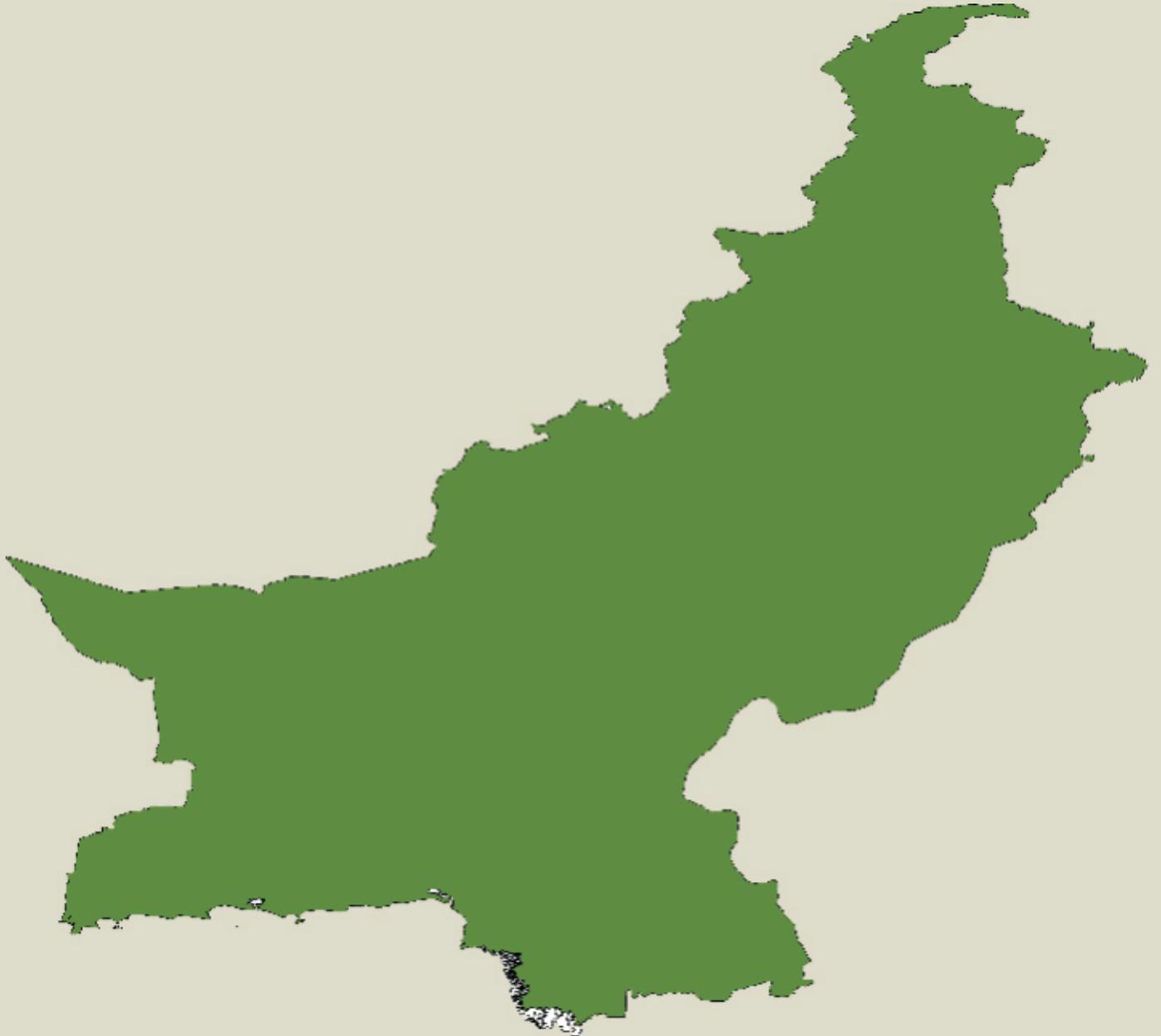


November 2022

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



Prepared by
Dr. Zainab Akhter
Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir
Mr Afroz Khan
Dr. Ashok Behuria

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, November 2022

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Exit strategy, Editorial, *Dawn*, 01 November¹

With mere weeks left for army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa to retire, controversy is simmering once again over the appointment of his successor. This fight for control over who will get to make the decision has been ongoing since before the PDM and PTI swapped their roles as government and opposition. *Since he wishes to retain the prerogative to select the army chief exclusively, it is incumbent on the prime minister to prevent further politicization of the appointment by acting fairly and decisively, while respecting the military's wish to remain apolitical.* When the army chief provides him with the names of the four or five generals best suited for the job, PM Sharif must set aside other considerations and make his decision strictly based on each candidate's professional strengths and weaknesses. *The experiments that were tried in the past should not be repeated again.* If they are to remain apolitical, the armed forces need a leader who is more concerned about the defence of the country rather than the ambitions of its politicians.

Chinese help, Editorial, *The News*, 03 November²

Reports from Beijing speak of a complete consensus between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Xi Jinping over broadening and deepening the strategic Pakistan-China partnership as the two leaders had an exhaustive meeting covering all areas of mutual concern including the multibillion-dollar CPEC and Pakistan's financial needs in the aftermath of this monsoon's cataclysmic flooding. The optics of the Pakistani premier's visit have been good starting from the red-carpet welcome accorded to PM Sharif and his delegation to his meeting with President Xi. From the mutual standpoint, putting CPEC back on the rails is rightfully the top item on PM Sharif's agenda. Although several of its early-harvest projects have come to fruition, transforming Pakistan's energy and infrastructure landscape, CPEC was in trouble from almost the moment the PTI and Imran Khan rose to power in 2018, with the former PM and his cabinet colleagues publicly maligning the multibillion-dollar initiative with allegations of corruption and misplaced priorities. *While none of those allegations came to anything over the four years since, work on the project came to a virtual standstill anyway. The prospective deep-sea port of Gwadar probably suffered the most damage as it was allowed to decay to a point where it became unserviceable for large ships.* President Xi will also be

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1718124/exit-strategy>

² <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1006105-chinese-help>

sympathetic to Pakistan's cause because the immediate trigger for Islamabad's request has been a natural disaster of biblical proportions, although there is no denying the Pakistani economy was already in a bad shape on account of a variety of reasons. *The long and short of it is that while it is still not clear amid the flurry of diplomatic ceremonies if a determination has been made on the matter or is pending, we have every reason to be optimistic that Pakistan's iron brother will make the right call and stand by Pakistan, especially knowing that riding on it could be a similar decision of Pakistan's Western lenders, expected to congregate in Paris before the year is out.*

The moment of truth, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 23 November³

A major challenge for the new incumbent in what is regarded as the most powerful office in the country will be to navigate through choppy waters. It is not just a matter related to the role of the security establishment in the ongoing political power game but also a question of how to restore public confidence in the institution. The loss of credibility has fueled unprecedented public criticism of the military leadership, a factor that has made the appointment of the new army chief controversial. Its deep involvement in political affairs have raised questions about the military's professionalism and obscured its main responsibility of ensuring the security of the nation. Unsurprisingly, the belated claim of 'neutrality' has few takers *However, the game has not gone as planned. The claim of neutrality has remained doubtful. Khan turned the tables on his erstwhile patrons with a ferocity not seen before. His populist appeal has changed the rules of the game. His relentless campaign has put the establishment on the back foot.* The upcoming change of command has restricted the establishment's options, to the advantage of the ousted leader. Moreover, the alleged involvement of the establishment in real estate business is perceived to have greatly affected the institution's responsibilities of national security. It is the moment of truth for the incoming army leadership that is to take charge at this very critical juncture in the country's trajectory. It may not be easy to move away from this damning legacy.

Farewell to arms, Editorial, Dawn, 24 November⁴

General Qamar Javed Bajwa's farewell address at the Defence and Martyr's Day ceremony on Wednesday was devoted to a rumination on the army's role in politics, perhaps in recognition of the fact that it is what his legacy will be defined by. *There was an effort to come clean; a somewhat grudging*

³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1722575>

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1722788/farewell-to-arms>

acknowledgement that part of the blame for where things stand lay in the military's history of political interference. But the general also assured us that the establishment's days of political management are now firmly over; that the institution has, since February 2021, closed the chapter on 70 years of "unconstitutional" political interference. This momentary self-accountability was inevitably followed by complaints. It was, undoubtedly, an unusual speech but perhaps fitting for these unusual times. Kudos to the chief for acknowledging the 'unconstitutionality' of the army's role in politics and attempting to make amends. Time will tell if the institution sticks to his word. *Meanwhile, some questions remain. The good general failed to tell us what motivated his institution to quit politics in his last years in power. What role had he and the army played till February 2021, and why were they so full of remorse?* And when Gen Bajwa eagerly claimed, on behalf of the armed forces, credit for resolving the Reko Diq and Karkey disputes, FATF whitelisting, and securing credit and cheap gas from friendly countries, did he consider for once that the army had no business interfering in any of these matters?

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Empty coffers, Rafia Zakaria, Dawn, 02 November⁵

In recent years, as Pakistan has hurtled from one catastrophe to another, remittances sent by Pakistani workers living abroad have been a source of some small amount of stability. When foreign investments have seemed scant and aid packages have dried up, workers sending money back to families, investing in and purchasing assets in their home country has served as a reliable source of foreign exchange. Now this once reliable source of money entering the country also appears to be threatened by both global and domestic conditions. *According to the Economic Outlook Report issued by the Ministry of Finance, the first 10 months of 2022 have seen foreign remittances drop by 3.6 per cent to \$7.7 billion.* Some analysts forecast that Pakistan's removal from the Financial Action Task Force 'grey list' will lead to better numbers in the remainder of the year as foreign investment sees an uptick. *This prediction, however, does not seem to account for the current political upheaval in the country following the murder of journalist Arshad Sharif in Kenya and the initiation of the latest long march and sit-in led by PTI chief Imran Khan.* Remittances are wanted in Pakistan but the workers who produce them are treated with ignominy and disrespect and labelled traitors for having left the country. In the meantime, the real traitors who are fixtures regardless of

⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1718345/empty-coffers>

whichever political party is in power, fill their coffers with money borrowed in the name of the country.

Interest-free economy, Editorial, Dawn, 11 November⁶

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's announcement that the ruling coalition would withdraw the legal challenge to the April judgement of the Federal Shariat Court that gave the government until the end of 2027 to eliminate interest-based banking must have come as a surprise. Mr. Dar said the government wants to eliminate riba as soon as possible. He also said that both the State Bank and the state-controlled National Bank would immediately take back the appeals against the FSC decision. But it still isn't clear how the government plans to achieve this goal and meet the court's deadline. Nor is it clear whether or not the private banks that have also challenged the decision, which declares interest-based banking "in all its forms and manifestations" against Islamic teachings, will withdraw their appeals. *Sadly, in more than three decades, neither the FSC nor successive governments nor the banks have given any thought to comprehensively studying the issue or its implications. It is advisable that the government, the FSC and other stakeholders move cautiously on this path, instead of rushing into it for political reasons. It doesn't matter whether or not the government withdraws its challenge to the FSC decision.* What matters is that whatever decision is taken should be done on the basis of thorough research.

Fall in remittances, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14 November⁷

Pakistan has a serious foreign exchange problem. The issue is getting further compounded as there is an earth-shaking disparity in the exchange rate at the banking and open market fora. It has led to visible depleting of reserves as flight of dollars is evident and the incoming remittances have dropped to new lows. The State Bank says remittances sent by overseas Pakistanis have hit an eight-month low at \$2.22 billion during the last month, and one of its prime reasons is that people prefer to enjoy a better rate at the open market through Hundi and Hawala. Hands exchange mechanisms are fetching up to Rs240 a dollar, compared to a trailing Rs222 to 225 on official decorum. This by all means reflects the beleaguered stature of macroeconomics that confronts the nation. *The 9.1% decrease in inflow of remittances is a warning of sorts. The fact that our largest diaspora in Saudi Arabia and the UAE are losing trust in official channels is an enigma. Receipts from Saudi Arabia and the UAE have slumped by 11.7% and 9.2% respectively in the last four months.* At a time when Pakistan is planning to buffer up its reserves through rollover concessions from

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1720271/interest-free-economy>

⁷ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2386048/fall-in-remittances>

Beijing and Riyadh, the expatriates should be on board too. The rupee in stampede is in need of being rescued.

Equitable economy, Mohammed Sarwar Khan, *The News*, 16 November⁸

Over the years, our economic and financial experts have made us dependent on imported raw materials, goods and energy that we are unable to pay for. We are trapped in a vicious cause-and-effect cycle of rupee devaluation and rising inflation, which contributes to food and energy insecurity, increasing poverty and vulnerability. The virtue of lay reasoning is that it cuts through to fundamentals and impact – the staggering under achievement. By GDP, Pakistan (\$1,658) stands between Haiti (\$1,673) and Cameroon (\$1,584), evidencing our diminishing global relevance. Regionally, we are far behind Sri Lanka (\$3,293) Bangladesh (\$2,734) and India (\$2,466). Domestically, corruption, privileges, tax evasion and inefficiencies are, by conservative estimates, costing over \$40.8 billion annually, about 12 per cent of the GDP. This amount is sufficient to plug the hole in our national accounts. Savings and austerity must begin by ending these subsidies that enable, what the former finance minister Miftah Ismail calls, ‘the one-percent’ to ride over their economic mess at our expense. Bad political choices – instead of economic necessity – have given rise to chronic structural issues that no one is still willing to address seriously. *We must commit to a shared set of national priorities that will drive our state policies for the next 10 years or so, prioritizing sectors that are vital to be self-sufficient in producing our essential goods locally.* We must enhance the necessary capacities and competitiveness, broaden the tax base, sustain our growing population, manage disasters and shocks effectively and export our surpluses to be a country that can care for its people equitably and effectively.

SECURITY SITUATION

Descent into chaos, Editorial, *The News*, 04 November⁹

A country that has buried assassinated political leaders far too often once again saw politics descend into violence and chaos as PTI Chairman Imran Khan survived a targeted attack. *Reaction has been quick, both regarding the attack and the subsequent confession. People have pointed to loopholes in the confession while also questioning whether only a 9mm weapon was used or if another weapon was also used by another attacker. Needless to say, it is important that a high-level investigation take place. A former prime minister*

⁸ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1010324-equitable-economy>

⁹ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1006408-descent-into-chaos>

being attacked this way is not a small matter and cannot possibly be brushed aside. Which is why it is encouraging that the federal government has written to the Punjab government to form a JIT for a thorough investigation. It is largely unlikely that the PTI will agree to any investigation announced by the federal government in any case; the PTI has said it has decided to name the prime minister, the interior minister and a military official in an FIR regarding the attack. It is understandable that tempers are running high, and there can be no ifs and buts about a clear, open, transparent investigation into this matter but it is also important that everyone takes a step back and waits for more details to emerge. That in no way means taking any official version without question. *In this, the Punjab Police has to also answer questions since it was responsible for the security during the march. If there were security lapses, those need to be investigated. If the victim has said he blames certain individuals for the attack, let an investigation look into all allegations.* The questions that have been raised need to be answered: should the Punjab government have provided more security to Imran Khan's long march? Why was the crime scene not cordoned off for forensics? Imran had been talking about threats to his life. Why have those threats not been taken more seriously?

Diamer school arson, Editorial, Dawn, 10 November¹⁰

The obscurantists' war on education continues, as a girls' school in Gilgit-Baltistan's Diamer district was torched early on Tuesday. Local officials have held "terrorists" responsible for this reprehensible act and have vowed to rebuild the school along with providing security to educational institutions. This is not the first time violent elements have torched schools in this highly conservative part of GB; there have been several similar attacks over the past few years. *However, what is welcome, apart from the government's resolve to resist the extremists' desire to wipe out education, particularly for girls, is the fact that local elders have condemned the act of arson and have called upon the authorities to nab the culprits.* Moreover, it is also heartening that schoolgirls in neighbouring Astore district staged a brave march to condemn the torching of the school. The Diamer area is no stranger to extremist activity. Only last month, armed militants ambushed a GB minister, demanding that their fellow fighters involved in acts of terrorism be freed. There was also some noise by right-wing forces against a women-only sports gala that was organised in the region recently. *The ground reality that this is a conservative region must be kept in mind, and community engagement is essential to ensure there are no violent disruptions to educational activities in this remote and underdeveloped area.*

¹⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1720075/diamer-school-arson>

Border Dispute, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 22 November¹¹

In an act of unprovoked aggression and a clear violation of Pakistan's border, seven people have been injured in Pakistan across the Afghan border near Khurram district on Sunday, including two children, who sustained severe injuries. *The border continues to be one of the most contentious issues for the two countries, leading to fatalities on both sides. Since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, cross-border attacks against Pakistani security forces have increased exponentially.* In response, Pakistan ordered retaliatory airstrikes into Afghan territory; resulting in even more chaos. The government has been forced to adopt a hardline stance because it has exhausted all other options. However, whether this lethal force would do anything to neutralise the Taliban's regime remains to be seen. *Tensions between the two countries come at a critical juncture-Pakistan is already facing tremendous opposition for its diplomatic recognition of the Taliban's regime but has not been able to assuage its controversial ally, whose militants have long found a safe haven in the Afghan border. The border is also home to other dangerous groups such as Hafiz Gul Bahadur, closely affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Haqqani network. The Taliban's regime in Afghanistan has also emboldened previously dormant factions of the TTP to reunite and indeed, the country is already witnessing a resurgence of terrorist activity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.* Pakistan must find a way to regulate its border with the increasingly rogue Afghanistan-constant confrontation will only make matters worse. In this regard, the country must reaffirm its commitment to modernizing the border and take preventative security measures against insurgence in the area. Both countries require a comprehensive framework for border management to improve the flow of trade without compromising the region's security. Pakistan must exercise its right to defend the Durand Line regardless of the Afghan state's recognition of it

URDU MEDIA

Prime Minister's China visit and expectations, Editorial, *Ummat*, 01 November¹²

After becoming the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif is visiting China for the first time. *There is no doubt that the condition that Pakistan finds itself in today has been caused by the political leaders. These leaders for years made Pakistan borrow loans and now it cannot even breathe freely.* In 2008 when

¹¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1030459/border-dispute/>

¹² <https://www.ummat.net/2022/11/01/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

Gen Musharraf had decided to leave the government Pakistan had a total debt of \$42 billion. In the last 15 years it has gone up and reached \$115 billion. Till June 2023 Pakistan will have to pay back loans amounting to \$27 billion. Total foreign reserves of Pakistan are merely \$8 billion. *Because of this really bad situation Pakistan needs friends and China is at the top of the list. Pakistan has taken loans from China earlier as well. Even for CPEC projects loans were taken but on the second phase of CPEC projects no satisfactory work was done, especially on the industries and agriculture sectors. If progress was made in these two sectors at least repaying China's loans might not have been difficult.* Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said before taking up the visit that China should extend the due date for repaying its \$6.30 billion which Pakistan is supposed to repay in next 8 months. Besides, Pakistan has asked for more loans. China has already kept deposits of \$3 billion to stabilize Pakistan foreign reserves. China has been increasing the date of these deposits by one year every year. Now Pakistan wants to extend the date either by three or by five years. *The delay or relief in loan is okay; but these are not solutions to the problem that Pakistan is facing. Pakistan should request China to complete the CPEC projects fast so that work on industrial and agriculture sectors will be started and capital starts getting generated in Pakistan.* Without this Pakistan cannot repay its loans. It is hoped that Shehbaz Sharif will raise these matters during his visit and it is also hoped that as always China will come to Pakistan's rescue.

Prime Minister's Saudi and china visits, Muhammad Mehdi, Jang, 02 November¹³

Pakistan has been caught in a severe political crisis for the last five years. Because of this country's main economic program, the CPEC is facing many issues. *Many CPEC projects which should have been completed long back are delayed. That is the reason that the country's economy is in an abysmal situation. To address this economic situation Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited China and assured the Chinese that there would be no further delay in completing CPEC projects now on.* Finance minister Ishaq Dar was asked to prepare all details in this regard in a short period of time and it is expected that the details were discussed with the Chinese during the visit. At the top of the list is better transport facilities. Similarly, updating railway lines was an important project and it is said that the ML-1 project will see some progress soon. Pakistan often faces an energy crisis which directly impacts the country's economy. For this on the one hand cheap supply of oil and gas is one way and the other is solar energy. It is said that a project was discussed for producing 10,000mg of electricity by using solar energy. *It is also important to see how*

¹³ <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/279059>

the US and the IMF are seeing these measures. This is important, especially in the context of Pakistan's pro-Saudi Arabia stand in the dispute between the US and Saudi Arabia. The position that Pakistan has taken is indeed because of the brotherly ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia; it also has economic reasons as was clear from the visit of Shehbaz Sharif to the kingdom recently. Meanwhile it is being said to the US that they do not see the measures of Pakistan with suspension and the latter is not involved in any block politics. All Pakistan wants is to stabilize its economy.

Maintain peace in the wake of the attack on Imran Khan! Editorial, *Ummat*, 04 November¹⁴

Thank God that the assassination attempt on Imran Khan failed and the country was saved from falling into a deep crisis! Unfortunately one overseas Pakistani was killed in the attack. If Imran or any of his senior leaders was killed a new crisis would have started in the country. Pakistan has been caught in a consistent political crisis which has also affected the economy. The investigation on the attack is in its initial stage. Thankfully the attacker was arrested. The attacker is Muhammad Naveed who was grabbed by PTI workers before he could do any further damage. Also it was a good sign that the attacker was not killed by the mob and has been arrested by the police. Then there is contradiction in the statements of the accused: On the one hand he says he had decided to kill Imran once the latter started his long march from Lahore; on the other hand he says he decided to kill Imran after seeing deck/music was played in the march during the Azaan (The Islamic call for prayers!). The second statement is immediately proven wrong because the attacker had a pistol from the beginning. Also he chose to attack at a place where he could run away through a nearby street. Thirdly, the attacker belonged to a poor family and could not afford a pistol which according to police costs about 5 lac PKR. Then the question is was he alone or he had some more people with him. That needs to be found out.

Political seriousness for national interests, Editorial, *Daily Dunya*, 10 November¹⁵

The “long march” of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) will resume today. Despite the call of Imran Khan the other day to his party workers to end their protests, they continued more or less across the country. *For some time now it has come to light that whenever a party wants to express its anger the most affected area is the motor-ways. Stopping traffic on the highways is considered a success of*

¹⁴ <https://www.ummat.net/2022/11/04/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

¹⁵ https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2022-11-10&edition=LHR&id=6460795_30

the protest; but this act causes huge trouble for the common people. Therefore, PTI should tell its workers to stop blocking roads and causing troubles to the common people. Will this concern be kept in mind during the “long march”? This will get clear in the coming days only. It is not a correct way to protest in which people face trouble and they cannot use roads. Furthermore, the “long marchers” will have to cooperate with the administrative arrangement in the background of the attack on Imran Khan on 3 November in Wazirabad. *To come out of the crisis the country and the people need to think. For that the government and the PTI will have to show sensibility and act patiently and they will have to talk to end the deadlock. Despite all protests the solution is to talk about resolving matters. Then why wait for further deterioration of the crisis?* First the political crisis destroyed the economy; now it has started to show its negative impacts with the rise in crimes in the country. Dacoits are running amok in Sindh. In an attack in the last week dacoits caused a huge loss to the Sindh police. Street crimes in Karachi are also increasing. Situation in Punjab is no different as the crime rate is increasing in rural and urban areas. Not only the economic situation but the social issues also demand that the instability in the country should end. For that all political parties need to introspect and take decisions which will help in ending the deadlock in the country’s politics.

Economic crisis and the measures by the government, Editorial, Jang, 15 November¹⁶

If the measures taken by the government to deal with the serious economic crisis that Pakistan has been through are successful then not only that country will come out of the crisis but it will also be set on the track of development. In this regard Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has come up with certain proposals. Also, *the government has started a roadmap called “Pakistan Outlook 2035” which will be used to plan a new economic policy to introduce changes in the economic structure and increase the country’s exports.* This can lead to fast and sustainable economic development and also help in bringing inflation under control. *Speaking at a convention in Dubai, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said that in the last four years Pakistan had started becoming Sri Lanka, not Singapore. Ishaq said that the previous government had let the dollar be free and destroyed the economy. By removing that government the ruling alliance has saved the economy. He said that Pakistan has decided to buy (cheap) oil from Russia and has briefed Washington about this.* Pakistan is working on stabilizing the economy. The government is acting on the IMF conditions and has good relations with China, Saudi Arabia and UAE. *The issue of climate*

¹⁶ <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/289196%22>

change is a serious one. The August floods unleashed havoc in Pakistan and caused a damage of worth \$35 billion. The damage of this scale cannot be met by Pakistan alone and it needs international support. The "Pakistan Outlook 2035" program will start in 2023. The country's economic structure needs changes which can be achieved by adopting a consistent policy framework for a year. For that political stability in the country is necessary. However, every political party wants power by hook or by crook which creates hurdles in achieving political stability. Political parties should at least agree on an economic charter so that the country comes out of the economic crisis. For that everyone will have to think big, beyond their personal and vested interests. Unfortunately Pakistan is facing such troubles at the moment from which it needs to be saved. The country needs a strong economic policy and everyone should support that.

Institutions should be clean of politics, Editorial, Ummat, 22 November¹⁷

The finance minister has taken notice of the leakage of tax details of Army chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa and his family. Finance minister Ishaq Dar has asked the FBR to investigate the serious matter as it was against the law. The minister has advised the advisor to the Prime Minister on revenue Tariq Pasha to submit a report in this regard in 24 hours. Ishaq said that whoever has leaked the information, s/he committed a big mistake. *The decision by the finance minister to investigate the issue of leaking out the tax details of the army chief and his family is right.* It is hoped that the culprit will be held accountable and punished accordingly. But this was not the first time that tax details of important personalities were leaked. *Lt. Gen. Asim Bajwa's tax details were also leaked in 2020 which was released by the same foreign website, "Fact Focus".* The matter was investigated and the additional surveillance director of the security exchange Arsalan Hijazi had submitted a report in which he had held 18 people responsible for the leak. But after that no action was taken against these people. *Now the matter has become serious as the tax details of the army chef and his family have been leaked. Moreover, the details have been leaked on social media. All this implies that when the law is weak and the guilty is not punished then such incidents keep happening.* Submitting tax statements is a normal practice across the world. Every taxable individual is supposed to submit tax statements annually. In Pakistan submitting tax statements and paying taxes are already weak. Despite the extension in the dates in a population of 220 million only 1.5 million have submitted the statements, 40 percent less than the previous year. On that the incident of leakage of the tax details of the army chief will affect the trust of the people in the institution. Therefore the matter needs to be taken seriously. It is the

¹⁷ <https://www.ummat.net/2022/11/22/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

responsibility of the state to protect such personal details. It needs a re-assessment of the whole system.

When the sun sets! Ayaz Amir, Daily Dunya, 23 November¹⁸

Many times it has been witnessed that whenever there is a transnational phase for power and authority the situation goes out of control? When Ayub Khan was in control no one could challenge him. Once he started losing the grip on power, slogans against Ayub were heard in the streets. Same happened with Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Today the situation has turned the same. Never has there been a situation of the "powerful;" like this. People, are speaking (against the establishment) and the people who were proud of their power are worried and helpless. All had already shaken. But the story on a website has come as a big shock. The story has spread like a wild fire across the country. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's statement that an inquiry team would investigate the leak deteriorated the situation, rather than helping. On 20 November the news came on social media. It appeared at the time when the army chief was preparing to leave. It seems it is the repetition of what happened at the time of Pervez Musharraf and gen. Aslam Beg. It appears to be part of one ups and downs in life. The reports are based on facts. It did not require a commentary. Though these facts are in the records of FBR; but searching, collecting them and then publishing them is a daring task. The situation would not have come to this point if there was no lack of trust in the government or the "powerful". Had the appointment been made there would have been no crisis. The issue has some complications though. A person's name that is being circulated is completing his term two days before the retirement of COAS. Rumors are that the Sharif's were in favor of him because he was against Imran Khan. One has to be smart not to mention the names as that may bring trouble. It is being said the Mr. X is supporting A and Mr. Y supports B. While all Imran and the people like this writer demand is that merit should be the criteria. Moreover, Imran Khan is marching towards Rawalpindi at the time when the decision has to be made. If the decision was taken on merit who would have pointed fingers? But if there is something wrong Imran Khan will not sit silent. The question then is what is happening to Pakistan? Where has the country reached? Who has the real authority? There were issues in the past but never had one heard such stories. What lies in the future nobody knows!

¹⁸ https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2022-11-23&edition=ISL&id=6484233_29933127

What is the Ultimate aim of the Long March? Off the Record with Kashif Abbasi, ARY News, 02 November¹⁹

The row between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the ruling coalition heated up with Imran challenging Nawaz and PMLN Vice President Maryam Nawaz hitting at the long march. Meanwhile, the protest march towards Islamabad could not gather pace. The PTI started the fifth day of its long march from Gujranwala but it could not cross the city. Addressing the participants, PTI Chairman Imran Khan said that *he will defeat Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz-Quaid Nawaz Sharif from his own constituency. "Nawaz Sharif, I challenge you, when you come back, I will beat you in your own constituency,"* he said. *What is the aim of the long march, the host asked the guests? How can the issue be resolved? Guests:* Ali Nawaz Awan-PTI, Faisal Nawaz Kundi-PPP & Amir Zia-Journalist. **Faisal Nawaz Kundi** pointed out that long march is coming in intervals and they wait for the miss call and intervention from above. *The audios of the PTI leaders and press conference should be questioned, why they are talking about bloodshed in the long march.* We have already formed a political committee to talk with the PTI but they have underlined that they will only talk with the establishment and not with the government. The political committee is made of senior leaders from the PDM parties. Why Imran Khan is talking about Martial law? It does not suit a head of a big party and an ex PM. **Ali Nawaz** asked what the use of talking to the government is, we will only talk to establishment that can bring change on the ground. Imran Khan is not saying that make him PM, we are only saying that there should be fresh elections. The government should talk about the pre-requisite of the talks, they want to break our rule in the PTI ruled provinces. **Amir Zia** pointed out that all the parties like PTI, PDM are struck at one point and there is no exit point for them all. They should talk to each other in Parliament and meetings but it would not happen. Therefore they rely on the establishment to take sides and interfere in politics. *The way Imran Khan is dragging the long march, it looks like that he want to solve the issue before reaching Islamabad and in that case if establishment can play a part they should intervene.*

Is this a long march or walk? When will new COAS be announced? Najam Sethi Show, 24 News HD, 02 November²⁰

About the recent announcement of the extension of the long march **Najam Sethi** first asked *is this a long march or long walk because march means*

¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr5ZBv7djsw>

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07wu4Kc36ic>

marching fast and reach the end and finish the march but it seems like the real agenda of the march is to take a long walk and finish the time negotiations behind the scene works in Imran Khans favour. Imran Khan is not in a hurry because he is not able to build the pressure and without any breakthrough he will not reach Islamabad. Imran Khan is realizing that he is not able to talk to the army and there is feeling that there will be no elections therefore now he is saying that the protest can go up to ten months. *Now he is getting ready for a face saying and also getting the supporters ready for the long haul.* Although the tall leaders of PTI has tried its best to talk to the army and put sense in Imran Khan not to fight with the establishment and go back to parliament but Imran Khan is going on a different trajectory. *If the federal government is dissolved, all the provincial governments will have to be dissolved and for that there needs to be dialogue between the opposition and government.* The Supreme Court has already announced that it will not let the long march to destabilise the country based on the way the PTI leaders are announcing that there can be bloodshed. The court is making sure that Imran Khan give commitment not to get down to violence on streets. There is lots of controversy on the appointment, on one hand the Imran Khan is saying he will come in power and appoint the chief on the other hand the PDM government is saying we will appoint him. If government appoints, then Imran Khan will keep criticizing the chief and there was an effort to keep Imran Khan away from the chief's appointment. This is one reason the appointment is delayed. This is true that both sides will have a favorite or choice, the government and PTI. *The GHQ has to send five names, it has still not been done, who will make to the list is a mystery* and this will again delay the process who will be ticked or crossed from the list. There will be a major delay in the appointment because this will become controversial especially in the situation that has developed in the country.

Is this an assassination attempt? Why hast in Investigation? 11th Hour with Waseem Badami, ARY News, 03 November²¹

It was underlined on the show that the shooter was not alone and it seems that he has backup and if this is the case, the attempt was really to kill Imran Khan as was disclosed by the shooter who was later grabbed by the police. Claims were also made by PTI leader Imran Ismail that in fact there were snippers and fire was coming from all sides and it was clearly an assassination attempt. He also informed that *Imran Khan has named three names who are responsible for the assassination attempt on his life.* He added, Action must be taken against them. Nation will not sit back and watch these murderers playing with the life of the nation. We demand justice. Chaudhary Fawad Hussain of the PTI claimed on twitter, *it was a well-planned assassination attempt on Imran*

²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWc-NTiyHPc>

Khan, the assassin planned to kill Imran Khan and leadership of PTI, it was not 9 MM it was burst from automatic weapon, no two opinions about that it was narrow escape. Imran Khan from Hospital bed has accused PM Shahbaz Sharif, Rana Sana Ullah & Maj. Gen Faisal Naseer, of ISI, for assassination attempt against him in Wazirabad. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Mr. Khan's successor, condemned the shooting and has ordered an immediate investigation. Officials said a suspect was arrested at the scene. Local media reports suggested the gunman had acted alone. Also, the PTI worker Abtisam Hasan who stopped the shooter from further shooting is celebrated as a hero especially by PTI and he is appearing on TV channels narrating the heroic incident. On this show he informed that *the aim of the shooter was on Imran Khan and it was an automatic gun* that fired continuously. He said that the saver is bigger than the killer and that Imran Khan is the leader of Muslim Ummah.

Who will be the next army chief? Appointment highly politicised? 11th Hour with Waseem Badami, ARY News, 22 November²²

The PM Office has tweeted that it has received the summary from the Ministry of Defence with a panel of names for the appointment of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of the Army Staff. It further added that the Prime Minister will take a decision on the appointments as per the laid down procedure. *The selection of the new COAS has become a big issue and has been highly politicised especially after Imran Khan named one of the army head responsible for his attack.* So who will be the next army chief and how and will be the summary be accepted or the PM will decide and take action on its own?

Guests: Qamar Zaman Kiara- Advisor PM, PPP; Arif Hameed Bhatti-Analyst & Ali Zaidi-PTI, head PTI Sindh. *Qamar Zaman Kiara* pointed out that the political statements and debates are not part of the policy making. If the decision has to be made on 26 November, summary will come on time. It is not important to be on one page, army and government but he added we all have to work according to the constitution. Imran Khan is telling the establishment not be neutral and take a decision and send the government home, in a way he is inviting the army to interfere in politics. Imran Khan should not work through threats but sit and talk with the parties, this will interfere in the larger working of the country. *Arif Hameed Bhatti* underlined that the issue is so much politicized that it has become dangerous for the country. It is clear that the appointments has to be done, but he pointed out that it has already been decided and signatures are put on the paper. Imran Khan's long march will not impact the selection and there will be backdoor talks with Imran Khan in April.

²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hY4SiMsvTh8>

According to sources it has been said that PM has sent the list back and put name of his favorites. *Ali Zaidi* pointed out that Imran Khan has never said anything about the extension of the army chief but he has always questioned the intension of the appointers (PM Shehbaz Sharif). We stick to our view that the COAS should be selected on merit and the people selecting the army, their merit should also be checked.

General Asim Munir will be next COAS? The Najam Sethi Show, 24 News, 24 November²³

Was it a dossier or something else send by ISPR to Defence Ministry with a name of list? Then according to rule the secretary of defence has to make a summary and then send it to PM office. Therefore the PM office was saying till the time they receive the summary they will not announce. *The bottom line is ISPR just send the facts/list and then the defence ministry makes a summary to send it to PM house. This is the reason that created confusion and thus conspiracy theories.* All the six names on the list are of same batch of graduation, therefore the list is based on seniority based. When asked what will be the end result? Najam Sethi pointed out that it is clear that General Asim Munir's name is on the top and would most probably the next COAS and it will be announced soon. It has to be noted that Bajwa has underlined that it is his last speech and Asim Munir will be made chief days before deadline and formally on 26 November. There will be no delay from Presidents side because the whole army will back the new COAS and the Arif Alvi will not go against the decision and take any risk. About the *farewell speech of outgoing Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa*, especially about not interfering in politics Sethi pointed out he made a simple speech in few words and it had all the meaning and message. He underlined that the point that Bajwa said last February the army decided not to interfere in the politics has many meanings, first it indicates that the army admitted to their mistake of hybrid regimes and interference in politics. Second it indicates that the time they stopped interference in politics Imran Khan's government fell down. Also they made it clear that in the future also there will be no interference from the army in the future in politics.

²³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLui7wD_Mms

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Wazirabad ²⁴	03/11/2022	One killed, 7 injured in attack on PTI's convoy in Wazirabad	01	07
quetta ²⁵	30/11/2022	Suicide bomber attacks Pakistan police guarding polio vaccination team, kills four	04	30

²⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1718659/one-killed-7-injured-in-attack-on-ptis-convoy-in-wazirabad>

²⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/blast-targeting-police-patrol-injures-over-20-pakistan-official-2022-11-30/>