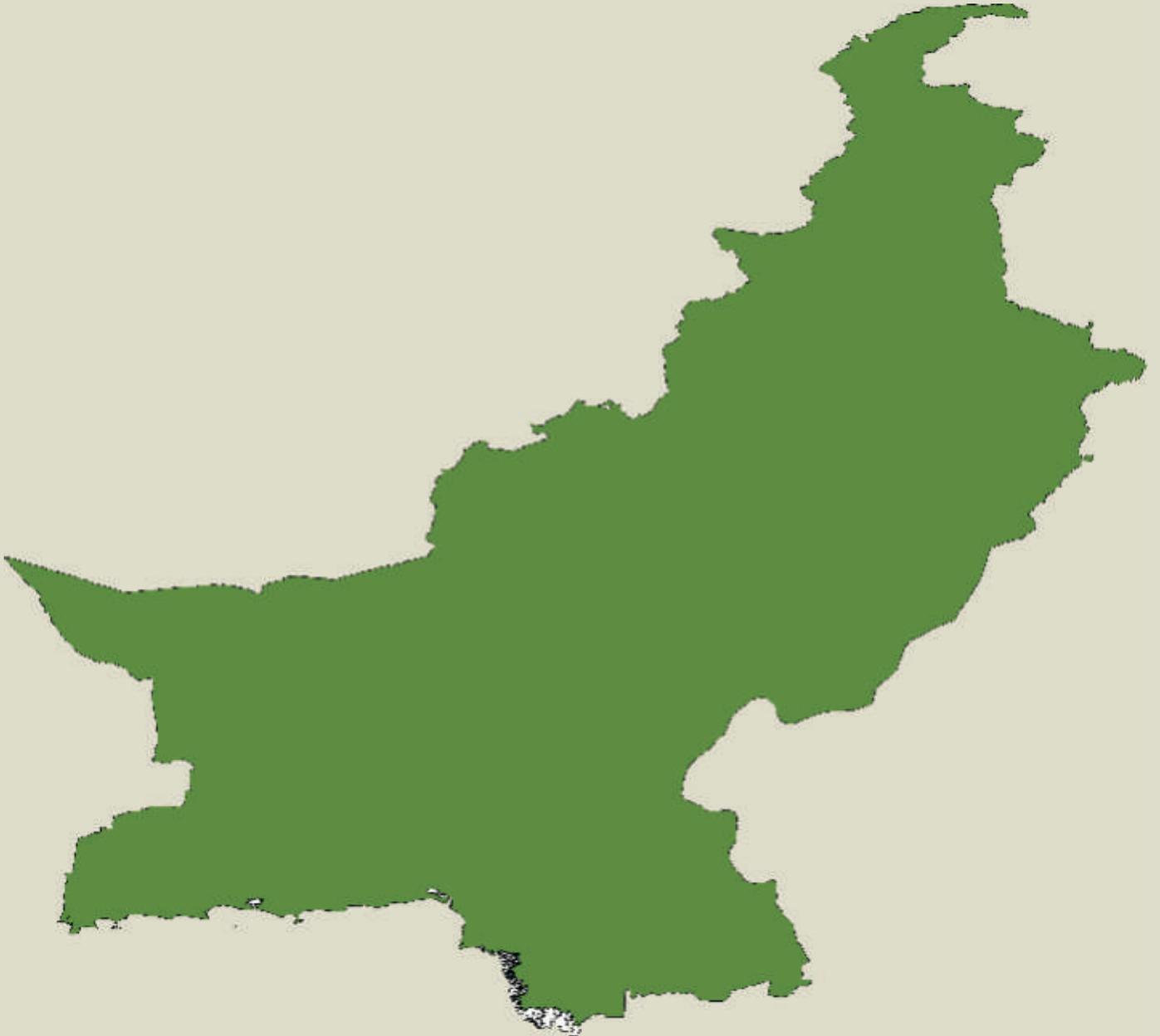


July 2020

# PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



*Prepared by*

*Dr. Zainab Akhter*

*Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir*

*Dr. Mohammad Eisa*

*Dr. Ashok Behuria*



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर परिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, July 2020

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## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### **Dangerous delusions, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 01 July<sup>1</sup>**

Speaking at a dinner for coalition lawmakers recently, the prime minister had boasted: *“we are the only choice”*. *Maybe his words were meant to calm down disgruntled allies and were also a way of letting an increasingly aggressive opposition, baying for his blood, know that he was not going anywhere*. But whose ‘choice’ was he alluding to? *Some observers took the prime minister’s remarks as meant for the security establishment, i.e. ‘we are still your best bet’*. It is evident that the establishment’s continued support is critical to keeping intact a fractious ruling coalition that has been further shaken by the exit of Akhtar Mengal’s BNP-M and the threats of some other parties to abandon ship. Moreover, the public remarks of cabinet ministers have further added to the government’s woes. Surely the passing of the budget has come as a relief for the ruling elite, but the crisis of confidence is far from over. *A major challenge for the prime minister is how to save the coalition from falling apart*. One tangible change in the prime minister, perhaps prompted by internal criticism, is his more frequent appearances in the National Assembly in the past week. That is certainly a good omen. *But some of his remarks during the budget session have certainly exposed a lack of understanding of some critical national security issues*. For instance, *the comment in which Osama bin Laden was described as a ‘martyr’ did not appear to be a slip of the tongue but something that he really believed*.

### **Red Zone Files: Minus few? Fahd Hussain, Dawn, 02 July<sup>2</sup>**

*The last few weeks have been unkind to the PTI government. Very unkind. These ‘slings and arrows of outrageous fortune’ hit a bullseye when Prime Minister Imran Khan stood on the floor of the National Assembly and referred to the peculiarly Pakistani political jargon of ‘Minus-one’*. The prime minister referred to ‘Minus-one’ because it was something that he had been hearing so often that he deemed it fit to actually address it. The report from the relevant quarters would have presented two possibilities: a) Yes, there is something cooking, prime minister, and you should take action accordingly) No, this is mere idle gossip, prime minister, and you need not pay any attention to it. Government insiders say the prime minister may soon be having a firm word with many persons in his cabinet. Which brings us back to the storm in the fabled teacup that may be spilling over. *It is a storm because it has brought the government to its lowest ebb in two years; it is in*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1566290/dangerous-delusions>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1566465/red-zone-files-minus-few>

*a teacup because it is not about to blow the government away and it is spilling over because there could be some collateral damage.* Khan is not happy with some of his cabinet members,” confides an insider. This person says the prime minister knows the dangerous implications of the “I” word. Nearly half of the PTI term is over (considering the last year is usually consumed in election campaigning). In the remaining time, the PTI government has to not only somehow erase the perception of its massive incompetence, it has to build one of competence. How? *“He will shuffle his team,” says another Red Zone insider. Some ministers, advisers and special assistants are walking around with big targets on their backs and may find themselves shunted out without warning in the coming weeks.*

**Hindus: the Bête Noires of Pakistan, Junaid Malik, Daily Times, 03 July<sup>3</sup>**

*The real problem is that such self-righteous individuals are themselves oblivious to the teachings of Islam. Their putative claim of knowing Islam in toto doesn't contain even an iota of veracity.* Anything that is antipodal to their hodgepodge and myopic understanding of ‘Islam’ becomes un-Islamic for them. *Moreover, if Sikhs have been endowed with the picturesque Kartarpur Corridor then why the Hindus should be left out in the cold? Are they lesser citizens of the state? Even the Objective Resolution of 1949 allows the minorities to freely profess and practice their religion in Pakistan. Pakistan is in a perpetual state of conflict with India since the time of its creation. Rather than seeing it as a territorial conflict, we the Muslims, have started viewing Pakistan's Hindus from an “Us vs. Them” lens. Our attitudes need to change. We cannot afford to proliferate more fissures in our already highly polarized society. A milieu that is congenial and hospitable for all the ethnic and religious minorities has to be created and promoted for the peace and prosperity of Pakistan.*

**Pressure on media, Editorial, Dawn, 07 July<sup>4</sup>**

*The state of media freedom in Pakistan today is far from satisfactory. The last two years have seen growing pressures of all kinds on the media leading to shrinking space for freedom of expression.* The latest in a series of incidents signaling a growing lack of state tolerance is the suspension of *the broadcast license for Channel 24*. PEMRA has pulled the channel off air citing some licensing issues but the channel management says they are closing transmission because they cannot face “blackmailing” from the government. Hundreds of people will now lose their jobs. The trend unfortunately is quite

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<sup>3</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/635225/hindus-the-bete-noires-of-pakistan/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1567497/pressure-on-media>

clear. *The present government has piled pressure on the media through all means available adding to the existing financial woes of the industry. At the same time, state pressure to toe the official line and not cross some red lines has led to self-censorship and muted critique by a majority of news organisations. Those that have resisted such pressures have faced punishment through various means including financial ones. Threats of physical violence are also frequently reported. All this undermines democracy and promotes a culture of intolerance and abhorrence for dissent. The culture flows down from the state to citizens at large, and the media becomes an easy prey for scapegoating.*

**Politics of JITs, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 08 July<sup>5</sup>**

*The latest debate on the reports is more political gamesmanship than a serious move to address the problem of heinous crimes and bring those involved to justice. Brought down from the shelf where they were gathering dust, the reports may provide some insight into the sordid nexus between crime and politics. But they may be only half true; some actors in the play are never exposed. There are scores of JIT reports on incidents varying from political murders and financial crimes to terrorist attacks that are just put on the backburner and forgotten until they are required to serve certain political objectives. It is not only Karachi where crime and politics fuse; the situation is not significantly different in other parts of the country either. Pakistan is fast turning into a country where the state is so weak that it is unable to fulfil even its minimum responsibility, exercise authority or offer citizens a modicum of security and order. The powerful nexus of crime and politics has little to fear. It is, however, despicable the way the JIT reports are used now to settle political scores. Rather than taking the issue seriously, these have been turned into a tool against rivals in a political power game. There is strong apprehension that Uzair Baloch may also end up as a pawn in the political chess game.*

**The dragon, Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 10 July<sup>6</sup>**

The irony is that when a party is in opposition, it decries NAB and wants the law suitably amended because it is the target, but when the same party is in office it is content to let it be. *Behind the curtain, the Miltabishment that created the NAB during a martial law regime and has protected it diligently from the wrath of political parties, quietly steers it in whichever direction is needed.* Obviously, the Chief Justice of Pakistan thinks that by increasing the number of courts and judges, justice will be speeded up. But the court has not taken one critical factor into account: *NAB's inability to put up a swift and*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1567718/politics-of-jits>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/the-dragon/>

*solid prosecution to wrap up each case satisfactorily. This, despite the fact that the NAB law is loaded against the accused because the onus of disproving the allegations is upon him/her (guilty unless proven innocent) rather than the other way round as generally decreed in law (innocent unless proven guilty). The statistics show that “plea bargains” account for an overwhelming number of settlements in cases against businessmen and bureaucrats, while those against politicians who refuse to admit corruption linger on endlessly for lack of proper homework. **The Miltablishment stands in-between: it wants businessmen and bureaucrats not to be unduly hindered but it wants undesirable politicians in opposition and government swiftly knocked out. The government, meanwhile, wants NAB to go after the opposition but leave alone its own corrupt stalwarts.** Now the dragon has been prodded to attack the Jang-Geo media group that remains a thorn in the side of the government and Miltablishment. **Where will it all end? Monsters, we know, have a habit of turning on their masters without warning.***

#### **A hybrid system? I.A. Rehman, Dawn, 16 July<sup>7</sup>**

The most important part of the much-talked-about interview given by Federal Minister Fawad Chaudhry recently was not a clash of ambitions between some ministers that was reported to have been resolved with considerable fanfare. *It was his observation that governance was being handled by non-elected functionaries, who had no stake in politics. This complaint is valid and its repercussions in terms of distortion of the democratic system could be quite serious.* It is commonly believed that the prime minister has been trying to manage the affairs of the state largely with the help of his 14 special assistants and Federal Minister Asad Umar. The special assistants to the prime minister, except one, are not elected members of parliament, but they enjoy the status of cabinet members. *The government’s law experts should examine the question of whether they can have this privilege because it is reserved for federal ministers, who must be duly elected members of parliament.*

#### **Hybrid Government and the Military, Ejaz Haider, Friday Times, 17 July<sup>8</sup>**

Over the 73 years of its life, Pakistan has experimented with various political systems. From quasi-Presidential (Governors-General) to martial law by a Governor-General to a Commander-in-Chief taking over to a presidential system through a rigged electoral college to martial law to a parliamentary government to a martial law to a quasi-military government to electoral parliamentary democracy to martial law again to a quasi-military government to electoral parliamentary democracy again to now what’s being called a

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1569277/a-hybrid-system>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/hybrid-government-and-the-military/>

*'hybrid government'* – we have tried them all. *What has remained elusive throughout these experiments is the development of institutions. Predictably, governance has suffered.* When we get the army to streamline WAPDA, sort out ghost schools, handle policing duties, fight invisible pathogens (unless it's army's specialized teams working in tandem with civilian labs), and send them after locusts et cetera, we are doing two things: one, *we are acknowledging that the civilian apparatus is dysfunctional and cannot cope with what it is supposed to do and, two, we are wasting precious training time of the army and involving it in tasks that are outside its remit.* In times of national crises we need all hands on deck. But every problem cannot be treated as a national crisis. No one is saying that the military cannot and should never be called upon to help. That would be silly. *But what's required (a) is to improve capacity on the civilian side and (b) do so in order to keep the army involved in its primary job. No more or less.* Hybrid war is a threat. Hybrid government can't be all that good!

#### **Changing dynamics, Editorial, Dawn, 23 July<sup>9</sup>**

*The Iran-China deal said to be worth hundreds of billions of dollars offers an opportunity to Pakistan. While Pakistan enjoys cordial relations with China, this can be a good occasion to improve relations with Iran. China seeks to build a 21st-century Silk Road in the form of the Belt and Road Initiative, envisioning a global network of trade routes emanating from Beijing.* It is in this context that it seeks to cement a deal with Iran, while CPEC is also a product of the same strategic thinking. On the other hand, Tehran struggling to stay afloat under crushing US-led sanctions will gladly accept foreign investment, as well as a chance to sell its oil and gas. Pakistan can play a positive role in this budding relationship, with a chance at becoming a key conduit in an energy and trade corridor linking the Eurasian hinterland to South Asian and Gulf ports. But there is a catch. As stated above, the US is in a combative mood vis-à-vis China, while Iran has been Washington's bête noire for over four decades. *The US must be told that while Pakistan values its relationship with America, Islamabad cannot isolate itself regionally by alienating neighbours with whom Washington does not get on.*

#### **The Curse, Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 31 July<sup>10</sup>**

*To be certain, there is no doubt that the Miltabishment is fed up with the incompetence and bungling of the PTI government which is laid at its door because it brought it in and has since propped it up.* But it doesn't trust the

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1570650/changing-dynamics>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/the-curse/>

leadership of the PPP and PMLN (that it has actively worked to target and belittle) to do its bidding in the event it chooses to bring both parties back to office. *Indeed, it is afraid that if either or both parties are unable to deliver on the economic and political agendas of the day like the PTI and if, on top of it, the old anti-Miltablishment hostilities in the PMLN leadership re-emerge in one way or another, it will be a case of getting out of the frying pan and into the fire.* It is also known that the Miltablishment is not ready to risk another general election soon in the midst of an economic and health crisis that has laid the state low and increasingly tense border issues with India and Afghanistan that could escalate into full blown crises without warning. *Is the sacking or desertion of PTI team members, or the proposed APC, a sign of the times? Change or no change, the curse of interesting times simply won't go away.*

## **ECONOMIC ISSUES**

**Budget approval**, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 01 July<sup>11</sup>

*That the federal budget has been passed by the National Assembly is no news. If there is anything that came out as news from the assembly's budget session on Monday, it is the score line.* The government managed 160 votes against the opposition's 119 at the time of passage of clause nine of the Finance Bill 2020-21. *The 41-vote majority could have shrunk further if an eleventh-hour dinner party, thrown by Prime Minister Imran Khan, had not managed to win back several disgruntled party colleagues and allies.* There are reports of senior most PTI members reaching out to a group of more than a dozen party colleagues who had refused to attend the dinner with assurances on behalf of the Prime Minister as regards some unfulfilled promises. *Still, the number of votes secured on the budget stood 12 short of the magical mark of 172 that ensures simple majority in the 342-strong lower house and that is needed by the PM to stay on in the coveted office in case a no-confidence motion is table by the opposition.* Should this electoral equation worry the PM? Yes it should, given the poor performance of his team in almost every area be it the economy, governance or social service delivery. The best way for the PM to keep the ruling coalition intact is to deliver, especially with regard to the economy, rather than succumbing to the fair and unfair demands of his coalition partners every now and then.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2252697/budget-approval-1>

### **Completing CPEC 'at all costs', Editorial, Daily Times, 06 July<sup>12</sup>**

*The government has done the right thing by putting to rest any doubts about timely completion of CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor). In fact, the prime minister went the extra mile and stressed that nothing was going to impact the timeline for the completion for CPEC because he understands just how big a revolution in jobs and trade it is going to bring about very soon. All that is left now is to make sure that the timeline is respected and any irritants – which always prop up now and then in such huge projects – are handled in time and the original schedule is not disturbed. For any inconsistency would go on to impact not just our rate of progress but the entire project, of which Pakistan is just one part. The Chinese government must be appreciated for keeping CPEC so high on its agenda even though it has had its hands full for a while, first with the trade war with the US, then the pandemic, and now with a cold war of sorts building with the Americans. It goes to show just how deep the bonds of friendship are between Beijing and Islamabad, which is why Chinese investment in CPEC is being thought of as something like the famous Marshall Plan, which enabled USA to help a devastated Europe to rebuild after the Second World War. With CPEC, this friendship will surely reach new heights.*

## **SECURITY SITUATION**

### **Aviation challenge, Editorial, Dawn, 03 July<sup>13</sup>**

With this fresh blow, the credibility of all Pakistani pilots and engineers has been called into question internationally. *Yet, the story of the rot within PIA and the CAA is not just about pilots. The saga spans decades and is fraught with monumental mistakes made by those in the administration itself. It is unfair to cast doubt on every pilot and technician simply because the government decided to blurt out the workings of a pending investigation. The minister could have approached PIA with the information and given it a chance to suspend flights rather than letting it be banned. The names should have been made public after the probe concluded and action taken against guilty individuals. Unfortunately, it is too late to undo the damage.*

### **Religious intolerance, Editorial, Dawn, 06 July<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>12</sup> <https://dailytimes.com.pk/636540/completing-cpec-at-all-costs/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1566701/aviation-challenge>

Bigotry and intolerance reigned supreme yet again last week, when authorities in the federal capital halted the construction of a Hindu temple in Islamabad. *A group of clerics opposed the building of the temple, threatening action if authorities went ahead with the work. The construction was also opposed by political parties, including the JUI-F and PML-Q.* Alas on Friday, the Capital Development Authority stopped the construction of the boundary wall on the plot meant for the temple, citing 'legal reasons'. *Although 'legality' and 'fine print' are being cited as the basis for which the construction of the temple wall was stopped, it is evident that the decision to stop building was taken after pressure was exerted by the groups that have so vocally opposed it.* That intolerance has won the day is a sad indictment of the shrinking space for religious freedom in Pakistan. What is more disturbing is that a private news channel claimed 'victory' when the construction was halted an indication of how deeply religious discrimination has permeated every aspect of society. *For too long, this country's minorities have been unfairly pushed against a wall by powerful groups that threaten and blackmail the authorities into submission.* This will be a test case for the PTI government and the prime minister, who must ensure that the initial spirit with which this decision was taken prevails.

### **New status of Hagia Sophia, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 15 July<sup>15</sup>**

While the decision by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan may have pleased his Islamist followers and his populist base, millions of Turks, as the country's Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk noted, "are crying against this but their voices are not heard". *The move has not only shaken the world, it has also divided the nation. Erdogan's latest action, coming after a court ruling, has raised questions about Turkey's image as a moderate Muslim country.* Such an approach can also fuel religious fanaticism and widen religious divides, besides causing a shift in the perception of Turkey as an open society. Many may see it as shift towards exclusion. *Erdogan's move cannot be seen in isolation. It reflects the increasing instrumentalisation of religion in order to solidify his populist support base. In fact, at a more general level, it symbolizes the rise of right-wing nationalism and religious chauvinism around the world today.* Religious conflicts are being increasingly weaponised by virulent nationalist forces to assert their political brand. It is a highly dangerous proposition as appeals to religion invariably create an opening for a more strident nationalism.

### **Where is Ehsanullah? Editorial, Dawn, 20 July<sup>16</sup>**

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1567281/religious-intolerance>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1569107/new-status-of-hagia-sophia>

It is curious that despite Ehsanullah Ehsan, former spokesman of the banned TTP and later its splinter group Jamaatul Ahrar, having engineered a miraculous 'escape' from the security agencies' custody in January, there seems no effort to recapture him. *In fact, the government has barely mentioned him at all except to confirm his flight, which Interior Minister Ijaz Shah undertook to do in the most offhand, cursory manner during a chat with journalists. Ehsan, meanwhile, does not appear to have opted for a low profile. A Twitter account reportedly used by him has been fairly active, and reflects the bloodthirsty mindset one would expect of his kind.* Among the more disturbing recent tweets from this account is a death threat against PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, *saying that the latter would meet the same fate as his mother, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.* That this mouthpiece of depraved terrorist organisations is able to roam free, apparently making his noxious ideas public and hurling threats against members of Pakistan's political class, is outrageous. *That the government believes it can remain tight-lipped about this issue is unacceptable. The public has a right to know more about the circumstances surrounding Ehsan's so-called escape.*

#### **SC's denunciation of NAB, Editorial, Dawn, 22 July<sup>17</sup>**

Those who run the National Accountability Bureau should hang their heads in shame — if they have any capacity for it. The anti-graft body has often been censured for its modus operandi but this time around, no less than the Supreme Court has excoriated its workings as being patently unlawful, unjust and in furtherance of a political agenda. *Authored by Justice Maqbool Baqar, the 87-page judgement in the Paragon City case describes the matter as "a classic example of trampling of fundamental rights, unlawful deprivation of freedom, and liberty and the complete disregard for human dignity as guaranteed by the Constitution".* The Supreme Court verdict reiterates that NAB's actions violate the principle of 'innocent until proven guilty', which is included in the UN charter of human rights. The bureau chairman's powers to arbitrarily carry out arrests have proved a convenient stick with which to beat the opposition and the odd recalcitrant journalist with. *Taking an individual into custody on allegations of corruption and keeping him there is a surefire way of destroying his reputation in the court of public opinion, even when evidence is flimsy or non-existent. The humiliation inflicted over the past few years by NAB on numerous bureaucrats who allegedly carried out illegal orders by 'corrupt' politicians, has rendered the bureaucracy virtually catatonic.*

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1570087/where-is-ehsanullah>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1570452/scs-denunciation-of-nab>

**Sleeper cells active again? Editorial, Dawn, 24 July<sup>18</sup>**

*The existence of sleeper cells is often the caveat to declarations about militancy having been eradicated.* That is especially the case in a complex urban scenario where violent extremism has spread its tentacles deep within society. Recent developments in Karachi appear to illustrate this phenomenon. On Wednesday, *Sindh Police's Counter Terrorism Department claimed it had arrested five men suspected of having links with the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, a sectarian outfit responsible for having murdered thousands of Shias across the country.* These individuals, according to the CTD, have revealed that four teams of hitmen had become active on the directions of two incarcerated LJ leaders who had told them to target religious personalities and policemen. *The detainees themselves are said to have 'confessed' to the murder of six people. A list of potential targets has allegedly also been recovered from them.* The claim about LJ leaders having issued orders from behind bars to their foot soldiers on the outside is a plausible one. While security features have been enhanced in Karachi's Central Jail, the main chink in the armour is not the infrastructure but the ill-paid human resource.

**Truth to Power, Najam Sethi, The Friday Times, 24 July<sup>19</sup>**

*The sudden "disappearance" and quick reappearance of journalist Matiullah Jan in the space of half a day merit closer examination to determine causes and consequences.* Mati, as he is fondly known, has rarely shied away from speaking truth to power. Mati's latest "crime" is to expose the attempt by the Miltriblishment to oust Supreme Court Judge Qazi Faez Isa a fierce defender of constitutional democracy for daring to criticize its unaccountable or unconstitutional actions in a couple of important cases. However, the kidnappers miscalculated on two fronts. *There was a huge outcry at home and abroad, the net result of it being to shift the spotlight from Mati's misfortune to the judiciary's independence and the state's accountability. More worrying for the plotters, Mati walked into the SC the next day, seemingly determined to stand his ground, an outcome that is exactly the opposite of what was premeditated.* The SC has adjourned the contempt indictment by two weeks because Mati has told the court he intends to contest it through a good lawyer instead of meekly admitting guilt and apologizing. To be sure, there will be a surplus of top lawyers lining up to defend him gratis. *The case is no longer about an objectionable tweet or*

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1570852/sleeper-cells-active-again>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/truth-to-power-2/>

*video, it has become a matter of free speech and fundamental rights under the constitution that will question the very bedrock of the law of contempt in relation to the conduct of the judiciary as it is practiced in Pakistan and elsewhere.*

## **PROVINCES & REGIONS**

### **Balochistan**

#### **Missing political approaches, Muhammad Amir Rana, Dawn, 12 July<sup>20</sup>**

*The recent upsurge in incidents of terrorist violence, mainly in Sindh and Balochistan, by violent ethno-nationalist groups has revealed two things. First, the threat of terrorism from both religiously inspired and nationalist groups persists. Secondly, the underlying factors of terrorism as well as conflict cannot be eliminated through force alone; it requires a holistic approach including political reconciliation and negotiation. In Balochistan, the state has largely tried cosmetic and half-hearted political options, which is why results have remained elusive. One reason for the state's reluctance to engage politically is related to the fear that a softer approach towards violent actors would be interpreted as the state's weakness. Critics of this attitude, however, argue that political engagement and negotiation will only earn the state the trust of the marginalized and aggrieved. While the nationalist insurgency in Sindh is not even considered a threat to national security, the one in Balochistan is assessed to be on a low to medium scale. In recent weeks, Sindh has emerged as a violent flashpoint after a long hiatus. Though no religiously inspired militant group was involved, violent Sindhi actors drew domestic and international attention by carrying out five attacks in June. The increasing capacity of such Sindh-based groups is also seen as a result of their nexus with Baloch insurgent groups. The government has also failed to address the genuine grievances of the people of Balochistan.*

#### **Baloch militancy trends, Tariq Parvez, Dawn, 25 July<sup>21</sup>**

The Baloch sub-nationalist terrorists demonstrated a greater degree of commitment and sophistication in attacks than before as indicated by the 29 June 2020 attack on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi with weapons and grenades. They had with them dried ration packs, indicating they intended to take over the place and hold people hostage before killing them. *A new trend in Baloch militancy i.e. a fundamental change in modus operandi in terrorist attacks.* Suicide bombing, the most common tactic of

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1568507/missing-political-approaches>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1570993>

religiously inspired militants, was never adopted by Baloch militants. *This has changed as Baloch militants have not only resorted to suicide bombings but also conducted more sophisticated attacks aimed at holding hostages, as in the attacks on the Chinese consulate (Karachi, 2018), PC Gwadar (2019) and PSX (2020). Some say the adoption of suicide bombing by Baloch militants is the direct outcome of the alleged policy of enforced disappearances and killing militants and then dumping their bodies by LEAs, besides reliance on excessive force.* That is not to deny that this fault line is exploited by India, Afghanistan and Iran who provide support to these militants. Another significant recent trend involves the effective leadership of Baloch sub-nationalist groups (BSNGs) *shifting from tribal sardars to the educated middle-class youth. We see this happening in the two most dangerous Baloch organisations, i.e. BLA and the Baloch Republican Army.* Also a new trend in Baloch militancy is the increased focus *on targeting Chinese premises and personnel, besides Pakistani state institutions and personnel. The status quo may lead to a reduction in terrorist attacks in the short run but would also add to the alienation of Baloch youth, driving them, in the long term, into the fold of those advocating lethal tactics.*

#### **Another Package for Balochistan, Editorial, Dawn, 27 July<sup>22</sup>**

*Every 'Balochistan development package' proposed by successive federal governments that has come to naught has only increased the sense of alienation among the Baloch.* Such declarations appear to them to be no more than an exercise periodically indulged in to give lip service to addressing the province's deprivation. On Friday, during a meeting of the National Development Council, Prime Minister Imran Khan set up a three-member committee to prioritize areas where development should be undertaken in Balochistan. *After decades of broken promises, political engineering and enforced disappearances, the trust deficit between the centre and the Baloch is vast.* One of their fundamental grievances is that Balochistan has been deprived of its fair share in the mineral wealth that lies beneath its land, and that it is exploited as a colony rather than treated as an equal member of the federation. *The province has indeed long been viewed through a narrow securitized lens, with its people's legitimate expectations being made to take a back seat to national geostrategic concerns. Such an environment has provided fertile ground for regional powers to make mischief and foment rebellion.* While the ongoing insurgency has been simmering since nearly a decade and a half, *recent attacks carried out by banned Baloch separatist outfits indicate they can still draw new recruits to their cause. These groups*

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1571360/another-package>

*are also manifesting a shift towards a more lethal modus operandi. To neutralize them ironically requires not a security-centric but a political solution, one rooted in a rights-based approach that prioritizes the aspirations of the Baloch.*

## GB

### **Political landscape of GB, Muhammad Amir Rana, Dawn, 26 July<sup>23</sup>**

*Political parties in GB are not happy with the decision of postponing the election by the GB Election Commission and view the move with suspicion. They declared that the commission needed to delay the election for at least two months so that appropriate arrangements could be made. There is a popular perception that another king's party is in the making and the election schedule will not be announced until the ongoing process of political engineering is complete. Some political observers in GB also see a bigger design behind the delay of the electoral process and link it to a major constitutional shift for the region. Many in GB believe, the process of forming a king's party has been accelerated during the last few weeks. Electable and strong candidates from the PPP, PML-N, Tehreek-e-Jafria and JUI-F are 'joining' the PTI. Though it yet remains to be seen how the incoming heavyweights will make a difference for the PTI, political maneuvering is already sending a negative message to the people of GB, which is a politically sensitive region. It is not sure on what grounds and with what manifesto the PTI will contest the election in GB. The corruption mantra will not be an attractive one in a region that has very limited financial resources and control. Secondly, identity is a major issue for the people of the region, and it is linked with the political grievances of the people. Development and a proper share in CPEC is the second major demand of the people of GB.*

### **GB's status, Editorial, Dawn, 30 June<sup>24</sup>**

The people of Gilgit-Baltistan have for long been denied full rights as citizens of Pakistan thanks largely to the power games being played in South Asia, particularly the Kashmir dispute. *Various governments over the decades have come up with 'packages' to bring GB closer to the Pakistani mainstream, and while progress has been made, the people of this geographically stunning and geostrategic region yearn for more namely full integration with Pakistan.* Those who control GB's destiny in Islamabad must listen to these voices and resolve the region's issues through democratic means, instead of cracking down and imposing orders in colonial fashion. As it is, nationalist parties are

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1571211/political-landscape-of-gb>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1571918/gbs-status>

gaining ground in the region and unless GB is given genuine reforms instead of lollipops, the sense of alienation amongst local people may grow. *We have witnessed the follies of a rigid approach in Balochistan as well as erstwhile Fata. Locals resent the fact that the unelected GB Council has more powers than the elected legislative assembly. This anomaly must be rectified while the recommendations of the Sartaj Aziz-led commission, which called for giving GB provisional provincial status, should be implemented.*

## URDU MEDIA

**Imran still has some time, Abdul Qadir Hasan, Roznama Express, 01 July<sup>25</sup>**

Whoever is responsible for the inflation in Pakistan, it is creating troubles for Imran Khan's to continue as the Prime Minister. High costs of basic commodities have made them unable to meet their daily requirements. The Government has failed to curb the inflation. Shopkeepers do not follow any guideline issued by the Government. These guidelines keep changing every next day. The language used by the Government about the matter is technical and incomprehensible to the common man. *Imran Khan has appointed inexperienced and unelected people to the top financial posts. They have not lived upto the expectations. They do not seem to be capable of delivering. These people should be called "ministers of recovery" who are working to meet the demands of international money lenders (yeh log woozaraye wasooli kehlaye jane chaye jin ka farz aur duty sirf yeh hai ki who en alami sahookaroon ke mutalibat purey karte rahein).* Surprisingly, the people, who used to call taking loans from outsiders unacceptable, are borrowing freely from foreign lenders. Though not a single penny reaches to the people, they are made to pay back these loans. The Government is selling local factories instead of running them. *Prime Minister Khan tries to address the issues but his team does stand by him. For the last one and half year, the finance ministry has not unfolded a single policy that would have helped in stabilizing the economy. It seems that no one in the Government understands economics.* Anyways, if Imran Khan wants to continue as the Prime Minister of the country for next three years, he needs to stabilize the economy. Otherwise he is going to meet the same fate that his predecessors have in the past.

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<sup>25</sup>[https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107552548&Issue=NP\\_I SB&Date=](https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107552548&Issue=NP_I SB&Date=)

**Our beloved Prime Minister has wasted our last 22 months**  
Arshad Bhatti, *Jang*, 02 July<sup>26</sup>

Mafias in Pakistan are Prime Minister Imran Khan's favorite topic. *He keeps repeating that his mission is to eliminate the mafias.* But he has done nothing so far to take them on. In his 22-months rule, some leaders were arrested but they all are now free on bail, except Hamza Sharif. *It has been proved that Abdul Razaq Dawood, Nadeem Babar, and Khusro Bakhtiar were involved in the power scandal, but they are all in the cabinet of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Leaders like Jahangir Tareen are free as well.* Imran Khan attacked the sugar mafia in the country and said that these people use their mills to convert black money into white. But one of the important members of the sugar mafia is Jahangir Tareen and he is roaming free, living in his palatial farmhouse in London. *Imran Khan has, time and again, said that there is a mafia in the media also. We have been consistently asking him please expose those people. There is no response from him.* Our beloved Prime Minister has lost his fight against all these mafias. They are deciding things and prices on their own terms. *Imran fought with locusts, but they destroyed crops in 50 districts. Imran Khan fought with the mafias to rescue Pakistan's economy, but the economy is doing badly. Now people have to make up their minds about him. When he says that "even if I were to be removed as the Prime Minister, no NRO will be issued to anybody", we are forced to say: "Our beloved Prime Minister, we wish you would not have not wasted our 22 months!"*

**"Minus-one" again... why?** Shafiq Awan, *Daily Khabrain*, 05 July<sup>27</sup>

The word "minus-one" keeps resurfacing in Pakistani politics. Once a beloved is declared a snake in the sleeves as soon s/he falls out of favour. *The forces that keep experimenting with selecting politicians are not competent enough to select a good leader to lead the country. They keep failing in the job.* The "minus-one" formula has a tradition in Pakistan. The Quaid, Muhammad Ali Jinnah perhaps was removed by using the formula. After the Quaid, Liaquat Ali Khan was removed by the same policy. Then Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged. Muhammad Khan Junejo was sent packing by the same forces that had brought him in. Nawaz Sharif was patronised before he was to be removed by the same formula. Benazir Bhutto was given a chance but soon she had to be removed. *Zafarullah Jamali, Shaukat Aziz, Yousuf Reza Gilani and then Nawaz Sharif again were first approved and appointed to the job and later removed by the "minus-one" formula. Imran Khan was raised with*

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<sup>26</sup>[https://jang.com.pk/news/790907?\\_ga=2.16011890.555156590.1593674406-1172285561.1585539487](https://jang.com.pk/news/790907?_ga=2.16011890.555156590.1593674406-1172285561.1585539487)

<sup>27</sup> <https://dailykhabrain.com.pk/2020/07/05/211973/>

*a lot of fanfare to the position that he fought for 22 years. But he has also failed to deliver and now the talk is his time is up as well. Imran Khan seems to become the latest target and that too just in two years after he became the Prime Minister. He is facing many problems, as the Prime Minister and as the leader of PTI within the party. He is surrounded by incompetent people and his government has failed to live upto the expectations.* The gardener (the establishment) is unhappy because one of the ministers who, just to show how candid he was in his job, damaged the image of PIA by disclosing vital information about fake licenses issued to some pilots. It is being reported that the captain is trying to save the minister.

### **Has Karachi no one to take care? Editorial, Ummat, 08 July<sup>28</sup>**

At a time when most of the countries across the world have been focused on development of their cities and have been able to create good infrastructure in their respective countries, our cities are facing the same old development issues. *There is not even a proper drainage system that would have helped in avoiding water logging during the rainy season. It rained for one hour on Tuesday and all the roads in Karachi were under water.* Two days before the rain, the provincial minister Nasir Shah had claimed that all drains had been repaired and there are no issues with the drainage system in the most populated city of Pakistan. But the one hour long rain has exposed all the claims of the Government. Across the world, municipalities are responsible for maintaining the drainage system and cleanness of the cities. In Sindh, all institutions and municipalities are centralized. *It was expected that the PPP Government would deliver in these areas. But for the last 13 years, no progress was made. The condition of Karachi is in front of our eyes. On the other hand, power cuts and high rates are daily issues in the city. No efforts have been made to address these matters, giving the Karachiite tough times in the hot summer.* The K-electric is like the cow, whose front half is with the Government and back half is with Abraaj Capital, which reaps all benefits; the federal government supplies the feed and the Karachiite suffer in such a system.

### **Accountability and the challenges, Editorial, Ummat, 09 July<sup>29</sup>**

The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Gulzar Ahmed has expressed his concern over the pending NAB cases. He has asked for setting up 120 new accountability courts so that the pending cases would be concluded soon. The Chief Justice also advised that the pending corruption cases should be

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<sup>28</sup> <http://ummat.net/2020/07/08/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

<sup>29</sup> <http://ummat.net/2020/07/09/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

decided in three months' time. For the benefit of the country and the people of the country, the suggestions of the Chief Justice need to be implemented. *No country can progress without holding powerful people accountable for what they have done. Pakistan was created in the name of Islam. Unfortunately, the Shariah was never brought in the country (Pakistan Islam ke naam per bana hai lekin bud-kismati se yahan ab tak shariat ka nifaz khwaab hi hai).* Instead of that, the laws made by the British were continued. Accountability courts were created to hold corrupt people accountable. But because of the legalities of the accountability process, the cases go on for years. It would have been better were the cases concluded as soon as possible. But that is not the case in Pakistan. Finally, the Chief Justice has risen to the occasion and issued some orders in that regard. *His suggestions need to be taken seriously and acted upon. The Supreme Court should take further steps and make all accountability courts model courts. The accountability courts should be advised to conclude the cases as soon as possible without any delay. It is the Government's responsibility to carry out accountability fairly.*

**“Minus-one”, Imran Khan and the opposition, Muhammad Nawaz Raza, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 12 July<sup>30</sup>**

It is said that the “minus-one” formula was invented by the “establishment”. It entered into Pakistani politics first when Benazir Bhutto was targeted as the Prime Minister. Later Nawaz Sharif was to be targeted. *It is true that the formula has never been used to remove “number one” from his/her position. In 2014, Imran Khan tried hard to remove Nawaz Sharif through the “minus-one” formula but to no avail. Again in October 2019, Maulana Fazlur Rehman organized mass protests to apply pressure on the “establishment” to remove Imran Khan by the “minus-one” formula. Nothing was achieved.* The issue of “minus-one” has come up again. There is no context: no protest on the roads or any revolt within the PTI. Some ally partners of the government were not happy with the Imran led government. But they were easily convinced by Prime Minister Imran Khan. Why has the question risen in the first place? *It seems the possibility emerged after BNP-M had withdrawn its support and PML-Q was not present at the pre-budget dinner. However, the speech by the Prime Minister at the pre-budget dinner made the passage of the budget easy. In his post-budget speech, Imran Khan was aggressive and targeted the opposition saying that it would not be easy to replace him.* The number of MNA supporting the Prime Minister is 180 and 172 is the magic number to stay in power.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2020-07-12/page-6/detail-6>

**PTI and JIT, Saleem Safi, Jang, 15 July<sup>31</sup>**

Imran Khan's policies might have failed, but *he has succeeded in diverting people's attention away from real issues by targeting opposition leaders. His government is now focusing on Kashmir and the CPEC. This government has so far dealt with the CPEC exactly like it had handled Peshawar's BRT, the Kashmir issue and the PIA.* The latest success of the government has been to force Sindh government to make the JITs reports public. However, it has failed to deal with the pandemic. The power issue in Karachi has been pushed under the carpet. The budget presented by the government was the worst in Pakistan's history. But it has ensured that we forget all this and see JIT report everywhere. *It is pertinent to ask here: what new information the JIT reports have brought to light? There is nothing in it which was not already known whether it is Uzair Baloch's criminal record or Altaf Hussain's role in making Karachi hell. Federal Minister Ali Zaidi is targeting the Sindh government for releasing the wrong report. The reality is that, both the reports the one that is with Ali Zaidi and the other released by the Sindh government have one thing in common: Dr Zulfikar Mirza was patronizing Uzair Baloch. But Ali Zaidi does not like this, because for him, Dr Zulfikar is a hero.*

**Construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam, Editorial, Daily Pakistan, 17 July<sup>32</sup>**

While laying the foundation stone for the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam, Prime Minister Imran Khan said that it would be the biggest dam in Pakistan. The dam would help in developing Gilgit-Baltistan, he added. He said in the past wrong decisions were taken. The construction of the dam would not only give free electricity to the people in the area but also would be harmless to the environment. *Diamer Bhasha Dam will be completed in 2028-29. It would be a multipurpose dam, producing electricity and would irrigate a huge area; it would create many job opportunities and also would increase the age of Tarbela Dam in KP.* Till now only claims were made but no action was taken. It is a fact that hydroelectricity still remains the cheapest, costing only 3 rupees per unit. *But in Pakistan no big dam was constructed after Tarbela Dam. Instead, a lot of attention was given to thermal electricity which was costly. Pakistan's preferences in electricity production have always been wrong. When agreements were signed with independent power producers, hue and cry was raised to oppose them. Later, despite signing the agreements, there was no relief from load shedding. Starting work on Diamer Bhasha Dam has raised a lot of hopes.* It is expected that it would be

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<sup>31</sup> <https://jang.com.pk/news/796512>

<sup>32</sup> <https://dailypakistan.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-07-17/page-9/detail-0>

completed on time so that consumers would get some relief from the costs of electricity.

**Imran starts new “political inning”, Muhammad Akram Chaudhry, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 19 July<sup>33</sup>**

Prime Minister Imran Khan has started his new inning. He has crushed all hopes of the opposition. *Out of desperation, in response to Imran’s inning, Ahsan Iqbal has raised the slogan of “Punjab bachao”. Imran Khan has learnt in his two years’ experience as being the Prime Minister that whatever the consequences, all decisions would be taken that are in the national interest. PML-Q would have to mend its way. There is no good news for PML-N either: many of its leaders may switch over to PTI.* Imran Khan should work by breaking the traditional ways ruling the country: he was voted to power for that purpose. Ahsan Iqbal’s “Punjab bachao” slogan is misguided. PML-N is responsible for the debts that Punjab suffers. No loans were taken by Imran Khan. Instead of apologizing for his party’s crimes, Ahsan Iqbal talks about Punjab bachao. Some may raise the question that true PML-N and PPP might have failed, but what has PTI done? *The answer to the question is that it is not possible to clear the mess created for years would be cleared in such a short period of time. The PTI led government is trying to provide quality governance which appears harsh to the people.* The rise of the prices of electricity and telephone bills has two aspects. One is to help these departments to come out of the crisis they are facing. People should not hesitate to contribute to that cause. Second, at many places though are meters installed, but there are no TVs. In such places there is no reason to impose PTV taxes. PTV should bear the responsibility. PTV can make money by broadcasting news and other resources. It needs to improve its efficiency by covering the large Pakistani market.

**Dual citizenship and the government position, Editorial, *Jang*, 20 July<sup>34</sup>**

According to the report made public by the government itself, seven out of the 15 special assistants to the Prime Minister have dual citizenship. *It is a matter of concern because one and half year ago the top court of the country had said in a judgment that appointment of people with dual citizenship for top government posts was a security.* The two judge bench of the Supreme Court had banned appointment of the people with dual citizenship for government offices. According to the source from the cabinet division, the seven special assistants to the Prime Minister (SAPM) were appointed after the Supreme Court passed the judgement. *Government is the protector of the constitution and upholder of the law. Therefore, if the government has violated the important judgment of the Supreme Court it is unacceptable. The government should not have appointed people with dual citizenship to the important positions and also should have brought in a law in this regard, as was*

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-07-19/page-3/detail-0>

<sup>34</sup> <https://jang.com.pk/news/798731>

*directed by the court. The government's inaction in this regard implies that it does not respect the court's judgments. The disregard becomes clear from the statement of a SAPM that the Prime Minister has decided to bring the people with dual citizenship into mainstream politics of Pakistan. He would field them as candidates of his party in the next national assembly elections in the country.* Even if that was the thinking of the government, it should have filed a petition in the court in this regard. Meanwhile the report of the government also dives details of the property and assets of the SAPMs. Given the scale of the assets, they need to be investigated. Action needs to be taken on the court's judgment on the appointment of the people with dual citizenship for the government positions.

**Government's undemocratic behaviour towards the opposition, Muzamil Suherwardy, Roznama Express, 28 July<sup>35</sup>**

Talks are going on between the government and the opposition on amending the NAB ordinance. On this at least the government and the opposition are working together is a good sign for democracy. *One of the biggest problems with Imran Khan is that he has closed all doors to consult the opposition. The only agenda of his cabinet, headed by Murad Saeed, is to target the opposition. For the last two years, Imran Khan tried everything to run the government without consulting the opposition.* He adopted the way of ordinances and reduced the parliament to nothing. Most of the opposition leaders were sent to jail. However, the opposition has played a constructive role during all this. They tried to debate and cooperate with the government. *In case of the NFC also, the government tried to create an environment of tension with the provinces. When the opposition took the matter to the court, the government had no option but to take back the notification. Similarly on the Coronavirus pandemic: The conference of the parliamentarians, called by the speaker of the National Assembly, was attended by Prime Minister Imran Khan but he did not listen to the opposition's views. One reason given for the attitude of the government is that it is supported by the "powerful forces" and the government knows that if it is in trouble, it would be salvaged.* For example, opposition leaders were ready to cooperate in amending the Army Act but the government was keen to ignore the opposition. Now when talks are going on about the NAB ordinance and FATF, it appears that the Prime Minister is staying away from them. Someone should tell the government that by adopting this attitude, you are harming the country's interests.

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<sup>35</sup>[https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107621716&Issue=NP\\_ISB&Date=20200728](https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1107621716&Issue=NP_ISB&Date=20200728)

### Two SAPMs resign, Editorial, Jang, 31 July<sup>36</sup>

The resignations of the two special assistants to the Prime Minister are seen differently in different sections in the country. *Some say they resigned because of the severe criticism that they hold dual citizenship. Some are of the view that they had to leave because of the ongoing tussle between the elected and non-elected cabinet members of the Imran Khan led government. Others opine that it was due to them not meeting expectations of the government that they were sent packing. Still others see the resignations in the context of the remarks of the top court of the country.* All the same, two SAPMs have resigned. Their resignations imply that Imran Khan is thinking about national interests. The special assistant on health, Dr Zafar Mirza said in his tweet that the personal criticism of his role as the advisor pushed him to take the tough decision. The assistant on “digital Pakistan”, Tania Aidrus was upset over the criticism on her dual citizenship which raised questions on her role as the head of the digital Pakistan plan. Tania said that, whether part of the government or not, she would continue to support Prime Minister Imran Khan’s vision for “New Pakistan”. Some say that Tania could not give satisfactory answers to the questions raised on the Digital Foundation Pakistan (DFP).

## ELECTRONIC MEDIA

### Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, PML-Q & its Position, Geo News, 01 July<sup>37</sup>

The discussion started with Bilawal’s hint that a no-trust motion may be tabled against NA Speaker, and his allegation that the government wants to murder former president Asif Ali Zardari and also dwelt on Pervez Elahi’s opposition to construction of a Hindu temple in Islamabad out of government’s funds. Dr Mohammad Shabaz Gill, PM's special assistant on political communication on this episode underlined that the PTI government *had successfully passed the budget in the national assembly which meant that the PTI-led government enjoyed the confidence of the house; hence, talking about no-confidence by the opposition does not make sense. He added the NA speaker was sitting there, because he had the required number of votes, and if they can bring someone else with majority support, it was*

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<sup>36</sup>[https://jang.com.pk/news/803622?\\_ga=2.225969759.496474709.1596004848-1172285561.1585539487](https://jang.com.pk/news/803622?_ga=2.225969759.496474709.1596004848-1172285561.1585539487)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-b3NoxEfnQM>

welcome. Chaudary Pervez Elahi, PML-Q: Opposed the construction of a new Hindu temple dedicated to Krishan in Islamabad by the government and in a TV interview underlined, *“Pakistan jo Islam ke naam par vojod mai aya tha, aur iske darul hokomat Islamabad mai naya Mandir banana, na sirf islam ke rooh k khilaf hai, balki Riyast medina ka toheen hai”* (Pakistan that is formed in the name Islam, and to construct a new temple in the capital of the country Islamabad is against the core of Islam and Riyasat medina) He further added that he had no objection to the government repairing old temples but building new temples militated against the spirit of Islam. Suhail Waraich, senior columnist said that of late *PML-Q had injected rightist and religious ideology into its identity*. He pointed out that they had even given a statement in favour of Tabligi Jammatt during the CoVID crisis and that the *Muslim Leagues has traditionally relied on the vote bank of conservative right wing people and perhaps they are trying to recapture it. Or else, they might be wanting to maintain their distance with the PM and PTI, so that it would be easier for them to withdraw their support, in case a new alternative springs up in the horizon.*

**Najam Sethi Show, Government cancels License of 24 News: Media under duress, 24 News, 06 July<sup>38</sup>**

The government cancelled the licenses of Channel 24 and its sister networks on Friday and the more than one thousand employees of the channel are protesting all over the country. In Lahore, there was *lathi* charge on the protesting employees injuring several of them; in Islamabad, PEMRA security guards also fired on the protestors.

**Q: What can PTI government achieve by suppressing the media?**

**A:** It is all happening under a plan, first to harass the opposition through NAB and send them to jails, second because the media broadcast the opposition voice and also criticizes the *government's works, they have now decided to control or manage the media*. When the judiciary supports such autocratic moves, then people have started doubting their intentions too. This is not the first time they are closing down a channel, it has been done at least twice in the past. We will again go to the court as in the past for judicial relief but the point is that a hostile environment has been formed and the clashes will increase. *It has also happened with Geo channel. 80% of the media is managed by the government and censored. Not only TV channels, the social media is also being controlled using cyber-crime laws. A list has been prepared to target select journalists and it is being circulated on whatsapp.* The PM has made personal issues with some anchors and therefore many of them have started their own YouTube channels because they cannot talk

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAPIFkykawQ>

openly on the TV. The PTI government has become aggressive because now they are realizing that *minus one ka silsila shuru ho gaya hai* (they have realized the process of minus one has started).

**Q: Is it not time that the media fraternity should act united against the government's anti-media policies?**

**A:** It so happens that the enemy always exploits division among the opponents, and the present government is applying the principle of divide and rule policy. The government should understand that it will need the opposition and media to be on its side when an international crisis arises. Similarly, it cannot afford to lose their support while dealing with internal crises too. The failure of COVID policy is an example (federal vs. province). Senior leader PPP Senator Sherry Rehman tweeted condemning the attack on protestors. *Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain, head of PML -Q wrote a letter to PM Imran Khan criticizing the move to suppress the media and is against the ethics.*

**Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, PTI's New JIT Report 2.0: Uzair Baloch Case, ARYNews, 07 July<sup>39</sup>**

Minister for Shipping and Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi on 07 July 2020 alongside Information Minister Shibli Faraz at a press conference in Islamabad *presented a separate report in which they alleges that a second part of the JIT report on Uzair Baloch has been concealed by the Sindh government due to the involvement of names of ministers in the case.* The main highlights of the report by the Shipping Minister are: *"The JIT report has two parts, first primarily deals with hard core criminal activities carried out by the accused and his accomplices, whereas the second part of the JIT report deals with criminal activities involving political figures. Though these two parts and their activities are intermingled and overlapping, however due to obvious implications. It stressed that this need to be further probed as Part II of the report is being kept confidential and not released or published by the Sindh government"*. This report further names politicians and political affiliations related to the UB case. Kashif Abbasi underlines that the JIT released by Sindh government has seven signatures on the other hand the Second Part of the JIT released by Ali Zaidi has four signatures. *He asks are these two JITs right or one of them is wrong?* Waseem Badami on this episode as a guest underlines that the Sindh government seems very confident about their JIT report with all the required signs but if the new JIT by Ali Zaidi is correct then it is really problematic especially for PPP and Sindh government. He stresses that we can ignore the fact that Uzair Baloch

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw7TKTnVafw>

had links with Zulfikar Mirza of the PPP the then home minister of Sindh who openly owned the Aman committee. Nasir Hussain Shah, PPP: *Dusre report ka tu ilam nahi hai* (we do not know about a second report) but the report brought by Ali Zaidi is incomplete without required signatures aur *ye ek safad joot hai*. He asks what the authentication of this report is.

### **Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Disappointment within PTI members & workers on a rise** *Geo News, 08 July*<sup>40</sup>

Hamid Mir underlines that it has been observed that there is an increasing disappointment within the members of PTI national and provincial assemblies and the within media analysts related to PTI. *Ye baldti howi mayosi bada aham ho gaya hai* (it is necessary to address the increasing disappointment). In Karachi **Amir Liyaqat Hussain**, PTI, member National Assembly has criticized the Federal Minister for Energy, **Omar Ayub Khan** and said, “Pakistan ka sab se batameez minister hai, Omar Ayub Khan, jo ke hamare he party mai hai” (One of the most ill-mannered ministers of Pakistan, who is in our party). He alleged that the minister refused to owe the K-electricals and any issues related to electricity in Karachi. *PTI mai kali bade gusse howe hai, jin k wajah se Khan sab ko taklif pohunch rahi hai* (There are black wolves within PTI due to whom, PM is suffering) and where should we the MNA’s of Karachi go with our issues, he asked in front of media. Senior journalist Chowdhary Ghulam Hussain, who has for a long time advocated Imran Khan openly has now blamed that in Punjab the officers are appointed giving bribe of three crore Rupees. *He has stressed that the PTI government should set an inquiry commission on this issue*. Usman Buzdar, CM Punjab requested for an interview with Kamran Khan on his programme but at the last moment the CM refused to be part of the show.

### **Hard Talk Pakistan with Dr Moeed Pirzada, PTI the most corrupt government in the history of Pakistan, 92News, 13 July**<sup>41</sup>

Dr Peerzada began by saying that **Bilawal Bhutto** underlined in his interaction with media that PTI government is the most *corrupt government in the history of Pakistan* and that Ali Zaidi, Home Minister, runs Imran Khan’s kitchen (*Ali Zaidi, PM ka kitchen chalate hai*). **Muraad Syeed of PTI** responded few minutes later that *Farzand-e-Zardari corruption ki baat kar raha tha, inke abu ke upar kitne corruption ke cases hain* (Son of Zardari is now talking about corruption cases. Doesn’t he know how many corruption cases are filed against his father?). *Farzand-e-Zardari aur Ayan Ali ke ticket*

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdNhc-egOcc>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2CIwlmM0Rc>

*ke paise bhi ek hi account se aya tha* [The money for both Bilawal Zardari and Ayan Ali (*the famous model arrested for money laundering*) came from the same account.] The host underlined that the bottom line was that Bilawal Bhutto had taken a very hard stance against the PTI government for quite some time and one of the main ingredient of his stance included the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. **Sabir Shakir, senior journalist & Columnist** said that the opposition has disappeared (*opposition gayab hai*) at this time and there is no unity amongst opposition forces. He argued that Bilawal Bhutto was trying his best to fill the vacuum, but he would not be able to make any impact. He pointed out that Bilawal had asked the PTI government to sit and talk, and his inference was that *backdoor mein kuchh aur baat kar rahe hain, aur camera pe aa ke kuchh aur baat kar rahe hain. (In his backdoor communication with the government, they are talking something and in front of camera they are saying something else)*. **Mubasher Lucman, Political analyst** said that NAB had pasted a notice in front of Bilawal House and Nawaz Sharif's house, *aur jab NAB harkat mein aati hai tau Bilawal, aur Shehbaz Sharif sab ek dum active ho jate hain* (When NAB is in motion, both Bilawal and Shehbaz Sharif become active).

**Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, Special Assistants of PM (SAPM's): Issues & legalities, ARYNews, 20 July<sup>42</sup>**

PM Imran Khan when he was in opposition has stated that the Pakistani's whose house and property are in foreign land should sell them and come back to Pakistan if they want to serve the country, he said, *Pakistan ko aise siyasadano ki zarurat hai jo apne kishtiya jala key aye, jis ka jeena marna Pakistan mai hia wahi politics kare* (Pakistan needs politicians who can burn the v bridges and come back to Pakistan and do politics here, who can live and die in Pakistan). He also said that people with dual nationalities should not sit in the parliament and or get any government posts. The anchor drawing a contrast to PM's earlier statements draws attention to the special assistants of PM who mostly are green card holders and has residency of foreign lands. The anchor asks: Should foreign nationals be in the cabinet or appointed as special assistants? The guests are Fawad Chaudary, PTI & Mohammad Zubair, PML-Fawad **Chaudary**: The structure of parliamentary form of government allows them to be a part of the decision making but they have no right to decide. *SAPM's are defecto part of parliament and it has to been seen what the Supreme Court decides about the legality of it. He underlines that when a defecto becomes minster then it's problematic.* The anchor argues that there should be a clear cut decisions on the SAPM's like

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIvNSHqfgG8>

India did, they did not allow them to be a part of the parliament, and there should be a clear cut decision on this in Pakistan too. *Fawad informs that personally he agrees to what PM said about them while he was in the opposition. Mohammad Zubair: Over a period of time the distinction between SAPM's and ministry of states has been blurred.* They are appointed as head of a particular division and as a head they are taking decisions every day. It is the responsibilities that matter, everything does not come in the parliament for approval, the SAPM's take decisions on their own every day. *The SAPM's were directed to declare their assets now by the PM, but the question is why they were exempted to hide their assets till now? They have been living in Pakistan and at least they could have declared their assets/income in the FBR.*

**Najam Sethi Show, Tahafuz-e-Bunyad-e-Islam bill: A bill to protect Islam & prohibit blasphemy, 24 News, 27 July<sup>43</sup>**

The Punjab assembly had unanimously passed a bill recently that aims to protect Islam and prohibit blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad and the holy figures of all religions. The PML-Q leader and Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervez Elahi also stressed that *a bill of the "same nature" should be passed by all provincial assemblies. In addition to this, after this bill was passed the momentum on banning books too has gained in the country.* This bill gives the Directorate General Public Relations (DGPR) powers to visit and inspect any printing press, publication house, book store and confiscate any book, before or after printing. Sethi underlines that the way this bill was brought in a haze overnight and passed without questioning is problematic and shows when it comes to religion no one dares to ask any question. *He predicts that since it will take another two years to form laws for the bill and also because the governor of Punjab will not sign the bill, this bill will be shelved without any implementation but the Chaudhary's will show at least they tried and gain sympathy.*

## BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

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

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
<b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)</b>				

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mt-jaSGdBZM>

Khurram <sup>44</sup>	01/07/2020	Five more killed as clashes in Khurram continue	05	35
North Waziristan <sup>45</sup>	12/07/2020	4 Pakistan Army soldiers martyred in intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan: ISPR	04	0
Bajaur <sup>46</sup>	17/07/2020	Pakistani civilians & troops killed in Afghanistan cross-border firing	03	07
Parachinar <sup>47</sup>	24/07/2020	17 injured as blast rips through crowded market in Parachinar	00	17
Peshawar <sup>48</sup>	29/07/2020	Blasphemy accused gunned down inside courtroom at Peshawar Judicial Complex	01	00
<b>Balochistan</b>				
Quetta <sup>49</sup>	13/07/2020	Religious leader shot dead in Panjgur.	01	01

<sup>44</sup><https://www.dawn.com/news/1566223/five-more-killed-as-clashes-in-kurram-continue>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1568576>

<sup>46</sup><https://dailytimes.com.pk/641974/pakistani-civilians-troops-killed-in-afghanistan-cross-border-firing/>

<sup>47</sup><https://dailytimes.com.pk/644889/17-injured-as-blast-rips-through-crowded-market-in-parachinar/>

<sup>48</sup><https://www.dawn.com/news/1571793/blasphemy-accused-gunned-down-inside-courtroom-at-peshawar-judicial-complex>

<sup>49</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2235824/1-five-killed-quetta-armed-clash/>

Turbat <sup>50</sup>	26/07/2020	Soldier martyred in terror attack in Balochistan	01	03
<b>Gilgit Baltistan (GB)</b>				
Chilas <sup>51</sup>	18/07/2020	5 CTD soldiers martyred during an operation in Chilas	05	05

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<sup>50</sup><https://dailytimes.com.pk/646000/soldier-martyred-in-terror-attack-in-balochistan/>

<sup>51</sup><https://dailytimes.com.pk/647081/5-ctd-soldiers-martyred-during-an-operation-in-chilas/>