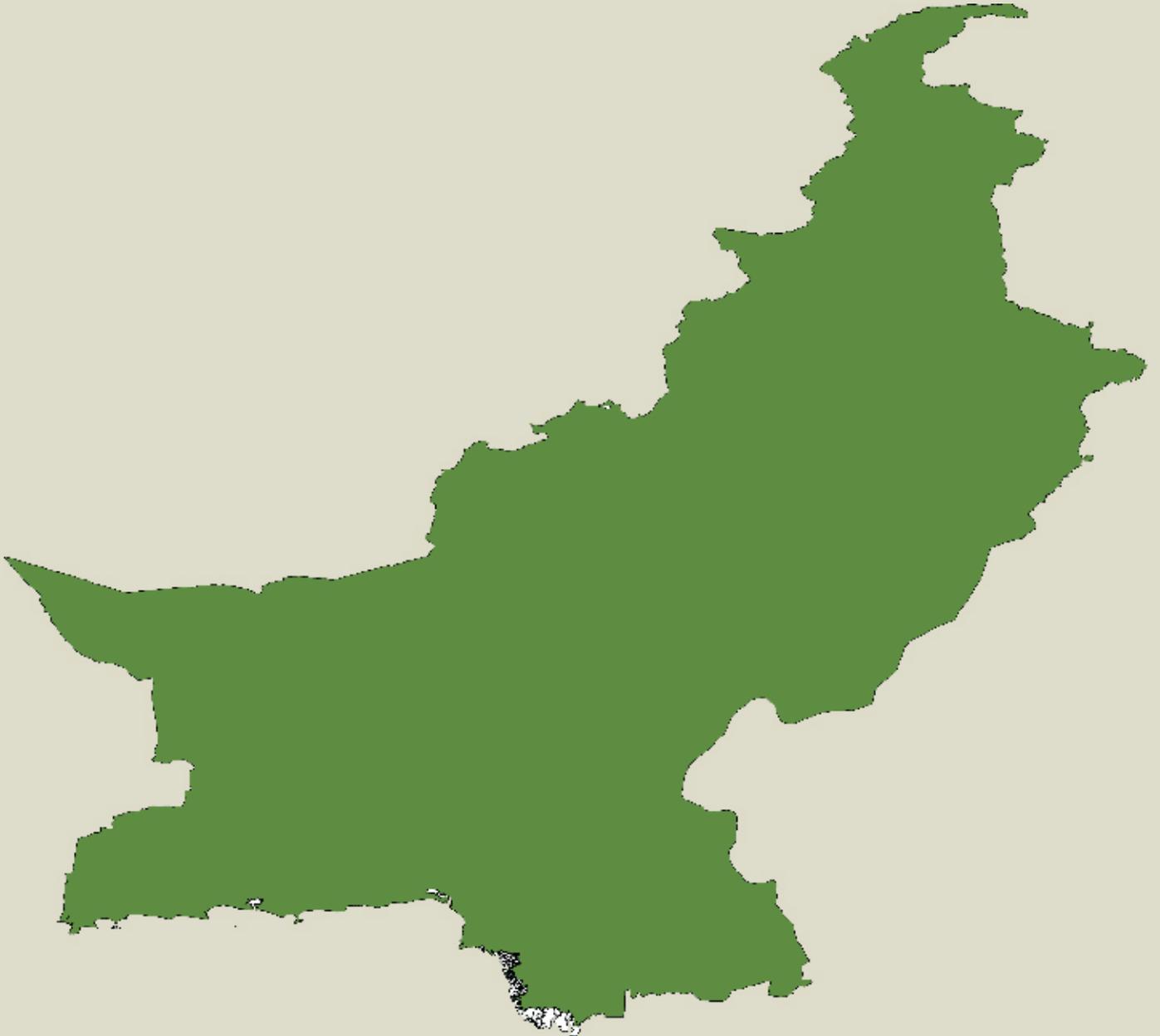


July 2019

# PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



*Prepared by*  
Dr. Zainab Akhter  
Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir  
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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, July 2019

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## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### **No mid-term polls, Editorial, Daily Times, 02 July<sup>1</sup>**

Hardly four days after the All Parties Conference (APC), consisting of the united opposition decided to move forward jointly, the Pakistan Muslim League-N President, Shahbaz Sharif, threw a spanner in the work. He unilaterally demanded mid-term polls in the country. The APC had resisted a suggestion for en masse resignation and decided to pressure the government inside and outside the parliament. Pakistan Peoples' Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had vowed to defend the parliament. Mr Sharif, however, justified his demand for mid-term polls over the failure of the government on economic front and argued that the mid-term poll is a solution to all problems. *His demand is not unconstitutional but it lacks justification. When the government is still one month away from completing its one year in office, it will be unwise to demand the mid-term polls.* The ruling party should show more maturity and seriousness in dealing with the opposition rather than provoking them every now and then. When the economy is fragile and ties with neighbouring countries are precarious, aggressiveness in ruling quarters is not a sane strategy.

### **Back to horse-trading, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 03 July<sup>2</sup>**

What was unholy in the past has now been declared kosher under the rule of a self-proclaimed crusader against corruption. It's certainly not awakening conscience that compels the opposition members to revolt against their 'corrupt' party leaders. It is not opportunism or monetary incentive alone that lures opposition members to the ruling party; security agencies too are often instrumental in securing defections. Their footprint has been too obvious in the latest political maneuvering. *Although last week's gathering of opposition parties, could not come up with any concrete plan that could threaten the government, it has pressed the panic button in PTI ranks.* The smooth passage of the budget has not helped to calm Khan's anxiety. *In fact, Khan's threats of fixing the opposition has made the credibility of the ongoing accountability move more questionable.* One lesson of history that Khan should have learnt is that neither horse-trading nor political witch-hunts can provide stability to the government. It is a siege mentality that he needs to break for his own good. Facing a vociferous opposition is also part of the democratic political process.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/421992/no-mid-term-polls/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1491781/back-to-horse-trading>

### **Rana Sanaullah's arrest, Editorial, Daily Times, 02 July<sup>3</sup>**

*As political temperatures go up, so do government actions against the opposition. The latest addition to the tally of arrested opposition leaders is Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) firebrand MNA from Faisalabad, Rana Sanaullah. He was arrested not by the National Accountability Bureau but by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), in what is said to be a narcotics case involving proscribed outfits. Before the ANF charge sheets him, public circles have started to call Sanaullah's arrest political victimization. That is a reflection of the state of affairs of our society. Over the years, all governments have used state machinery against their opponents to settle scores, both old and new, thus eroding public confidence in public offices. In recent days, the selective usage of accountability laws against opposition leaders has made NAB and other departments the butt of political jokes. The trend is dangerous, as governmental actions devoid of public support lead to fascism. The ANF action is likely to push the PML-N and other opposition parties to seriously mull over the idea of an agitation movement, which, consequently, will damage the economy that is already in dire straits.*

### **Moving forward, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 24 July<sup>4</sup>**

*It's an interesting development that the Trump administration now sees Pakistan more as part of the solution than the cause of the problem in Afghanistan. And Pakistan is happy to cooperate in return for an assurance that its national security concerns will be addressed. There is, indeed, a convergence of interest, notwithstanding the huge trust deficit between the two countries. One of the reasons for the change in the environment was Pakistan's crackdown on militant groups, especially the arrest of Hafiz Saeed under terrorism laws on the eve of the visit. The US had placed a \$10 million bounty on the head of the founder of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba. Trump's comments about Kashmir too indicate his administration's changing stance over a lingering problem that is causing instability in South Asia. But his offer of mediation in the dispute seemed more of an off-the-cuff remark than a serious proposition.*

### **Nawaz Sharif's fate, Editorial, Daily Times, 25 July<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/422683/rana-sanaullahs-arrest/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1495910/moving-forward>

<sup>5</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/436850/nawaz-sharifs-fate/>

*As the Supreme Court has already ruled that it is up to the Islamabad High Court bench hearing appeal into the case that how it decides the case, Maryam Nawaz should have taken up the issue in the court of law and not in press conferences. She might be reminded by some party lord about a similar case of a Lahore High Court judge's audio tapes involving her close family members. The Supreme Court had overturned the verdict given by those judges. Moreover, if she has some more videos laced with incriminating evidence of bias and persecution, she should share them with the forum concerned so that an appropriate action is taken. The coming days may see a wave of confrontation as Maryam Nawaz has also hinted at using the option of PML-N lawmakers resigning from all the assemblies. She is justified to hit her point since the government has clamped down on electronic media's coverage of the opposition. The policy, however, could not flourish much, thanks to judicial activism and targeted media campaigns. Now, the government of the day bears responsibility to keep the democratic norms intact so that we move forward.*

**US Pakistan relationship another fresh start, Ikram Sehgal, Daily Times, 25 July<sup>6</sup>**

*Pakistan's nuclear weapons are safe in the hands of one of the most professional armies in the world, is this well known to the United States. We share our intelligence with the US about the way we have installed the safety measures around our nuclear programme. For both Pakistan and the PM the visit to Washington was excellent. A good working relationship with the US – as with any other country in the world – is very much in Pakistan's interest, the history of US-Pakistan relations has taught us that there is Indian induced "Pakistan fatigue" in Washington. While the "Pakistan Fatigue" won't change easily, Pakistan today is well situated in its international relations. The gravity on regional relations has shifted to China and Russia with SCO in the centre. If Pakistan is looking for support in solving regional conflicts like Kashmir FM Qureshi has dampened the all-out optimism by saying in his press conference that "I am not saying that this sitting has completely changed the way things were for us. I am saying that a door that was completely shut for us ... a possibility has been created for that door to be opened.*

**Evaluating the US visit – distilling facts from hype, Talat Masood, The Express Tribune, 31 July<sup>7</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/436819/us-pakistan-relationship-another-fresh-start/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2024755/6-evaluating-us-visit-distilling-facts-hype/>

The PM's highly critical projection of the opposition leadership while addressing the American-Pakistani gathering and during his address at the United States Institute of Peace was neither good politics nor a fair projection of Pakistan's image. His crusade against corruption should have been projected to incentivize investment and for other good reasons without maligning the entire political leadership of the opposition. *It was a reflection of the personal prejudices that seem to be ingrained deeply in the PM and he would be well advised to overcome them in the larger interest of the national pursuits that he is engaged in. Serious internal differences sap the energy of the nation and can be exploited by foreign powers to their advantage.* The PM's statement that Pakistan's media is free was contrary to the reality. In this modern age, it is not possible to project scenarios that are not based on facts.

## ECONOMIC ISSUES

**Pakistan's economy: some dos and don'ts, Tang Tianru, Daily Times, 01 July<sup>8</sup>**

*Due to poor economic performance and deviation from the fiscal and taxation policy, Pakistan has encountered some serious problems, such as stagflation, sharp devaluation of currency, and high inflation rate. The direct result of stagflation is a sharp decline in people's income and a sharp increase in unemployment, as well as major problems in social stability. At present, the response of the Pakistani government is limited to short-term solutions, lacking long-term strategic vision. The effect of the 'treatment' is not as desired. CPEC in Pakistan is a project supported by the whole people, and it has become an important factor that can change the fate of Pakistan. As CPEC has reached a critical period, we shall make positive preparations for the healthy and rapid development of CPEC in a constructive direction. At the time of rising production costs, enterprises have encountered the double challenge of shrinking market demand, adding to their difficulties and worrying conditions. Some enterprises have stopped production or sought to withdraw from the Pakistani market to seek overseas development, thus increasing the unemployment rate in Pakistan.*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/421504/pakistans-economy-some-dos-and-donts/>

**Beyond Pakistan's puzzling politiconomics, Hasaan Khawar, *The Express Tribune*, 02 July<sup>9</sup>**

Under the immense pressure from the IMF, the PTI government had to drastically reverse the patterns set forth by the previous government, cutting down development expenditure and significantly devaluing the rupee. It also had to continue with the borrowing spree to retire maturing debt. *Between June last year and March this year, external debt had already risen by another \$4 billion and overall public sector debt by four trillion rupees.* More importantly, the government did a shoddy job in managing investor confidence. And while the government has pulled all the right levers to bring in much-needed stabilization, a strategy for recovery is nowhere in sight. *Unfortunately, Pakistan is now at a juncture where there are no easy choices. Fiscal discipline will come at the cost of compromised growth.* Massive devaluation hurts but is necessary to reduce reliance on foreign loans. Fixing PSEs would mean privatisation, downsizing and even liquidations, while addressing circular debt may need renegotiating contracts to reduce capacity payments.

**Pakistan: be penny wise and pound foolish, Hassnain Javed, *Daily Times*, 23 July<sup>10</sup>**

*The growth rate dropped from 6.2% to 3.3% by nearly 50%. Next year, it is anticipated to go down even further to 2.4 percent, which in the previous 10 years will be the lowest in the country. Since the start of this fiscal year, the Pakistani rupee has lost a third of its value against the dollar. Over the next 12 months, inflation is anticipated to slide around 13 percent, approaching a 10-year-high as well. Government's debt gobbles up about 30% of the budget each year. The tax burden in Pakistan, falls predominantly on the poor, who pay indirectly in multiple ways and who are already striving to achieve ends.* A third of the country presently lives below the poverty line. Moreover, do one more thing, do not complain either that Pakistan is not making progress. *Before coming to power, Khan promised to crack down on tax evasion and corruption, but so far nothing is being done.* While the government of Khan does not increase income flows, it also does not cut down non-developmental spending. After debt servicing, the largest source of such expenditure is the military, which gets around 18 and 23 percent of the budget annually. *Pakistan seems to be stuck in a negative feedback loop of trying to accommodate the army's interests and the strong financial elites that are crippling its economy and forcing it to continue borrowing from global creditors, plunging further into debt and bringing it nearer to a complete economic collapse.* Those in authority

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<sup>9</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2004108/6-beyond-pakistans-puzzling-politiconomics/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/435687/pakistan-be-penny-wise-and-pound-foolish/>

and those enjoying monetary privileges must recognize at this stage that this status quo is economically unviable.

## SECURITY SITUATION

**Pakistan and religious freedom, Yasser Latif Hamdani, *Daily Times*, 01 July<sup>11</sup>**

*Pakistan today is one of the most horrible places on earth when it comes to religious freedom.* Discrimination against religious minorities is built into the very structure of the Constitution. Enough has been written on the fact that offices of the president and the prime minister are reserved for Muslims alone. This is a negation of the principle of equality of citizenship. Discrimination permeates through our constitution and the legal system. Non-Muslims are not just second class citizens but most of them are just a level above the sub-human status. Then there are the Ahmadis, who had so valiantly supported the Pakistan Movement and suffered at the hands of religious parties and they are not even given the right to profess or practice their faith in accordance with their conscience in Pakistan today. *An Ahmadi in Pakistan can be jailed for simply saying Assalamualaikum or writing his name outside his house. Believe it or not this part of the Pakistani Penal Code.* Pakistan does not even realize what we owe to our Christian brethren. Christians had stood steadfastly with Muslim League during the Pakistan Movement just like the Ahmadis. Yet they have had to face countless humiliations and outrages in our increasingly intolerant and bigoted country. Most of the cases filed against Christians under Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code emanate from property and personal disputes. Then you have government departments advertising sanitary posts for them exclusively.

**BLA and beyond, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 04 July<sup>12</sup>**

Jundullah, cover named Jaish al-Adl, and Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), have been declared terrorist outfits by the US. The declaration of the US Office of Foreign Assessment Control has been welcomed by Pakistan as these outfits have long been a source of violence in the Balochistan province bordering Iran. The BLA is Pakistan's prime concern for two reasons: a) its involvement in subversive activities targeting its armed forces and, b) its attacks on foreign investors in parts of Balochistan. *The US State Department in the charge sheet against the BLA stated: "The BLA is an armed separatist group that targets*

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<sup>11</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/421524/pakistan-and-religious-freedom/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/423468/bla-and-beyond/>

*security forces and civilians, mainly in ethnic Baloch areas of Pakistan.* The BLA has carried out ... suicide attack in August 2018 that targeted Chinese engineers in Balochistan, in November 2018 they attacked the Chinese consulate in Karachi, and in May 2019 they attacked a luxury hotel in Gwadar," . Time and again, it has been reported that foreign powers, including mainly but not limited to India, have been financing the BLA. *Now that the US has declared it a terrorist organisation, it is imperative to hold an inquiry into where these terrorists get their funding from.* More important is the action to be taken at the government level to counter the separatist narrative. Generations of Baloch people have been harbouring a sense of alienation from the country because they think that their resources are not being utilized on them.

**Hafiz Saeed, 12 other JuD leaders booked for terror financing, Asif Chaudhry, Dawn, 04 July<sup>13</sup>**

*Top 13 leaders of the banned Jamaatud Dawa (JuD), including its chief Hafiz Saeed and Naib Emir Abdul Rehman Makki, have been booked in nearly two dozen cases for terror financing and money laundering under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.* Finally, 23 FIRs were registered against JuD leaders at the CTD police stations of Lahore, Gujranwala, Multan, Faisalabad and Sargodha on July 1 and 2. Besides the top two JuD leaders, Malik Zafar Iqbal, Ameer Hamza, Mohammad Yahya Aziz, Mohammad Naeem, Mohsin Bilal, Abdul Raqeeb, Dr Ahmad Daud, Dr Muhammad Ayub, Abdullah Ubaid, Mohammad Ali and Abdul Ghaffar were also booked in the cases. *“Formal investigations on a large scale have been launched against the top leadership of the JuD for terror financing after the registration of FIRs against them during the last two days,” said a spokesperson for the CTD, Punjab.* According to the official, substantial and irreversible punitive/ legal action has been taken against them by the state, making these organisations “fully dysfunctional”. *The spokesperson said the suspects had committed multiple offences of terror financing and money laundering and would be prosecuted in anti-terrorism courts.*

**Hafiz Saeed’s arrest, Editorial, Dawn, 21 July<sup>14</sup>**

There is a palpable sense that the government of late has moved its campaign against militant groups into high gear, with over two dozen cases of terror financing filed earlier this month against JuD’s top leaders. The world is watching Pakistan’s actions closely, particularly in connection with JuD and Jaish-e-Mohammed; any perceived kid-glove treatment of them will feed into

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<sup>13</sup><https://www.dawn.com/news/1491997/hafiz-saeed-12-other-jud-leaders-booked-for-terror-financing>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1495312/hafiz-saeeds-arrest>

global misgivings that the country has a selective policy vis-à-vis extremist organisations. The latest turn of events has therefore gone down well, with President Donald Trump hailing the arrest of “the so-called Mumbai ‘mastermind’ after a ten-year-long search”. *Pakistan must continue to plough ahead to put militant groups out of business and prosecute their members under the provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act. Otherwise, Hafiz Saeed’s arrest could be perceived as little more than an opportunistic move calibrated to coincide with an important state visit.* Even more importantly, however, such a course correction has a critical bearing on Pakistan’s internal security and its future as a responsible member of the international community.

**Terror again, Editorial, Dawn, 25 July<sup>15</sup>**

The attacks underscore the reality that more needs to be done before we can claim that Pakistan has seen the end of terrorism. *Undoubtedly, consecutive security operations in the country have vastly limited the capacity of terror groups to strike.* Despite the gains made by these military advances, it is evident that there is a need for continued vigilance, along with sustained focus on eliminating/ addressing the causes of militancy. *In the past, the state had a peculiar predilection for promoting the concept of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ militants – a dangerous narrative that discounted the material and logistical links between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ jihadis.* It is also important for the government to identify and block the source of funding of terror groups, many of whom are reportedly financed through drug trafficking, smuggling, extortion, kidnapping and street crimes.

**War on terror is not over, Editorial, Daily Times, 28 July<sup>16</sup>**

*Since the eruption of the war on terror after 9/11, there has been no lull in terrorist attacks by the invisible terrorists groups on armed forces, police and public.* Though our armed forces have beaten the militants to a great extent, the recent surge in attacks show they are not completely broken. Time and again, TTP factions have shown their method: they emerge from hibernation after months, carry out isolated attacks at different locations and then disappear. Recently, we have seen one such suicide attack in Lahore too. The war against terrorism cannot be won unless sleeper cells of militants are unearthed and their sympathizers wiped out. There is no other way. Recently, Prime Minister Imran Khan in his meeting with US President Donald Trump spoke about political solutions to end war and insurgency in Afghanistan by holding

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1496095/terror-again>

<sup>16</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/438579/war-on-terror-is-not-over/>

dialogue with the Afghan Taliban. *Our government and the world should learn from the recent attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan that the war on terror is far from the end point.*

**The threat is not over, Editorial, Dawn, 29 July<sup>17</sup>**

The insurgency has indeed been going through a relatively slow phase, but the recent attack — if investigations do lead to separatist groups — would clearly show that Baloch militants still pose a threat to the security and stability of the state. Commenting on the attack, the military has said that it is likely the handiwork of “inimical forces ... attempting to destabilise Balochistan”. As for the incident in North Waziristan, the banned TTP has claimed responsibility for the attack which was apparently launched from across the border in Afghanistan. *However, it would be wrong to assume that all is well in the sensitive region of FATA, as the attack targeting troops shows that parts of the newly merged tribal districts are still vulnerable to militant violence.* Indeed, in nature the insurgencies in Balochistan and the former Fata region are very different from each other; the former is being carried out by hard-line separatist forces, while the latter is being steered by dangerous religious extremists.

**Cracking down on terror financing, Editorial, Dawn, 31 July<sup>18</sup>**

*Militancy in Pakistan has long exploited public sentiments to ensure a steady stream of financing, which extremist groups then put to use within the country or send abroad often through opaque 'hawala' transactions.* Many jihadi groups such as JuD and Jaish-e-Mohammad — the main targets of the recent countrywide crackdown against militant outfits — have welfare wings to raise funds, help expand their support base and multiply their financial resources. *The guise of charity is particularly expedient when the parent organisations are banned.* According to Prime Minister Imran Khan while on his recent visit to the US, there remain thousands of militants in Pakistan who continue to pose a threat to the country.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1496831/the-threat-is-not-over>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1497213/cracking-down-on-terror-financing>

**Jirga with Salim Safi, Interview with President of Afghanistan, Geo News, 01 July<sup>19</sup>**

Salim Safi reminded that initially the Afghan President extended hands of friendship towards Pakistan but soon the relations hit rock bottom with Afghanistan accusing Pakistan of supporting Taliban. Recently Afghan President embarked on a two days visit to Pakistan and conducted high level talks indicating the end of a long pursued confrontational policy. Salim Safi asked few key questions which are listed below with the Presidents response: *How did the Pakistan government convinced you to visit this time as to my understanding you were not happy with the Pakistan for a long time?* I see an opening and a chance for dialogue from the Pakistani side this time and a willingness to embrace regional cooperation and connectivity. I envisage a prosperous and stable Afghanistan, with Pakistan helping us to achieve this agenda. The point is that we will never be subordinates but if you treat us as equals, you will not find a better partner. He adds that the internal circumstances in Pakistan makes him hopeful this time and secondly global circumstances are changing. He underlined that if Pakistan and Afghanistan does not cooperate in such times, both countries will suffer lose. *How do you see regional connectivity and where do Afghanistan fit in this agenda of connectivity?* Afghanistan has always been the key and heart of connectivity, whether it is China's BRI or access to central Asia our country is important for regional connectivity. When Pakistan stopped trade with Afghanistan through Karachi port we diversified and now our trade with central Asian counties like Kazakhstan has increased. He added that the agenda of lose-lose is in nobody's favour, therefore closing of the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a loss for both sides. Now that we have come to a common understanding, we have agreed to keep the Turkham border open twenty four hours and Pakistan has agreed that our trucks will go straight to India without any interference. He emphasized that basically *Afghanistan will provide Pakistan access to central Asia, if it provides them access to south Asia.*

**Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Interview of Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, Geo News, 02 July<sup>20</sup>**

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.geo.tv/shows/jirga/241868-jirga-30-june-2019>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.geo.tv/shows/capital-talk/242035-capital-talk-02-july-2019>

Hamid Mir starts the conversation by asking Maulana Rehman about the recently concluded all parties Conference (APC) which was convened by him. *What was the motive behind bringing together all the opposition parties and to organize the APC. Maulana replied by saying that the main motive of the APC was to first display the unity of the opposition against the PTI government and second to demand resignation of Senate Chairman and discuss the name of a consensual candidate in case he is removed.* Also it was to ensure the formation of a Rehbar Committee to ensure the smooth work of the opposition against the government. The unfair elections and the need to press for new elections were also discussed he added. Hamid Mir asks if the reports of the differences between him and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto is true, and if so why? He replied that there were indeed few differences and the main point of difference was that Bilawal wanted to give the PTI government a chance to complete its full five years term to enable it to perform and work for the people. However, Fazlur Rahman said he and his party Jamaat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) totally disagrees with such proposition. But they all agreed that the Rehbar committee, when formed, will take all the decisions and it will have the final words. He informed that each opposition party will have one representative in the committee to make the process fair. When asked what actions are you planning to take against the government post the APC. *He replies that they are planning to organize a massive protest in Islamabad which will be headed by the JUI and MMA and if the opposition leaders want to attend it they are welcome.* He underlined that they will be able to unite ten lakh protestors and through this they want to show the real face of Pakistan, its religion and unity and tell the world that the Pakistan shown by Imran Khan is not the real one and is a copy of the western world.

**Jirga with Salim Safi, Interview: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Geo News, 25 July<sup>21</sup>**

In June Pakistan organised an Afghan peace conference titled Lahore Peace in Murree which was aimed at bringing the Afghan leaders together to discuss over efforts to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was among the Afghan leaders who attended the peace conference and returned to Pakistan after 24 years. Following are the some important questions asked by Salim Safi to the guest Gulbuddin Hekmatyar:

**Q: Why the conference is taking place in Murree, Pakistan when the issue is Afghanistan peace and it should have taken place in your country?**

A: Yes, Kabul should have been the venue for such discussion but the environment is not suitable in Afghanistan for such dialogue at present as few sections of the society are not in favour of this kind of peace dialogue. I think

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.geo.tv/shows/jirga/242400-jirga-06-july-2019>

every country in the Afghan neighbourhood should provide a platform for Afghans' to come together for such dialogue as Pakistan has done this time. *At the same time Pakistan government is not interfering with the process and thus making it an Afghan led effort for peace.*

**Q: What was the need to organize such conference in Pakistan?**

A: Pakistan has played an important role in getting us together at one platform and that is very significant and symbolic. I think it is only Pakistan which can convince the Taliban to join such peace conference in future and in that case if Taliban takes part in the conference, Pakistan's role and participation in the event will be very important. Imran Khan has shown a keen interest in bribing the Taliban to bring them to the dialogue process with Kabul, which is an important development. At the same it is very important to have inter-Afghan dialogues which also include the Taliban to resolve the issues of the conflict hit country.

**Q: Why Afghan government is not part of the US-Taliban talks in Qatar?**

A: The Qatar talks will not be so beneficial to the people of Afghanistan and the Afghan cause as they are just talking on two to three issues. First they are saying that the Afghan soil should not be used as a launch pad to attack neighbouring countries, which is not really related to the Afghan issue. Secondly they are demanding that the US army should give a time frame of their departure from Afghanistan because it will not only affect the Taliban but the whole country. Key questions like ceasefire, inter afghan dialogue are yet to be discussed.

**Q: Is US serious about peace in Afghanistan according to you?**

A: In United States there are two views, one from the army and the other one is a political view. The Generals and Pentagon are of the view that this war should continue. While as Trump is saying this 19 years' war in Afghanistan has adversely affected the US and it should discontinue. This was one of the major issues during Trumps election campaigns. But slowly he is changing the language and slogans and is in no mood for a complete withdrawal of US army from Afghan soil. Pakistan is making efforts to establish peace in Afghanistan because if any country in the neighbourhood that is hit drastically due to conflict in Afghanistan, it is Pakistan. *At the same time Iran is dominating the markets in Afghanistan and Pakistan has not been able to reclaim its position in the Afghan markets.* In order to keep their dominance Iran and Russia does not see peace as a solution but they benefit more from the conflict and chaos in Afghanistan.

**Report card with Afshan Kanwal, Zem TV, July 30<sup>22</sup>**

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.zemtv.com/2019/07/30/report-card-30th-july-2019/>

Anchor Afshan Kanwal underlined JUI-F chief's warning to the government that Imran Khan led coalition should resign by August 2019; otherwise there would be strong protests. She asked her guests to comment on the two statements coming from the government. *Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said that Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman should not use religious card. And when LTP is not allowed to do religious politics, how can be Fazl-ur Rehman be allowed to use religion for politics? While PTI leader Nadeem Chan said that the opposition has right to protest peacefully.* Political commentator Hasan Nisar said that either of the policy of the government should not be taken as final and basically both are the same. *Nisar was critical of Fazl-ur Rehman that these protests are using religion for wrong purposes.* Babar Sattar said that both positions are correct. It is right of the opposition to protest. *But Fawad also is making a point while saying how one party is allowed to use religion and others are not.* Hafizullah Niazi was of the view that both the statements are not contradictory. It is genuine concern that Fazil-ur Rehman should not use religion. *Hafizullah said however that could Fawad have talked like this if the PTI had not used religious card when it was in opposition. He said Fazl-ur Rehman should use religious card as the PTI also used it.* Mazhar Abbas, while disagreeing with Hafizullah, said that in the movement of the 1970s when religious card was used, there was martial law. War and democratic movements are different. *Mazhar said that Fawad is wrong. There is contradictory in his statements. When PTI uses religious groups it was fine but when others do the same it is not allowed.* According to Mazhar, Nadeem Chan is right in his statement. *Mehmal Sarfaraz said that she agrees with Hasan and Babar that both the statements of the leaders are right. Right to protest is our fundamental right.* But there is ban on violent and provocative protests. *She said that the government should get an agreement signed from Fazl-ur Rehman that he would not use religion provocatively.*

## URDU MEDIA

**New expectations in Pak-Afghan relations, Salman Abid, Daily Express, 01 July<sup>23</sup>**

Given the timing of the President Ashraf Ghani's visit to Pakistan, it was of great significance. *The visit happened at the time when whole world is keenly watching the ongoing peace talks between the Taliban and America.* Islamabad

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<sup>23</sup> [https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1106536891&Issue=NP\\_KHI&Date=2019070](https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1106536891&Issue=NP_KHI&Date=2019070)

is playing role of an arbitrator. In the past great powers tried to resolve Afghan-conundrum without Pakistan but they failed. American Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad in his efforts to reach some solution, is relying on Pakistan. He thinks that Pakistan has great leverage on the Taliban and can convince them for anything. While Pakistan's position is that they can bring the Taliban for talks and rest there is need to accept them as reality. *Whatever may be the outcome of Khalilzad's efforts but that will not be limited to the US, Afghan-government and the Taliban. It will also entail an agreement between Kabul and Islamabad in which Kabul will have a constructive role in Pakistan.* Khalilzad will have to understand that like stability and peace in Afghanistan are directly linked to internal security of Pakistan, same way there will be no solution to Afghanistan-Pakistan issues without improvement in India-Pakistan relations. There are people in Afghanistan and Indian intelligence which do not want solution to Afghanistan-Pakistan issue. ... Few days back a conference was organized at the Lahore Centre for Peace Research (LCPR) in which 57 prominent members including 18 from Afghanistan participated. *It was interesting to observe that majority of the non-Pashtuns participants from Afghanistan were suspicious of Pakistan role. However people like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar were of the view that Pakistan has important role to play....* In the latest development of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, President Ghani's visit to Pakistan is important. Both parties need to understand that dialogue, talking to the Taliban and other groups in the country is the only solution to Afghan-conflict. The conflict is not only Afghanistan's issue but also concerns Pakistan's internal security. Pakistan wants a peaceful solution to the conflict.

**FATF is sitting on Pakistan's head, Wajih Ahmed Siddique, Ummat, 03 July<sup>24</sup>**

To pay back the debts, Prime Minister Imran Khan has increased prices of gas and electricity. He has accepted the conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). *But the IMF will not give Pakistan the loan on the pretext that Pakistan has not fulfilled its commitments to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as a pretext.* The FATF has said that Pakistan has not done enough to curb funding of terrorists and money-laundering. In the FATF meeting in Florida, China, Turkey and Malaysia supported Pakistan. But rest of the countries in the 38 member organization expressed their unhappiness over Pakistan's inability for not meeting the conditions set for it. This is consequence of India's diplomatic efforts. *Decision on whether Pakistan will be blacklisted or not will be taken now in next meeting in October 2019. Pakistan needs at least support of 15 members to be not to be blacklisted.* America, Britain and

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<sup>24</sup> <http://ummat.net/2019/07/03/news.php?p=idr2.gif>

India are trying hard to blacklist Pakistan. ... The President of FATF said in the June meeting that there was possibility of Pakistan being blacklisted. *He said Pakistan has not taken satisfactory measures to stop money laundering and funding of terrorism. Pakistan has missed set deadlines. If does not take action then in the next meeting decision will be taken.* ... It is strange that these international saviors have no problem with the people that have looted wealth of Pakistan and put that in their banks. *They are worried that the money should not fall in hands of the people who will bring ideological change in the world. Islam should not prevail. They are concerned that the nuclear power Pakistan should not wake up.* ... The US is playing double game. One the one hand, it is begging Pakistan to bring the Taliban for talks. On the other hand, it is backstabbing Pakistan by taking action against it. *Pakistan should also set many preconditions for the US to bail it out of Afghanistan. And first such precondition should be to remove Pakistan from the FATF list.* Americans attack civilians on the pretext of targeting the Taliban. The Taliban only attacks the military establishments. Therefore, who is terrorist?

**Civil-military collaboration, Qayyum Nizami, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 03 July<sup>25</sup>**

Institution of national security, Pakistan army has been target of lot of propaganda. This has caused a worry among the people of Pakistan. *One of the reasons for the propaganda is that despite the country being in economic crisis, Pakistan army is counted as one of the best in the world.* Pakistan is the only nuclear power in the Muslim countries. *Enemies of Pakistan and Islam are jealous of Pakistan army. The list is topped by the US and India. Both these countries want to weaken Pakistan army.* Because no army can do well without support of the people of that country, the enemies want to create divergence between the army and people of Pakistan. Two largest political parties, PML-N and PPP, since the leaderships of the parties are being held accountable for their alleged financial irregularities, also target the army. They call Imran Khan 'selected' prime minister and imply that Khan is puppet of the establishment. This is used on social media. This can only strengthen US and India's propaganda against Pakistan. *India wants that Pakistan's economy should fail as that will affect the army as well. That is one of the reasons that India is trying everything to sabotage the CPEC.* Prime Minister Imran Khan has realized that economic situation and security are complementary to each other. He has included the army chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa in his mission of bringing the country out of crisis. *Gen. Bajwa while speaking in a seminar at the National Defence University the other day said that given the gravity of the situation, no state institution will be able to succeed alone. We need to be united and address the challenges together. He said that the current*

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-07-03/page-10/detail-8>

*government has taken some measures which we all should try to make successful.* This is good news for Pakistan: For the first time in the history of the country the army and the civilian government seem to be on same page. It is the need of the hour that all the institutions to work together to address the crisis that the country is going through. However, the army needs to be careful. It should not take any step that will damage its image in people.

**Free-media guardian of strong state, Mudassar Iqbal Butt, Daily Khabrain, 04 July<sup>26</sup>**

It is not like that no one has talked about freedom of media in Pakistan or the challenges that it faces. *Many voices have been raised to tell the people and officials that the mirror is breaking. If there is no mirror where will you get reflection and find out what is wrong with your look.* Sometime back few people had raised the question about the need of media. They tried to trash so that there will be no one to question them. However it did not work. Journalists carried out their work and helped to save every institution. Firdous Awan, advisor to the Prime Minister on information and broadcasting, has improved the situation for the media to operate. *But it seems she is not allowed to work freely. On many issues there is interference from different sides.* These were the people who had released the controversial video of the NAB chairman on TV. In presence of such elements, it will be difficult for Firdous Awan to run the matters freely. *She will succeed only when she will convince the Prime Minister and others that media is truly fourth pillar of democracy. By banning or stopping the media, weakness cannot be addressed.* Shafaqat Mehmood recently said that many newspapers without the required merit were given government advertisements. But he did not say that many good newspapers are not given the government advertisements. *If media industry is not left alone, it will cause great damage to the society and institutions.* Financially, these are bad times for media industry. *These issues are linked. If media is kept free, it can do good business. A group of sycophants cannot replace media.* Free media can make society and government sensible and mature.

**9 'martyred' in a blast in Dera Ismail Khan, Editorial, Daily Khabrain, 23, July<sup>27</sup>**

It has been always the case that whenever a high profile leader of Pakistan goes for some important foreign visit, there will be an attack of terrorism. *Earlier, there used to be protests. But for last three decades, inimical elements through their agents in Pakistan are busy in destroying the situation in the country.* It

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<sup>26</sup> <http://epaper.dailykhabrain.com.pk/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2019-07-04/89813/05.jpg>

<sup>27</sup> <http://epaper.dailykhabrain.com.pk/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2019-07-23/91242/02.jpg>

was expected that some countries, their agents and some politicians may not like Imran Khan's visit to the US and his negotiations with President Trump and they were critical about it. *It is not a good sign that improving foreign relations should be at the cost of lives of innocent citizens. Economic crisis can wait. There is a mafia that is trying to destroy country's peace and stability.* These are doings of Indian secret agency 'RAW' so that to give out a message that situation remains bad in Pakistan. What role can it play in other countries (read Afghanistan)? President Trump should realize that on the one hand America is appreciating Pakistan's role in facilitating the Taliban talks. *On the other hand it is goading on India to carry out attacks in Pakistan.* Is it that bombs are blown only when there is an important provincial or federal meeting or visit? Rather than sitting silent, Prime Minister Imran Khan, investigative agencies and the security forces should carry out an investigation and act accordingly.

**America-Pakistan relations: Positive change, Editorial, Jang, 26 July<sup>28</sup>**

Imran Khan has come back from his successful visit to the US. *The success of the visit was reflected in the enthusiastic foreign policy and also the visit threw the idea out that Pakistan was being isolated, to dustbin.* Also noticeable was that America accepted Pakistan's sacrifice and role in fighting terrorism. Washington praised Islamabad for playing constructive role in Afghanistan and for bringing the Taliban to the negotiation table. *Imran Khan put up the Kashmir issue quiet well and President Trump said he was asked by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be arbitrator on the issue, a claim rejected by New Delhi.* American Foreign Minister has supported Trump and said that America can play the role of a mediator if India and Pakistan want to sit together. ... Donald Trump is a straight person. He should take notice of India's duplicity and should use his power to implement the UN Resolutions on Kashmir issue. While talking about the Afghan conundrum, Prime Minister Imran Khan said that both the US and Pakistan want peace in Afghanistan. But the Taliban needs to be convinced for that and Pakistan is trying it. He said some misunderstandings between Washington and Islamabad are now getting clear. *Better relations between the US and Pakistan are important for the region. The triangle of the US, India and Israel has badly affected the region. The triangle seems to have broken after Imran Khan's visit. The US needs to look into matters as a super power, not from the perspectives of India and Israel.* This will help in restoring peace in Afghanistan and also will help in finding a solution to Kashmir issue.

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<sup>28</sup> [https://e.jang.com.pk/07-26-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06\\_001.png](https://e.jang.com.pk/07-26-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_001.png)

### Claims of success on terrorism, Editorial, *Ummat*, 29 July<sup>29</sup>

Neither the government nor the opposition realize seriousness of the kind of whirlpool that Pakistan is caught in currently. Bureaucracy was never expected to do anything. *Two institutions which have been reliable so far are the judiciary and the army. However, because of the judiciary's laziness and army's support to a failing government, people are disappointed by these two institutions as well.* If there is no concrete policy in place to address the developing perception among the masses, future can be uncertain. Imran Khan's visit to the US is portrayed as a successful visit despite the fact that neither has President Trump assured him on arbitration on the Kashmir issue nor has he taken any step to bring Pakistan out of its financial crisis. *America wants to get out of Afghanistan. For that it needs Pakistan's help and is therefore using flattery to exploit Islamabad.* Only positive development that has happened in the bilateral relations is the Trump's decision to provide \$125 million for supporting F-16 jets. The governments sold this as India's defeat and Pakistan's victory. But the government is not telling whole story. Washington has provided five times more military aid to India for C-17 transport jets. *Furthermore, despite all the claims of the government, terrorism continues in the country. On the one hand our soldiers are killed by Indian forces' firing along the LoC. On the other hand, there is regular firing on Pakistan's border post in the border it shares with Iran and Afghanistan.* On Saturday, two bombs blasts in North Waziristan and in Balochistan killed ten soldiers. The government and the military need to take concrete steps to address the issue of terrorism. On the one hand Trump says he is ready to be arbitrator on Kashmir and on the other hand India has increased its army in 'occupied' Kashmir. How can PTI label Imran Khan's visit to the US a success?

### Interest in arrests, Hamid Mir, *Jang*, 29 July<sup>30</sup>

On this arrest majority of the people were surprised. Some were disturbed and later it all turned into criticism. *Nawaz Sharif's former advisor and speech writer Irfan Siddiqui was arrested and taken to jail. When the news of the arrest spread like a wild fire and media asked why was Irfan arrested at the midnight, the answer was given that Irfan had given a section of his house on rent without informing police about the details of the tenant.* Some PTI supporters started praising the arrest by saying that crackdown against journalists has begun. But the list of journalists that are expected to face arrests does not include Irfan Siddiqui. When presented in the court, lawyer of Irfan argued that the section of house that was rented is not on Irfan's name but on his son's name. But the court rejected the argument and sent Irfan on 14-day remand. Irfan was handcuffed. *It was all going on when it came to light that*

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<sup>29</sup> <http://ummat.net/2019/07/29/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

<sup>30</sup> [https://e.jang.com.pk/07-29-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06\\_007.png](https://e.jang.com.pk/07-29-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_007.png)

*FIR against Irfan was false and the house number-54 was not Irfan's property. Even the government was surprised what was happening. ... It is point of retrospection. The enemies had arrested him to act as a warning for others. But the people had to bear the cost. The arrest was so badly criticized that the court had to assemble on Sunday to release Irfan from jail. The government was criticized for arresting him and further criticized for releasing him later. Now all political arrests will be suspicious. In case of further arrests, the government will have to face consequences.*

### **US, Kabul and Taliban agree, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 30 July<sup>31</sup>**

Foreign Minister, while talking to a tv-talk show, said that the benefits of Imran Khan's visit to the US have started to come forth. *Imran Khan may meet President Trump again in September during the United Nations General Assembly meeting.* Qureshi said earlier Pakistan was held responsible for the situation in Afghanistan while Imran Khan was saying that there needs to be a solution to the conflict. Now America, Russia, China, Europe and the Muslim countries are validating Pakistan's position... Qureshi said that some forces do not want peace in Afghanistan and they will be exposed soon. It is a welcome news that after 18 years of war there is progress on restoring peace in Afghanistan. It is good for America and its NATO allies and for the region. Pakistan and Prime Minister Imran Khan have played important role to make the talks possible. ... The Taliban had never accepted the 'occupation' and the puppet government in Kabul. They were never ready to talk to the government in Kabul. The Taliban spokesperson said other day that in near future there is no possibility of holding talks with Kabul. *America has realized that it cannot afford to lose more troops and money in an unwinnable war. It wants a 'respectful exit'.* President Trump had hinted towards on 31 January while saying that if there is an agreement America would leave Afghanistan. At the same time Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen had said that once the US troops leave Afghanistan, the Taliban would find way how to leave peacefully with other groups and people. ... *Indeed, peace in Afghanistan will be good for the region. However, New Delhi and Kabul do not want peace in Afghanistan. They want the war to continue. Few days ago, the terror attacks in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and then attack on Amrullah Saleh in Afghanistan are attempts to sabotage the peace talks.* Today America and the Taliban are honestly taking the talks to next level. Pakistan is playing its role quite well. Without Pakistan there would possibly have been no talks.

### **Destroying of economy, evident at home, Editorial, *Ummat*, 30 July<sup>32</sup>**

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-07-30/page-10/detail-0>

<sup>32</sup> <http://ummat.net/2019/07/30/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

Before the 2018 National Assembly elections person that was talked about most after Imran Khan was Asad Umar. It was expected that Asad would bring in his experience and would bring Pakistan out of the economic crisis. ***But Imran Khan hired foreign people from International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other organizations and preferred them over the elected people. One of the reasons for that can be 'authoritarian attitude' of Imran Khan. He does not want to listen anyone else but himself.*** Asad said in an interview that 'I informed Imran about the situation and the final decision was to be his. ***Imran Khan said that he is a risk-taking person but 'all' say that we will have to go to the IMF. He did not name 'all' and the nation will have to bear the consequences of his self-will.*** Despite the fact that people are increasingly standing against his policies, Imran is likely to complete his term with the support of internal and external forces. Imran used to say that going to the IMF is like committing suicide but on asking of the 'all' he went to the IMF. ***No one knows who these 'all' are. But it is possible that along with these 'internal forces', there are some external forces that play their role in implementing agenda of America and the IMF.*** That is why first Qadianis were appointed as experts and when the decision faced protests, then representatives of IMF were appointed as the financial advisor to the Prime Minister and the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan. Shabir Zaidi was made chairman of the FBR. ***Asad Umar's statement that Pakistan lost the gold opportunity by going to the IMF is important.*** Imran Khan will have to answer these questions. Value of Pakistani rupee is worse than when Ishaq Dar was the finance minister. Imran Khan should not make claims unless he is able to lessen the burden of common people. It will not be wrong to say that Imran has handed over the economy to the foreign hands for which history will never forgive him.

**Pakistan rejects US report on religious freedom, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 30 June<sup>33</sup>**

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) report on religious freedom in Pakistan is not based on facts. That is why Pakistan rejected it. Foreign Office said that the conditions of the Muslims in India and Kashmiris is ignored in the report. Pakistan has always supported religious freedom and brotherhood. The Constitution of Pakistan has protected rights of the minorities and they are given all chances to progress. ***Despite this the report by America on religious freedom is negative about Pakistan which reflects its biased approach. In contracts, there is no mention of 'occupied' Kashmir where Indian security forces 'brutally kill' Kashmiris and use illegal weapons against them. There is no mention of the minorities being converted forcefully, burn alive and subjected to violence in India.*** This is has made the report suspicious.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2019-06-30/page-13/detail-3>

Whether it is religious freedom or rights of minorities, record of Pakistan is much better than many other countries.

**NA to act against Fazl-ur Rehman, Report, Ummat, 31 July<sup>34</sup>**

While on the hand Maulana Fazlur Rehman has issued an ultimatum to the government, on the other hand investigation against Fazlur Rehman in corruption charges are being hastened. *According to the sources from Islamabad, Fazlur Rehman can get notice in this regard in August. In September he may be arrested.* That means before his plan of long-march in Islamabad, Fazlur Rehman may be in jail. The sources said that apart from Fazlur Rehman, his brother Maulana Zia-ur-Rehman, former chief minister of KP, Akram Durrani are also likely to be arrested. Sometime back NAB chairman Javed Iqbal had allowed inquiry against Fazlur Rehman in asset-beyond-means case. *In response Fazlur Rehman had said that he would tear apart any notice from the NAB.* ... However, Asif Zardari had also said that the NAB would not dare the arrest him. But he is in jail. Now NAB may take it as a challenge to arrest Fazlur Rehman. *According to the source, if Fazlur Rehman is arrested before his long-march plan, it may be taken as political action.* JUI-F is not only planning long-march but also a *dharna* in Islamabad, according to the source. However, both the big parties PPP and PML-N have not given their support to the long-march so far. While Maryam Nawaz is willing to support it along with her supporters.

## STATISTICS

### BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

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

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
<b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</b>				
Khar <sup>35</sup>	10/07/2019	Soldier killed, 3 injured in blast in NW Pakistan	01	03

<sup>34</sup> <http://ummat.net/2019/07/31/news.php?p=story2.gif>

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2019-07/10/c\\_138215327.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2019-07/10/c_138215327.htm)

<b>Islamabad</b>				
Rawalpindi <sup>36</sup>	27/07/2019	Captain among 10 soldiers martyred in two terrorist attacks in Pakistan	10	00
Rawalpindi <sup>37</sup>	30/07/2019	17 killed as Pakistani army plane crashes into residential area	17	12
<b>POK</b>				
Chamb <sup>38</sup>	04/07/2019	Five soldiers martyred in explosion near LoC	05	01

<sup>36</sup><https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/504482-captain-among-10-soldiers-martyred-in-two-terrorist-attacks-in-pakistan>

<sup>37</sup><https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/several-killed-as-pakistani-army-plane-crashes-into-residential-area/article28754736.ece>

<sup>38</sup><https://dailytimes.com.pk/423541/five-soldiers-martyred-in-explosion-near-loc/>

