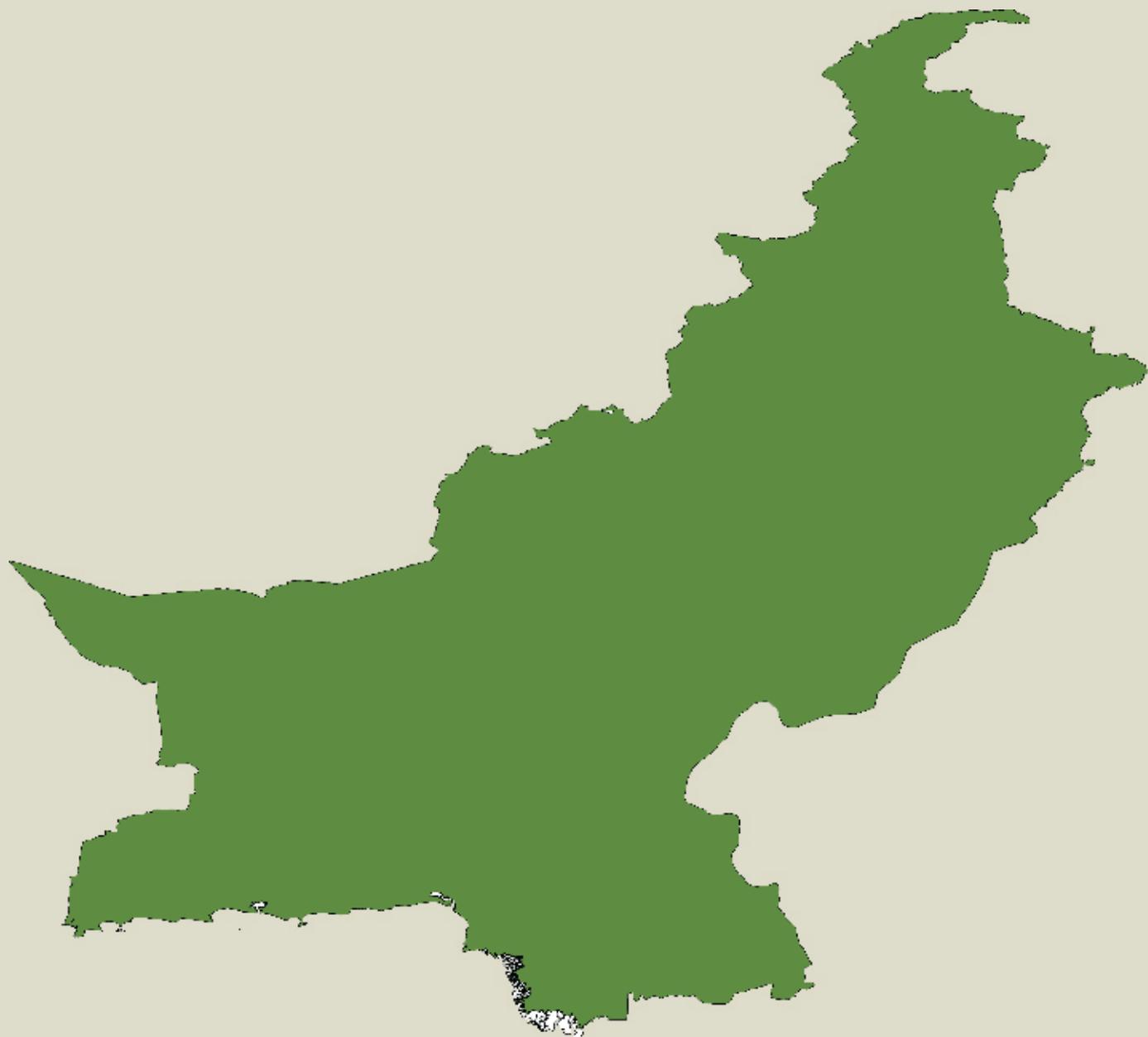


May 2019

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



Prepared by
Dr. Zainab Akhter
Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir
Dr. Mohammad Eisa
Dr. Ashok Behuria

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, May 2019

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Is PML-N ready for a showdown? Arifa Noor, Dawn, 07 May¹

*Or perhaps it shows the party's second tier is capable of a healthy discussion once the Sharif's are not present to impose a single view on them all. If, before the elections, they were all silenced into the defiance chosen by Nawaz Sharif, post elections, the younger brother had convinced them of the need to be more practically quiet. But once Shahbaz Sharif wasn't there, they were willing to discuss the need for a different, noisier strategy. The party also announced a new organizational structure. And the PML-N continues to be under siege. The family head has been struggling with legal cases since before the elections, but now the second tier is also about to be sucked into the accountability maelstrom – while Saad Rafique is already in jail. The National Accountability Bureau is questioning Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Khawaja Asif, and Ahsan Iqbal is next according to some reports. There are also rumours of inquiries against Marriyum Aurangzeb and Rana Sanaullah. **Can we all stop using 'deal' without really mulling over what it may mean under the present circumstances? Any understanding between the Sharif's and the powers that be will not be as formal as the last time around.***

Are the Chinese safe in Pakistan? Ejaz Hussain, Daily Times, 21 May²

In the wake of the terror attack on the PC Hotel in Gwadar, the Chinese media and commercial circles seem concerned regarding the state of security in Balochistan which is witnessing the fifth wave of Baloch insurgency. Though the Chinese government and the state media showed restraint in terms of adherence to bilateral cordiality and consolidation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), certain social and corporate community did raise eyebrows over this second attack within short period near the Gwadar Port- which has, over the years, attracted huge Chinese investment, and workforce and policy attention. **Are the Chinese companies and workforce working on CPEC really threatened in Pakistan which is termed friendly by their government? How is the general security situation in Pakistan and in what ways can it impact CPEC and the BRI in particular and the China-Pakistan relations, in general?** A considerable section of the Chinese workforce is engaged in Gwadar where major projects in infrastructure and energy are underway. The Pakistani authorities, being aware of restive security situation particularly in Balochistan and generally in rest of the country, establish a security regime to safeguard the Chinese manpower from mostly internal threats. In order to improve the collective security within its territory, Pakistani authorities would have to

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1480803/is-pml-n-ready-for-a-showdown>

² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/397860/are-the-chinese-safe-in-pakistan/>

tackle this monster of terrorism on multiple levels. Strategically, the country needs to engage with its neighbors meaningfully. Here, China can play a role by encouraging regional cooperation and peace. Indeed, the trilateral Afghan peace process is a step in the right direction. *Moreover, China-Iran-Pakistan trilateral engagement carries the potential to devise a collective response to anti-peace elements in the South Asian region. Importantly, China may also convince India in a manner that reduces strategic uncertainty.*

Opposition's u-turn on Asad Umar, Ikram Sehgal, Daily Times, 24 May³

Instead of settling down to focus on the more serious matters affecting the country the Opposition seems to be working on a single agenda, to try and remove PTI govt by hook or by crook by still using whatever tactics at their disposal by spreading fabrication, lies and falsehood with persistence, aided and abetted by a section of the media that kowtows to the Opposition for its own interest, including financial rewards. They are desperate because the NAB is closing in on them through an anti-corruption web. The Opposition's personalized attacks are not based on facts but aim to save their leaders' skins, all will go to jail in some of the many cases NAB has against them. While it is the job of any mature Opposition to hold the govt accountable to the public, it must be seen to be acting as such. *In a democracy the opposition represents an alternate govt responsible for not only challenging govt policies but also producing alternative policies where appropriate. Unfortunately our Opposition is striving to reach a minimum common agenda serving their motivated interests only, their only aim is to avoid jail, and it has nothing to do with national interest.* Going to the IMF had become absolutely necessary but with mischievous rumours floating around the situation has become murkier.

³ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/399729/oppositions-u-turn-on-asad-umar/>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

IMF negotiations, Nadir Cheema, Dawn, 02 May⁴

In principle, this adjustment could be accomplished via cuts in core government expenditure, but there is less fat here than is generally believed. Much of the adjustment burden will still need to fall on revenues. Pakistan does not have any material foreign exchange buffers to meet this requirement. Recent support from Saudi Arabia and the UAE was short term, so it will not help close the medium-term gap. In these circumstances, the IMF will likely demand full exchange rate flexibility, to help reduce the current account deficit. But this will not be without costs: currency depreciation will raise inflation (weakening our competitiveness), as well as the burden of servicing external debt. Thus, even if necessary to stabilise foreign exchange reserves, further exchange rate depreciation may not bring much net benefit in terms of reducing the external financing gap. *Faced with difficult decisions, the Pakistan government, as well as the IMF, would be well advised to be seen as being as equitable as possible by key stakeholders.*

Handling Pakistan's economic challenges, Col (R) Muhammad Hanif, Daily Times, 15⁵

The government has been working to make an economic revival plan mainly focused on stabilizing the value of rupee, to increase exports and take other measures to increase the foreign exchange reserves, to muster sufficient funds to repay the foreign loans and resolve the balance of payments issue, and to collect targeted tax revenues to prepare the upcoming annual budget. In this regard, the recent shuffle in the cabinet made by the Prime Minister has initiated the domestic debate and the opposition parties have started increasing pressure on the government. *it is also highly important for the government to increase its foreign exchange reserves and domestic income by taking immediate decisions and steps to boost Pakistan's economic growth, increase its exports, enhance its foreign remittances from the Pakistani diaspora, and attracting domestic and foreign investment, at the same time controlling the prices of the daily use commodities to keep those affordable to the poor masses and ensuring that no more devaluation of the Pakistani rupee takes place. Domestically Pakistan has cracked down on terrorist organizations and as a recognition of its sacrifices in fighting the war on terror, it deserves to be given a relief by the IFIs and FATF.*

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1479765/imf-negotiations>

⁵ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/394814/handling-pakistans-economic-challenges/>

Towards CPEC 3.0, Sohaib R. Malik, Daily Times, 27 May⁶

CPEC 3.0, should be manoeuvred towards high-tech sectors — namely telecom, electric mobility and renewables, where China is an emerging global leader — to optimize CPEC's benefits. In the telecom industry, China's Huawei has become a leading equipment supplier and is among the world's most innovative companies with nearly 88,000 patents as of December 2018. As of April 2019, Huawei had signed more than 40 5G contracts globally, proving that the firm can commercialise its solutions faster than its Western and Asian rivals. *Many Chinese tech giants are already present in Pakistan. Since digital connectivity and infrastructure are essential for tomorrow's economies, future cooperation in this area should form a major pillar of CPEC.* Regardless of the US government's fierce opposition, Chinese tech giants will be at the forefront of advancements in the telecom industry.

SECURITY SITUATION

Masood Azhar ban, Editorial, Dawn, 03 May⁷

While some segments may see the move as a 'victory' for India, the fact is that Masood Azhar and his group have caused nothing but trouble for this country. The JeM may have made India-held Kashmir its focus, but its cadres have caused plenty of havoc in Pakistan as well. India had been trying for over a decade to get Masood Azhar blacklisted. Each time its efforts would be blocked by China on 'technical' grounds. State must realize that tolerating such groups is a liability for Pakistan. Far from serving any 'strategic depth', these outfits end up isolating the country internationally. *Perhaps if we had put our own house in order, India would not have been able to exploit the situation and associate jihadist groups with Pakistan.* It is also hoped that the blacklisting

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1484851/towards-cpec-30>

⁷ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1479948/masood-azhar-ban?preview>

of Masood Azhar will help strengthen the country's case with FATF, to prove that Pakistan is working hard to eliminate all militant outfits.

Hazara massacre calls for introspection, Zeeshan Rasul Khan, *Daily Times*, 01 May⁸

For too long now, the Hazaras appear to have been an easy target for the terrorists. They live under a constant threat of targeted violence. The attacks have been going on for decades. Almost every family in the community has a painful story to narrate. Many of them have lost people close to them to a terrorist attack and there seems to be no end to it. A sad aspect of the violence is that it has gone on without there being any retaliation by the community. It has been hard, in fact, following several attacks to pinpoint an immediate cause. *The media has speculated that one reason they are being persecuted could be sectarian hatred. This, if true, should be a matter for great shame for any state. For an Islamic republic it is all the more unfortunate to be unable or unwilling to protect a Muslim community.* Such attacks bring a bad name to humanity. It is sad that religion should be ignorantly thought of as asking for it. Such atrocious acts a false righteousness attract opprobrium, not only for their perpetrators but also for the religion they claim for themselves. Those responsible for this bloodshed need to be dealt with sternly. There needs to be an effective policy for protecting minority Muslim sects as well as other religious minorities.

Fighting extremism with clarity, Nazeer Arijio, *Daily Times*, 08 May⁹

The moral decay of the society can be gauged from the fact that callous killers are garlanded. Sometimes those involved in extrajudicial killing garner public esteem and appreciation. Recall the scenes of vandalism in the country, and hate speech against the judiciary, military, and government when Asia Bibi was acquitted of a blasphemy charge. *Forced conversions and marriages of Hindu girls are tarnishing the image of both Islam and the country.* According to a recent report entitled Forced Conversion and Forced Marriages in Sindh, Pakistan, by University of Birmingham, up to 1,000 women and girls are abducted, forcibly converted and then married off to their abductors every year in Pakistan. Sectarianism also continues to take a heavy toll. Culling of Shia Hazara community goes on unabated. According to a National Commission for Human Rights report titled Understanding the Agonies of Ethnic Hazaras, up to 600 people have been killed and more than this number injured in various

⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/385872/hazara-massacre-calls-for-introspection/>

⁹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/390230/fighting-extremism-with-clarity/>

incidents of terrorism in Quetta over the last five years. *The recent Quetta blast targeting the Shia Hazara community speaks volumes of the onslaught against them. The prime minister visited the families of the victims giving assurances of implementation of the National Action Plan in letter and spirit.*

Data Darbar blast, Editorial, Dawn, 09 May¹⁰

The apparent target of the atrocity was a contingent of the Elite Force stationed outside the shrine for its security; at least five policemen were martyred in the attack. According to media reports, Hizbul Ahrar, said to be a splinter faction of the local Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack. Extremists bear a grudge towards Sufi dargahs and practices, and law enforcers and security personnel, regarded as symbols of the state, are 'easy' targets. The Data Darbar bombing, as well as a number of other recent attacks, such as the one on the Hazara community in Quetta, indicates that militant groups are communicating to the state that they are far from vanquished. *Hizbul Ahrar has been involved in acts of terrorism elsewhere in the country, including Karachi, and at one point the security apparatus had claimed the militant outfit had been 'broken'.* Better intelligence coordination is needed between the civilian and military security agencies, as well as between the provinces and the centre, to keep an eye on the resurgence of militant groups.

Attack in Gwadar, Editorial, Dawn, 13 May¹¹

The motive is of course patently clear. Baloch separatist groups have made no secret of their hostility towards CPEC, which they perceive as yet another manifestation of state plunder of Balochistan's resources. They seem to have stepped up their campaign in recent months with a number of high-profile attacks. *The banned Balochistan Liberation Army has reportedly claimed responsibility.* These are but two among several such recent attacks, and they illustrate the Baloch separatist groups' tenacity in their war against the Pakistani state. Containing them by force is necessary, but it is not a durable solution. The only long-term resolution to this extended, if low-key, conflict is a political one. The state must reach out to disaffected nationalists and individuals who have some currency with the more obdurate Baloch. Moreover, it must do all it can to eliminate extremist groups of all stripe — ethnic, sectarian and ultra nationalist.

¹⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1481199/data-darbar-blast>

¹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1481952/attack-in-gwadar>

PROVINCES & REGION

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Going for the PTM, Editorial, Daily Times, 01 May¹²

The most important concerns, according to the Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor, the Inter-Services Public Relations director general are foreign funding for the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement and the idiom and style of the PTM at its protest demonstrations. The ISPR chief mentioned several instances of PTM leaders receiving funds from hostile neighbours. He also said they had had several meetings with the enemy. He announced that law would take its course against PTM leaders who had been flouting it. *The army has claimed it has addressed the concerns and is disappointed that the bitterness in the PTM rhetoric for the army has shown no signs of going away. Slogans against the army continue to be raised at PTM rallies and the same complaints continue to be reiterated.* Predictably, however, the public relations exercise, tends to draw flak from the opposition when matters in other jurisdictions are discussed. Having restored peace to the region, the army is a major stakeholder in the former tribal areas. This is not going to change any time soon. However, when it comes to announcing government policy it is appropriate for the military to yield the center stage to civilians.

Defusing tensions, Editorial, Dawn, 29 May¹³

The PTM's leadership must be mindful of this singular aspect of their style of protest that many had warned would be counterproductive to their cause. Second, the fact that several soldiers also received injuries points to armed individuals being present at the scene. *This is a departure for the PTM, which had maintained a non-violent stance for well over a year. It would be an unfortunate though not implausible development, given the risks of even the most peaceful of movements resorting to violent means in the face of repeated, heavy-handed use of force to quell them.* Moreover, the authorities and the PTM must immediately come to the table to reiterate their common goals of lasting peace and rule of law, and use that as the basis on which to conduct

¹² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/385958/going-for-the-ptm/>

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1485232/defusing-tensions>

honest, productive talks. For any lasting resolution, it must be acknowledged that an entire generation has grown up in the historically disenfranchised region of erstwhile Fata against a backdrop of seemingly unending conflict.

URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Electronic

Interview with Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Jirga with Salim Safi, Geo News, 05 May¹⁴

Recently there were some changes made within the PML-N, Maryam Nawaz was officially inducted into the party as Deputy Head and Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was made the senior deputy head of the party. There was lots of controversy about the changes and how the posts were assigned without any internal elections in the party. Mr. Abbasi making an attempt to clear the air on this issue said in the interview that PML-N was contemplating and discussing for a change from a long time and it's not decided in one day. Maryam Nawaz has made a place for herself among the party workers he said and also have campaigned actively for the party thus proving her worth to be appointed the deputy head of the party. Salim Safi then asks people of Pakistan thinks that if there is no democracy within the party then how PML-N can restore the democratic values in the country? To which Mr Abbasi replied we already had a general council formed and this council nominated the workers for the post and after Nawaz Sharif Shahbaz Sharif heads the party as the ultimate decision maker. *Salim Safi further questions him that being the leader of the opposition, Shahbaz Sharif is said to lead a soft opposition and even Maryam Nawaz has stopped criticizing the government, is there any sort of deal to save Nawaz Sharif?* Mr Abbasi answers it by saying that we as an opposition do not want to cross limits and Nawaz Sharif is the soul of the party and people believe in PML-N because of him. As the media are saying there is no deal of any sort and we are doing the work of an opposition but until and unless there is free and fair re-elections in the country both politics and economy of Pakistan is going to go down from here.

Discussion on the IMF Package, Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Geo News, 13 May¹⁵

Hamid Mir opens the discussion by pointing to the fact that in the beginning Imran Khan pledged that the PTI government will not go to the IMF in any

¹⁴ <https://www.geo.tv/shows/jirga/236366-jirga-05-may-2019>

¹⁵ <https://www.geo.tv/shows/capital-talk/237204-capital-talk-13-may-20>

circumstance, what changed. The first guest Makdoom Kusru Baktiyar from PTI who is the current planning and development minister tactfully answers that the recent deal with IMF is not a sudden thing, we were in negotiation with the IMF from a long time and current deal is a great breakthrough at the government level which will go to the executive board. *Also it has to be noted, he adds that Imran Khan is right in saying that this should be the last agreement with IMF as after this we are planning to bring major structural changes to stabilize the economy of Pakistan. He says that when the PTI came in power the account deficit was 20 Arab dollar, that is the reason that IMF was the last resort and after the structural changes;* the PTI is planning to reduce the deficit to 12 Arab dollars towards the end of this year and hopefully after 4 years to a manageable stage of 4 Arab dollars. If India can bring its economy to a sustainable position after a last help from IMF in 1991 then why not Pakistan, he asks. Khurram Dastgir of the PML-N points to the fact that if the Imran Khan government knew from the beginning that there was a need to approach the IMF to stabilize the economy then why did it took nine months to finally take the step. He adds that the structural changes the PTI are talking about like devalue rupees, minimizing role of state bank of Pakistan, increasing taxes will have a huge effect which will further cripple the economy and living standards in Pakistan. It has to be noted that Pakistan has gone to the IMF 21 times, even under PML-N but statements in the agreement such as the one that read, "Continuing anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism efforts" indicates a direct link to the FATF and indicates the US pressure in the deal, he adds.

Urdu

Military and PTM, Saleem Safi, Jang, 01 May¹⁶

The debate over the Pushtun Tehfuz Movement (PTM) has started again after DG ISPR Maj Asif Gafoor called it an agent of foreign agencies. Maj Asif also said that time is up for the movement. *The issue has become more important than Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for journalists like me. I know a lot; can write a lot and can speak a lot but can do neither.* Therefore, I reproduce a column that I wrote in January 2019, titled, *The danger at the door:* 'The reality is that for last two decades the Pakistani security forces, the nation and the Pashtuns in particular have gone through tough times. *Every individual, institution and section was so much devastated that no had time for other's concerns or troubles. For security forces it was most difficult and longest period. ... They fought this war against the people who were their co-*

¹⁶ https://e.jang.com.pk/05-01-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_004.png

religionists. In the past, these two adversaries were fighting together. The security forces had to fight a war on which not only the nation but even the political leadership was not united. Similarly, people and the Pashtuns had to suffer a lot. First they were told by the state that they should accept and help Mujahidin and then the Taliban. Then because of the wrong policies, these mujahidin became burden for the locals. They killed leaders and youth and destroyed economy. At the last security forces were sent in the area. The Pashtuns respected the security forces. They were not allowed to take action against the militants. They over the period of time got confused. Finally decision was taken and an operation was started. However for that the Pashtuns were asked to leave their houses and migrate. They were not treated well in other parts of the country. When the time to go home came, they found their homes destroyed and economy in shambles. People were killed and missing. This led to the rise of a movement. The case that the PTM is fighting is correct. But unfortunately their declarations have anger in them and sometimes cross the limits. The movement has no overall policy. Similarly. The state has no clear cut policy for them. It is acted on some incidents and state psychology. ... It would have been better that the two sides would sit together and fight together. But instead of being united, they are fighting each other out.'

To restore peace in Afghanistan, America has to abandon New Delhi, Editorial, Nawa-i-Waqt, 02 May¹⁷

Three Pakistani security forces were killed and seven were injured when terrorists attacked a check post in South Waziristan. These terrorists came from Afghanistan. *According to ISPR, 60-70 terrorists were involved in the attack. However it was foiled by the Pakistan's brave army men.* The DG ISPR condemned the attack and said that work on fencing on the border continues despite Kabul's opposition. US Deputy Foreign Minister Alice Wills said in Islamabad that there is no proof that Afghan-territory is being used by New Delhi against Pakistan. *The argument was still in news when the attack happened, proving the Pakistan's position.* It is reality that America is able to talk to the Taliban because of the important role of Pakistan. In this regard, American special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad has praised Pakistan for helping in organizing the talks. This was not first of its kind attack from across the border on Pakistani check post. It is going on for years and Pakistan has proof for that. *Since the former puppet President Hamid Karzai, Afghanistan*

¹⁷ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-05-02/page-10/detail-0>

is being used to train terrorists against Pakistan. It is unfortunate that America on the one hand praises Pakistan for its role for organizing talks with the Taliban and on the other hand patronizes the source of terrorism in the region. It should be inferred from the recent attack that the attack was carried out by Kabul so that to sabotage the talks with the Taliban. Pakistan needs to take strong steps to strengthen its security and America needs to open its eyes to reality.

Afghan-administration aims to sabotage the peace-talks, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 06 May¹⁸

The Afghan-Taliban has said that an important development has been made in regard to withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan in the ongoing peace talks. ... *It was difficult for America and the Taliban to sit on the negotiation table. Pakistan was active and handy in bringing the two sides to talk.* The talks have been successful so far. Both the sides are serious about looking for a solution to the conflict.... The Afghan administration should play positive role in making the talks successful. However, it seems too bent to sabotage the talks. It senses that its rule in Kabul is possible if America's remains in the country. *Pakistan's role in making the talks to happen does not bode well with the Kabul government. It keeps targeting Islamabad on one paltry reason or on other.* Few days back it attacked Islamabad for a statement by Imran Khan. Imran has said that by having an interim government in Afghanistan, it would be easier to hold talks between the Taliban and America. President Ashraf Ghani's term is about to end. In September there elections for national assembly will be held. During this period, the Taliban could have talked to the interim government but they have refused to talk to the government in Kabul. The strong reaction from Kabul on the statement of Imran Khan is uncalled for. It is just an attempt to keep Pakistan away from the Afghan-issue. Rulers in Kabul have left no stone unturned to sabotage the Taliban-US peace talks. America knows it. *When the Taliban is not ready to talk to Ghani government, there can be an interim government which would make talks easy. Though the US and the Taliban remain main players but the Kabul administration needs to be consulted in some affairs for which there is no need to wait for the elections.* Afghan-conflict cannot be resolved without mainstreaming the Taliban. *Daesh* is making inroads in Afghanistan. Only Taliban can counter it. There is positive development in talks. However, more trust between the parties needs to be established for their success.

¹⁸ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-05-06/page-10/detail-0>

Ghani-Imran exchange is welcome, Editorial, Jang, May 07¹⁹

Just after four days after the attack in Afghanistan, the leadership of Afghanistan and Pakistan contacted each other and agreed to cooperate to restore peace and stability in the region. *According to an American news service, President Ashraf Ghani called Prime Minister Imran Khan and expressed his desire to strengthen relations between the two countries for peace in Afghanistan and regional stability.* Imran Khan told President Ghani that Pakistan will take every step to restore peace and stability in Afghanistan. Imran invited President Ghani to visit Pakistan so that the relations can be further strengthened. President Ghani accepted the invitation. This development has taken place at the time when the sixth round of peace talks between the Taliban and the US that are making fair amount of progress. *All the same, to make the relations better Kabul should not keep blaming Pakistan for all wrong happening in Afghanistan.* They should maintain better relations in future. It is hoped that President Ghani will keep all important factors in mind when he visits Pakistan.

Expectations from new Economic team, Editorial, Jang, 06 May²⁰

Prime Minister Imran Khan has appointed Dr. Raza Baqir, who was working in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the governor of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Ahmed Mujtaba, who was working as additional secretary finance, as the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). *Imran has entrusted these people along with advisor on finance to the Prime Minister Hafeez Sheikh with responsibility to bring Pakistan out of economic crisis.* Though the announcement about Reza Baqir as new governor of the SBP has been made but Ahmed Mujtaba's appointment as new head of FBR is yet to be made. ... Dr. Baqir worked with the IMF for 16 years and played significant role in stabilizing the economies of Greece and Ukraine. He was advisor of the IMF for Romania and Egypt also. *It is good news that his experience will be helpful to him in heading the SBP and shape the economic policy of the country. Additionally, his presence will give out positive message and help in negotiating with the IMF.* However it is not clear as of now whether is going to remain associated with the IMF or not. If he remains attached with both the institutions, there may be conflict of interests and it will be difficult to judge whose interests Dr. Baqir will give preference. The appointment of Dr. Baqir

¹⁹ https://e.jang.com.pk/05-07-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_002.png

²⁰ https://e.jang.com.pk/05-06-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_001.png

may help in setting economy on track. As far as the economic crisis is concerned, it is obvious the policies of past have played role in it because of which imports increased and exports decreased. This caused budget deficit and increased foreign debt. Country's foreign reserves were decreased. *According to some experts, the current government should have gone to IMF as soon it had taken over but it delayed it which deteriorated the crisis. However, now if the bail out is given by the IMF and number of paying taxes increases, the situation can improve.* New entrepreneurs should be encouraged. In particular Pakistanis in other countries should be encouraged to investment in Pakistan.

From Mukti Bahini to PTM-II, Asadullah Ghalib, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 09 May²¹

It is said that PTM is meant to protect Pashtun rights. Even Prime Minister Imran Khan said that if the grievances of Pashtuns were not addressed that would harm the country. However, first we will have to see how to protect our country's interests. ... *Many claim that the Pashtuns have been protecting our borders on the West. They liberated some parts of Kashmir also. There should be no injustice to them. It should be also kept in mind that it was the East-Pakistan that laid foundation of the Muslim League in 1906.* It was the same party that passed Pakistan Resolution in 1940 and Pakistan was created in 1947. It is to be seen how have we treated these people? Was not it a slogan raised by civil-bureaucracy of Pakistan that East Bengal was poor and let it free so that other Pakistan could prosper and grow? And then in 1971 when the East Bengal was being thrown away, what role Indra Gandhi had in that? Who says that Pakistan media was not free in those days? It was free. Who published Mujibur Rahman's six point formula? Today also media is free. Media raised the question in Musharraf's regime that the Lal Masjid was used as store for weapons. Media provoked the government why action was not being taken and when action was taken, same media criticized it. When operations were carried out in Swat and North Waziristan, media was free. *It published the statement of politicians that even if a dog was killed by US drones that was a martyr. But any army man of Pakistani army who was killed was not a martyr because it supported the US.* Then DG ISPR Asim Bajwa had warned people that the operation 'Zarb-ul Azab' would be carried out in the area, people should leave their homes to safe places. Whoever stays in North Waziristan, he/she would be treated as enemy. *The operation was carried out against terrorists and Pakistan used F-16 for the same. But the use of F-16 was opposed by India and by the tribal people. All the same, the operation caused damages in the area. Reconstruction of house, infrastructure and economy was task of*

²¹ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-05-09/page-4/detail-8>

the civilian authorities. The Prime Minister should deliver his responsibilities rather than threatening that if the tribal people do get justice, there would be problem. Media is also threatening Pakistanis that if action is taken against the PTM, implications will be severe. *Media should not only show one side of the story. It should also report the development and reconstruction done in the areas.* If there is more to be done, it should be done, I request media to visit the tribal areas and consult people there so that the PTM is exposed.

Masood Azhar international terrorist, Nusrat Mirza, Ummat, 08 May²²

Today I should write something on declaring Masood Azhar as global terrorist. *Though China had vetoed declaring Azhar a global terrorist many a times, but had been asking Islamabad how long can this go? Pakistan had allowed China not to veto the process last year.* But not allowing India to have its say, Beijing vetoed it. *Now after getting consent from Pakistan, it did not veto. Pakistan has pulled back its support from Masood Azhar because these people were not restraining despite being told the same.* Army Chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa had suggested on 19 March 2019 that such 'volunteers' should be part of mainstream and work for society. DG ISPR also said just one day before the UN Resolution that the madrassas would be given a status and welfare institutions will be nationalized. *Question is that is Masood Azhar no more needed? I think Masood was never needed. He was asked to stop many times but he never obliged.* He also liked to brag about any activity. As the Army Chief has said that Pakistan does not need this. Pakistan wants peace and development. When Pakistan wants to control terrorism why should it harm others. The groups heading it are known to whole world. One example is Hafiz Saeed.

Affiliated groups of banned organizations also banned, Editorial, Jang, 13 May²³

The Interior Ministry has imposed ban on the 11 affiliate groups of Jaish-e-Muhammad (JM), Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Fahlah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF). *It has got national support and was taken according to the national Action Plan and UN Resolutions.* It is a positive development. The banned groups include: Al-Anfal Trust, Lahore; Idara-i-Khidmat Khalaq, Lahore; Al-Hamad Trust, Lahore and Faisalabad; Al-Fazal Foundation Trust, Lahore; Mosque and Welfare Trust, Al-Madina Foundation, Lahore, Mazz-bin-Jabel Education Trust, Lahore; Al-Eesar Foundation, Lahore; Al-Rehmat Trust Organization, Bahawalpur; and Al-Furqan Trust, Karachi. *These organizations*

²²<http://ummat.net/2019/05/08/news.php?p=idr4.gif>

²³ https://e.jang.com.pk/05-13-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=08_001.png

are suspected to have links and financial supports of JuD, FIF, and JM. In the month of February, the government had banned the JuD and its affiliated groups. In this month, the UN declared head of JM Masood Azhar as global terrorist. The target of the Interior Ministry are the groups who are known for their social work. *But these have been associated with the banned organizations. Because of which they damage the image of Pakistan.* One example for that is the banning of JM chief by the UN. Pakistan is an important member of the UN and has followed its rules and regulations. Many groups were banned after the 9/11 which were active in Afghanistan. Some of them however were doing terrorism in Pakistan also. *Taking actions against terror groups was necessary also to avoid possible actions by FATF. For ta purpose friends like China also have been advising Islamabad to oblige to international demands.* Many of these groups have been fueling sectarianism in Pakistan which is dangerous for the country. It thus can be said that banning of these groups was need of the time. But a lot remains to be done. Implementation of National Action Plan is necessary for national security.

IMF agreement: positive and negative aspects, Editorial, Jang, 14 May²⁴

Pakistan has accepted almost all the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for granting Islamabad bailout package. *Pakistan will get \$6 billion in 39 months in installments. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other financial institutions will provide further \$3 billion after the IMF package.* In total Pakistan will receive \$9 billion loan at minimal interest rates. The agreement will be implemented in next 6 weeks. Though the agreement has many positive aspects, it has some negative aspects as well. But Pakistan had no option but to swallow the bitter pill. *According to Shaikh Hafeez some of the conditions set by IMF were in our interest. In next three years we will introduce structural change in country's economy to improve our image.* He said the economy has been in shatters for last few years. Foreign debts have reached upto \$90 billion. *However, after analyzing the agreement it seems that the people will have to face taxes of seven thousand crore. Inflation will be sky high. Because of this the opposition parties have rejected the agreement.* The IMF statement says that taxes will be uniform in all sectors. The government will have to further strengthen its monetary policy. ... It will have to reduce the budget deficit from 9.1 percent to 6 per cent. It will have to curb tax privileges and give more autonomy to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Experts say that the conditions set by the IMF may be beneficial in the long run. *However its immediate effects will be inflation, more taxes, increase in prices of production and unemployment.* However, to restore the economy

²⁴ https://e.jang.com.pk/05-14-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_001.png

financial discipline is necessary. The government should appropriately use the bailout package and rely more on its own resources. It is a test for the current government to set the country free from foreign debts.

Balochistan and interests of international actors, *Dr. Ahmed Saleem, *Nawai-Waqt*, 14 May²⁵

In the last month in an attack in Gwadar 18 people were killed, including 12 security personal. In this month four terrorists attacked a hotel in Gwadar which was claimed by Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). *Despite the improvement overall security situation in the country, Balochistan remains challenge. On analyzing these attacks it appears that it is not the 'Baloch separatists' or 'religious terrorism' that is affecting Balochistan. Rather many international actors have vested interests in the region.* The international forces are interested in Balochistan because of three reasons. One, the presence of oil, gas, mineral and other resources in Balochistan. If Pakistan uses them it can be one of the countries giving loans to other countries of the world. Second, its strategic location. On the West to Balochistan is Iran and on its north is Afghanistan. Its coastal areas link with West Asia. The route connects it with the Gulf and with the main route of world oil supply. Third, the province apart from having mineral resources, can be route for many pipelines. Because of these reasons, Balochistan was important even before the creation of Pakistan. It is strange that so-called 'separatists' of Balochistan are supported. *Terrorism needs three things: money, weapons and training.* It is unfortunate that Iran and Saudi Arabia are at draggers drawn. Iran is unhappy with Pakistan because of Saudi Arabia's decision to invest in the CPEC. *America is using India and Afghanistan against China. Chabahar Port is common link between these countries.* Because of the sanctions on Iran, not much has been done on the port. India in 2016 announced \$85 million investment. New Delhi is also planning a 600 kilometer highway from Chabahar to Zahedan. Chabahar will be also linked with Nimroz province of Afghanistan. ... *Pakistan needs to protect its interests by providing security to Balochistan. Education and development in Balochistan will not let the Baloch to be vulnerable to foreign agents.* Our officials also need to tell Iran that it needs to design a common strategy against terrorism with Pakistan. If Balochistan is disturbed, that will be in America's interest and it will then target Iran's Sistan-Balochistan province.

²⁵ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-05-14/page-10/detail-8>

American 'respectful' withdrawal from Afghanistan, Dr. Ahmed Saleem, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 21 May²⁶

America invaded Afghanistan after 9/11 and within two months removed the Taliban from power. But within two years the Taliban started reemerging and targeted the American troops. *Now after 18 years the America led forces from 42 countries have not been able to defeat the Taliban. They have been forced to talk to the Taliban. It is a fact that without the Taliban there can be no solution to the Afghan conflict.* It is also true that America wants to leave Afghanistan. One, it has realized that despite all the money and loss of lives it will not win the war. Second is the next year's presidential elections in the US. ... To win the elections President Trump will have to 'befool' the people of the US to vote him again. And the easiest one is to claim that the US has won war in Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have been eliminated. Therefore America has withdrawn from Afghanistan. *The withdrawal is political and economic compulsion for Trump. Once the US leaves, the regional powers including Russia, Iran and India will start sponsoring their favorite groups. Pakistan in such situation will be forced to look for its favorite ones.* In that case the Taliban will emerge again. But it would not support international terror groups like Al-Qaeda. Pakistan has also got its lesson and it will not try to differentiate between good and bad Taliban. *Islamabad has changed its foreign policy and has abandoned 'strategic depth' policy and seeks peace in Afghanistan which is in its national interest.* That is why it says that until Pakistan will not allow India to do trade through Pakistan, there will be no trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is better for Pakistan to improve its trade and relations with Afghanistan. America will always want India to play a role in Afghanistan. That is the reason that India is spending money in Afghanistan for last over a decade. It is hoped that Afghanistan understands this: It should realize that Pakistan is better option for it than India in every sense.

Can the opposition alliance become real threat? Saleem Safi, *Jang*, 22 May²⁷

Let us first discuss position of each party. **PML-N:** During the elections the Sharif brothers issued controversial statements and the party lost its ground. Not only the country but they also lost Punjab. Their troubles increased. *Finally Nawaz accepted Shehbaz's position. Nawaz and Maryam got silent and Shehbaz talked. But it could not be converted into deal and Shehbaz was also caught in trouble.* Now Maryam has taken the stage and raised the slogan of

²⁶ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-05-21/page-10/detail-9>

²⁷ https://e.jang.com.pk/pic.asp?npc=05-22-2019/Lahore/images/06_004.png

respect the vote again. *The iftaar and to agree to protest under the leadership of Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman are part of that policy.* It is also being felt that the way current government is flunking, there needs to be real an opposition to take it head on. **PPP:** During the PML-N rule Asif Ali Zardari was critical of Nawaz Sharif. *Zardari used the Panama Leaks and tried to be friendly with anti-Nawaz forces. He was told that if he did not cooperate he would lose Sindh also. He was being readied as second Imran Khan.* He had to ignore Bilawal Bhutto and his statement. He played such a role post-election that PPP became like PML-Q. However it did not work and he was also caught. *Zardari now feels that he was cheated and also that there is limit to boot-licking.* Now he wants to play role of opposition and that is why all opposition parties were invited for the iftaar. **Position of Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman:** Maulana did not want to accept the elections results and expected that PML-N and PPP would take same position. Zardari was not serious first but when he was targeted, then he said if Nawaz Sharif joins all party conference then he would also be part of it. *Then Maulana was disappointed by Nawaz. He tried to bring Nawaz in APC but because Shehbaz trying his policy, it did not work.* But alter they joined him and held successful rallies. Now they plan protests on Eid. **Other parties:** Like Maulana Rehman, ANP, BNP, PkMAP, JI, MQM and PSP were not ready to accept the results. But when PML-N and PPP sat in the assembly, these parties followed them. Akhtar Mingal announced to support the government. *So. Will the iftaar of Bilawal and APC will be able to protest against the government on Eid? I think no. The reasons for that is that PML-N does trust PPP and vice versa.* The one thinks that the other may do a deal during protests. Same are the apprehensions of other's. Maulana doubts the both. Therefore, to create a reliable opposition, PML-N and PPP will have to take serious measures. *Will the alliance then be no threat to the government? The answer is no. If the street power of religious groups gets leadership of PML-N and PPP, then PTI cannot defend itself.*

IMF dancing on our head? Prof. Khalid Mehmood Qureshi, Nawa-i-Waqt, 20 May²⁸

IMF is not less than a school teacher with stick in hands for us. *Whether the governor of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) or chairman of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Shabbar Zaidi, they are of IMF's opinion. IMF knows more about our finance system than we do. ...* To correct revenue system is

²⁸ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-05-20/page-10/detail-11>

important for Pakistan's economy. Foreign debt has crossed 30 thousand billion rupees. Next month Pakistan has to repay \$2.5 billion commercial debt. Japan, America, Germany and France are waiting for their money. How will Reza Baqir or Shabbar Zaidi pay the foreign debts? How would they run the country without foreign aid? How will they deal with CNG, oil and gas crisis? Despite the Ramazan going on, fruits and vegetables are costly but cheap in susta-markets. Though corruption has ended in ministries but employees continue to take it in form of chai-pani and gift. Rates of electricity will be increased. Amnesty scheme will be started before the IMF programme. Pakistan will get 170 billion rupees. Inflation is more than 6 per cent. **2 billion rupees were spent to sell 19 basic rations at low prices. But that has not happened.** ... Despite all this nothing is being done. The opposition is getting stronger. But time makes people complicit. **The conditions of IMF have been accepted. The government is going to end all subsidies. Prices of electricity will be increased. By increasing prices of gas and oil the government can collect 340 billion rupees. The taxes have increased from 39 hundred billion to 8 thousand billion during Imran Khan's rule.** Chairman FBR will try to catch the people who do not pay taxes. The team of Shaikh Hafees, Shabbar Zaidi and Reza Baqir will indeed bring change. However, IMF is turning out to be the Second East India Company for us. In next seventy years, the debts will go up to \$31 billion dollar. What will be inflation then? Black economy is around 30 percent and Sabbar wants to bring it in tax-net. ... No government has been able convince people that their money will be spent on them. IMF has put strong conditions and we are trapped. How can the Prime Minister give house, cow, goats, etc, to people? If people get meat and eggs, that will be big thing for them.

Agenda of NAB, Editorial, Jang, 21 May ²⁹

National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has been target of civilian leaders in the past. These people were told to go through investigation. This continues and NAB's policies/steps are targeted. **It is said that NAB and economy cannot go together. Economy is in shambles because of NAB. Business section is harassed and NAB is used for political engineering. It is used to suppress the opposition.** ... To address these and many other grievances, chairman of NAB Justice Javed Iqbal gave a press conference where he mainly talked about the business class and criticized the government and opposition equally **Javed said that NAB arrests only after collecting solid proofs. As far as threatening**

²⁹ https://e.jang.com.pk/05-21-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_001.png

bureaucracy and business class is concerned, he himself has gone to them and created a cell to register any such complains. And till today no complain has been filed. He said now onwards no business person or bureaucrat will be summoned to NAB office. Rather a questionnaire will be sent to them and then further action will be taken. He said that NAB is not responsible for the condition of economy of Pakistan. NAB and economy have gone together and will walk together. But corruption will to be accepted. ... NAB kind of institutions exist across the world which take serious actions against corrupt people. But they collect solid proofs for any action. That is the reason people accept their decision. *In Pakistan there is a perception that there is less accountability more political vendetta. Because of this NAB does not enjoy much credibility. It is important that NAB maintains high stands for itself and reform its laws wherever needed.* This is a point where the government, the opposition and the NAB chairman agree. NAB is important to make the country corruption-free. It needs to be improved.

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Dera Ismail ³⁰ Khan	01/05/2019	Journalist killed in DI Khan	01	00
North Waziristan ³¹	02/05/2019	Three Pakistani Soldiers Killed Cross-Durand Line Attack	03	07
	05/05/2019	Polio worker gunned down in Bajaur	01	00

³⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1479544>

³¹ <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/three-pakistani-soldiers-killed-cross-durand-line-attack>

Bajaur ³²	07/05/2019	Child killed, four others injured as hand grenade goes off in Karak	01	04
Peshawar ³³				
Chaman ³⁴	08/05/2019	Tribal leader among 3 killed in Chaman blast	03	01
North Waziristan ³⁵	27/05/2019	Soldier embraces martyrdom in North Waziristan terrorist attack: ISPR	01	00
Balochistan				
Gwadar ³⁶	12/05/2019	Three security guards were killed and four people were injured when gunmen stormed the Pearl Continental Hotel	03	04
	14/05/2019	At least four police personnel were martyred	04	12

³²<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/05/05/polio-monitoring-officer-shot-dead-in-bajaur/>

³³<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1950492/1-child-killed-four-others-injured-hand-grenade-goes-off-karak/>

³⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1481047/tribal-leader-among-3-killed-in-chaman-blast>

³⁵ <https://arynews.tv/en/soldier-martyrdom-north-waziristan-attack/>

³⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1481731/terror-in-gwadar-as-gunmen-storm-luxury-hotel>

Quetta ³⁷		and 12 others, including some policemen, wounded in a blast near a mosque in the Satellite Town area		
Nasirabad ³⁸	14/05/2019	Unknown suspects gun down three labours in Nasirabad	03	01
Quetta ³⁹	16/05/2019	Nine terrorists killed in Balochistan's Mastung operation	09	00
Mastung ⁴⁰	27/05/2019	Prayer leader found murdered in Mastung	01	00
Quetta ⁴¹	27/05/2019	Terror bid on Samungli air force base foiled, two suspected militants killed	02	00
Punjab				
Faisalabad ⁴²	06/05/2019	Cop shot dead	01	00

³⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1482172/second-attack-in-three-days-rocks-balochistan>

³⁸<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Crime/491443-Unknown-suspects-gun-down-three-laborers-Nasirabad>

³⁹<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/472137-nine-terrorists-killed-in-balochistans-mastung-operation>

⁴⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1484874>

⁴¹<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/05/27/two-terrorists-killed-as-security-forces-foil-terror-bid-near-quetta-airbase/>

⁴² <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/467782-cop-shot-dead>

Lahore ⁴³	08/05/2019	5 dead, 24 injured in explosion near Data Darbar in Lahore	10	24
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⁴³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1481009>