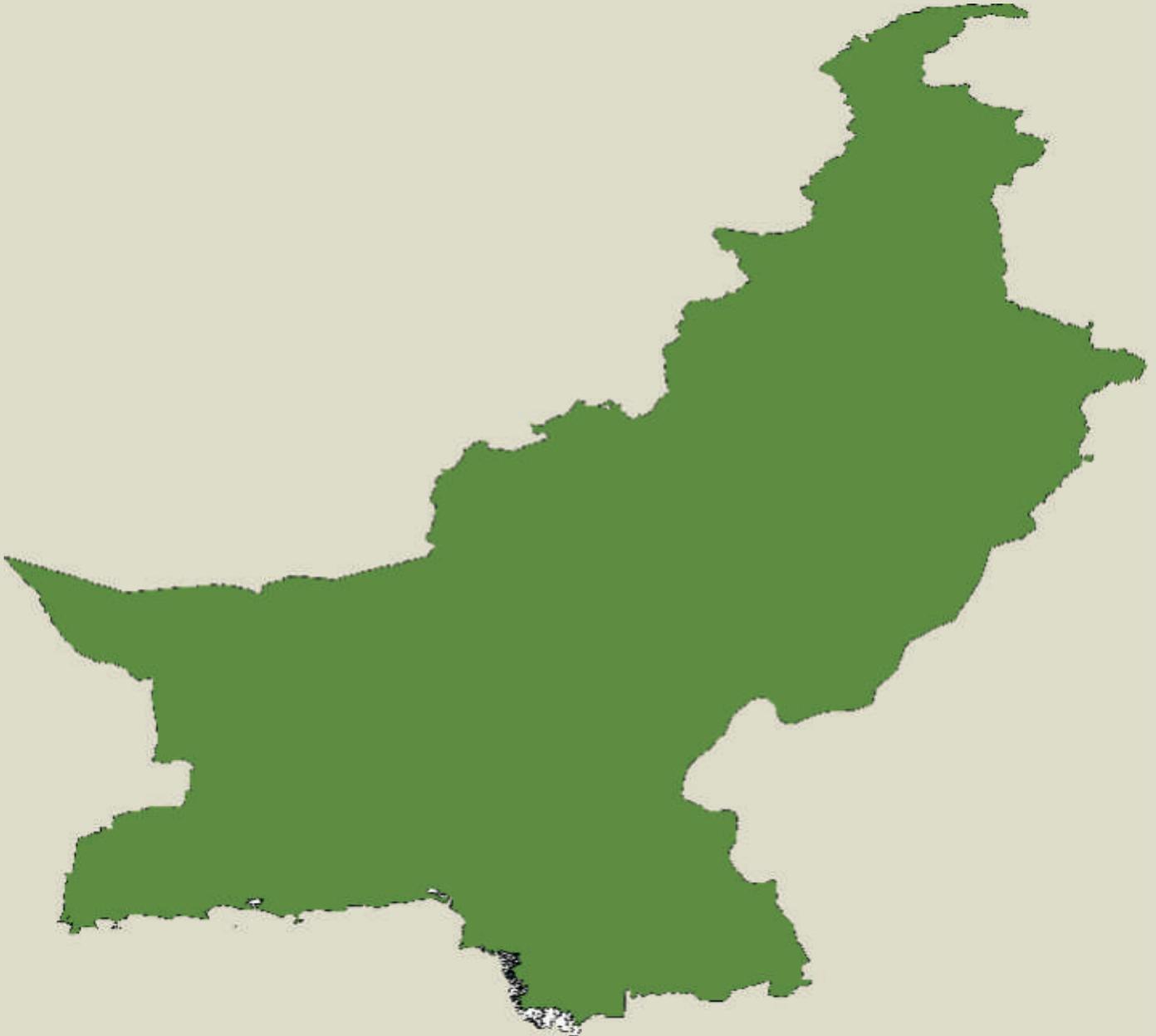


October 2022

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



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

October surprise? Editorial, *The News*, 03 October¹

The federal cabinet has decided to formally launch legal action against former Prime Minister Imran Khan after the latest audio leaks pertaining to the US cipher. The second round of audio leaks featured PTI Chairman Imran Khan, his then principal secretary Azam Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Asad Umar all discussing the 'cipher' and how best to use it. There is also the not-so-small and somehow super convenient revelation that a copy of the cipher has gone missing from the Prime Minister House. *In a rather strident press conference, a visibly victorious and freshly-exonerated Maryam Nawaz has suggested that Imran's Bani Gala residence be raided to recover the missing copy. In response, PTI leaders say the copy from the PM House was sent to the National Assembly speaker who then sent it to the chief justice of Pakistan. In short, we have a rather tragically comic situation. We are just three days into the month of October and already the political stakes are raised sky high. After the IHC overturned Maryam Nawaz's conviction, there is little doubt that there may be jitters in the PTI camp since the IHC ruling could also mean an end to Nawaz Sharif's 'self-exile'.* There have always been speculations that the PTI, which has been at the peak of its popularity, wanted early elections to cash in on this popularity wave while the PML-N in government was fighting with rising inflation and its two main leaders – Maryam Nawaz and her father Nawaz Sharif – were out of the electoral race. This gave an added advantage to the PTI.

Bajwa's contention, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 06 October²

It was reassuring to learn that the armed forces have distanced themselves from politics. Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who is touring the US these days, was quite categorical when he reiterated that he will be doffing his uniform at the end of his three-year extended tenure by the end of November, and that politics is no more a ball game of the security forces. These two utterances have come at an opportune moment as the nation was unnecessarily being pitched in a crisscross of rumours related to the professional decisions of the armed forces, as well as the undeniable linkage of its influence in day to day politics. Gen Bajwa has cleared the air, and made room for a scheduled transition of power, which literally is a good omen for public confidence and prosperity of the country. At the last leg of his professional assignment, *Gen Bajwa has recrafted Pakistan-US relations. The cold shoulder that had set in has literally been addressed, and cooperation with Washington in terms of military and counter-terrorism domains strengthened.* This will long be remembered as his legacy. Now with a firm word from the military head, politics of exigency and misinformation must come to an end. As the country is ripe with difference of opinion in political spheres, the army must be kept aloof. It will be a great service to the country and its institutions.

¹ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/996590-october-surprise>

² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2380280/bajwas-contention>

Dissecting Biden's statement, Kamran Yusuf, *The Express Tribune*, 17 October³

'What I think is maybe one of the most dangerous nations in the world: Pakistan. Nuclear weapons without any cohesion. Joe Biden. However, the latest statement has stirred a great deal of controversy as it is rare that in recent years senior US officials, let alone the President, publically questioned the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. Given the fact that President Biden is given briefings on such matters regularly, his statement cannot be taken lightly; though some observers say it has to be seen in the full context. The focus of his speech at the fundraiser event was on the changing global geopolitical scenario. He spoke at length about Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin's attempts to use technical nuclear weapons to advance his strategic objectives. One part of the statement no one is talking much about was Biden saying that China is revisiting its relationship with Pakistan, India and Russia. He did not elaborate since Pakistan has a strategic relationship with China. However, in recent months there have been concerns that Beijing is not happy with Islamabad. President Xi is particularly concerned over the security of Chinese nationals in Pakistan. The statement by Biden comes at a time when there has been a positive momentum in the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and the US. *But the latest Biden statement would certainly be seen as a setback as regards the gradual improvement in the relationship. Foreign Minister expressed surprise over Biden's remarks as the Foreign Office summoned the US Ambassador over the controversy. However, Bilawal insisted that it will not have any negative impact on efforts to reset the bilateral ties.*

Imran's victory, Editorial, *Dawn*, 18 October⁴

The voters have sent their message through the ballot box, and it appears that the majority is still with Imran Khan. Though the former prime minister did not enjoy the clean sweep he may have hoped for, comfortable victories on six of seven National Assembly seats in three different provinces have considerably strengthened his hand. There are some important takeaways from the Oct 16 by-polls. *First*, the PTI's marathon jalsa's over the past few months have not just been good for optics, they have also translated into votes at the ballot box. Citizens turned out in large numbers to cast their votes in nearly all contests barring Karachi, despite by-elections usually being low-key affairs. *Second*, this means that the former prime minister's narrative is very much alive and driving large numbers of citizens' voting choices. *Thirdly*, a question mark remains on the electability of PTI leaders other than Mr. Khan. The firebrand politician's public image as an unimpeachable, uncompromising leader has managed to hold up despite his follies and questionable decisions. *Come the general election, the PTI chairman will be under pressure when deciding tickets. He will need to balance realpolitik with his voters' idealistic demands.*

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2381916/dissecting-bidens-statement>

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1715634/imrans-victory>

Journalist's killing, Editorial, Dawn, 26 October⁵

Too many questions are swirling around the tragic killing of senior journalist Arshad Sharif in Kenya late on Sunday. And unless they are answered, by the Kenyan authorities as well as our own administration, the truth about Mr. Sharif's killing may never be unveiled, and those responsible for his death will not be brought to justice. As per the Kenyan police, the late TV anchor was travelling as a passenger in a vehicle which failed to stop at a roadblock. The police, who were searching for a stolen car according to the official version, opened fire, resulting in the death of Mr. Sharif. Kenyan law enforcers say it was a case of 'mistaken identity'. But it needs to be explained why lethal force was used when the automobile failed to pull over, and why officers shot the late journalist in the head. *Arshad Sharif had been in self-imposed exile since August after an arrest warrant had been issued for him, following a controversial interview the anchor had conducted with PTI leader Shahbaz Gill, while he had been critical of the establishment since Imran Khan's government was ousted in April.* Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has urged the Kenyan president to ensure that a thorough probe is conducted, while on Tuesday the PM said a judicial commission would be formed to investigate the killing. The need for a transparent probe is all the more important since Mr Khan's claim that Arshad Sharif was the victim of a "targeted killing", and that the slain journalist had been receiving threats. *The fact is that our record when it comes to protecting journalists is far from satisfactory. According to UNESCO's figures, 85 journalists have been killed in Pakistan since 1993, with hardly any of the perpetrators of these crimes being punished. Every threat to journalists must be taken seriously, while those who threaten the media fraternity must face justice to end this climate of impunity.*

Burnt bridges, Editorial, Dawn, 28 October⁶

The establishment reached for the nuclear option as it attempted to reassert itself ahead of the PTI's announced long march on Islamabad. *Smarting from recent allegations and insinuations of its involvement in the killing of journalist Arshad Sharif, the military brought out its big guns to respond. For the first time in the country's history, the DG ISI, the chief spymaster of the country's premier intelligence agency, addressed the public in a joint press conference alongside the military's spokesman.* Saying he was "forced" to make an appearance and set the record straight because his institution and its people were being relentlessly attacked, Lt Gen Nadeem Anjum, who otherwise prefers working away from the cameras, expressed at length his indignation at those slandering the armed forces. "When lies are being spoken so easily, fluently, and without inhibition from one side that there is a danger of chaos and upheaval in the country, the truth cannot remain unspoken for too long," he said about his decision to

⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1716937/journalists-killing>

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1717298/burnt-bridges>

speak out. Meanwhile, there are other lessons to be learnt. Due to the manner in which the establishment repeatedly interfered in political and civilian affairs over decades, the civil-military schism we see today was bound to happen. It is true that the people of Pakistan have always loved their armed forces and will continue to do so, but their love should not be considered unconditional. *It is there for those who give their blood to protect the country against its enemies, not for those who manipulate the country's political system. We sincerely hope that at least this one lesson has finally been learnt from the situation.*

SECURITY SITUATION

Terror threat, Editorial, *The News*, 09 October⁷

A surge in terrorist activities by the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has prompted senators and the people of Swat to sound alarm. The Senate witnessed a heated debate when senators from both sides of the aisle expressed their concerns over recent developments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in Swat and its adjoining areas. Senators have demanded a briefing over a recent threat alert that the interior ministry issued about heightened risk of terrorist attacks by the banned outfit. Since the activities of the Taliban have attracted much attention during the past couple of months, it has become a point of public concern that the government and state institutions must address at once. There is an immediate need for the interior ministry to take parliament into confidence. People in Swat have also carried out protests this week to demand the elimination of anti-peace and anti-state elements from Swat district, warning that if the state does not take action, the residents of Swat will take up arms. That the people of Swat, who have borne the brunt of Taliban rule and fought bravely against them, have to come out on the streets and demand that the state protect them should be a moment of shame for the government and state whose responsibility it is to protect its citizens. How long will we expect our people to lay down their lives in this fight against terrorism? When a large number of people take to streets in Swat demanding the government to take decisive action against militant elements in the valley, the government should take it pretty seriously.

Terror in GB, Editorial, *Dawn*, 11 October⁸

The chilling recent episode in Chilas, where militants were able to practically hold hostage a sitting Gilgit-Baltistan minister along with several others by blocking Babusar Road, exposes a shocking lack of security in the area. A little-known outfit calling itself

⁷ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/998396-terror-threat>

⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1714414/terror-in-gb>

Mujahideen Gilgit-Baltistan and Kohistan on Friday brazenly stopped GB Minister Abaidullah Baig, who was travelling from Gilgit to Islamabad, whisked him away and held up traffic on the high-altitude road for several hours. *The minister was later freed, but only after political leaders and clerics from Diamer, as well as local officials, negotiated with the militants.* Apparently, the militants want their comrades some involved in the deadly 2013 terrorist attack on the Nanga Parbat base camp, in which foreign climbers were targeted freed, along with an end to women's sports activities in GB. *They said the road was blocked because the state failed to honour a 2019 agreement with them, while giving the government a 10-day ultimatum to meet their demands.* The state, particularly the security establishment, needs to explain how this massive security lapse occurred. It is astounding that militants were able to block a major artery with such ease. This time the militants let the hostages go; next time they may not be so 'benevolent'. Moreover, the policy of negotiation and caving in to the demands of violent actors is a flawed one, and has always failed. *The state should by no means release men involved in heinous acts of terrorism, while the militants' other demands, such as ensuring women disappear from the public sphere in GB, must also be dismissed.*

Anti-militancy protests, Editorial, Dawn, 13 October⁹

Protests against creeping militancy have been taking place in KP for several months now. But the latest demonstration in Swat, which was held after gunmen killed a van driver, Hussain Ahmed, and injured two schoolchildren in an attack on Monday, was amongst the biggest of its kind, with solidarity protests held in Haripur and Battagram as well. The disturbing incident brought back memories of the attack on Malala Yousafzai a decade ago in the same region, in similar circumstances. Though militants had been behind the attack on the Nobel Prize winner, the authorities are tight-lipped about the latest incident, while no group has claimed responsibility as of yet. However, the people who bravely came out on the roads of Swat have no illusions about who is responsible for this and other acts of violence in their area as they chanted 'no more terrorism'. A cross-section of civil society and political activists joined the demonstration. *Meanwhile the KP government spokesperson has said 'splinter groups' opposed to the faltering peace talks between the state and the banned TTP were behind the upsurge in violence.* It is very difficult to agree with this assertion as the TTP and its splinter groups are amorphous in nature, coming together when the need arises, and separating when the situation demands it

⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1714788/anti-militancy-protests>

FATF exit, Editorial, Dawn, 23 October¹⁰

After nearly four-and-a-half years of trials and tribulations, Pakistan has finally exited the FATF's so-called grey list of countries. *It is a victory that ought to be celebrated as an example of what it is possible for the country to achieve when the national leadership works together towards a common goal.* Pakistan's placement on the FATF's enhanced monitoring list had been widely resented, but it has done considerable good for the country. As a result of the pressure from the international watchdog, Pakistani authorities worked together to overhaul the regulation of the domestic financial system to enhance monitoring of who has been using it and how. This not just helped satisfy the FATF's conditions, but it has also made it much more difficult for nefarious elements to use the system to launder black funds or move them around. *Oversight of the various channels of the financial system will greatly strengthen the state's hand as it targets criminal activities and the proceeds from their crimes in the future.*

Another lynching, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 31 October¹¹

Humanity stooped to a low when two people were attacked and lynched in broad daylight by a vigilante mob in Karachi's Machhar Colony after rumours spread that they were child kidnappers. *Local police have confirmed that the two were actually employees of a cellular company carrying out routines checks on antennas and signals in the area. They were roaming in their vehicle and equipped with different devices when some miscreants spread rumours about them. Later on, a crowd of 500 to 600 people gathered and beat them to death.* Many such brutal cases have come to light in the past such as those of Mughees and Muneeb Butt in Sialkot, Mashal Khan in Mardan and Priyantha Diyawadanage, the Sri Lankan citizen, also in Sialkot. However, this has most commonly occurred in alleged cases of blasphemy or when street criminals are caught by the public. *It is explicitly clear that in Pakistan this is more of a social problem. Such acts cannot be justified through any means, religious or otherwise, and should have no place in any respectable and dignified society.* That such heinous acts are carried out unabated by the credulous masses is a clear indication of moral degradation, lack of social empathy and low socio-economic standing. It also indicates the dangers of social media and information dissemination. The people here are not tech-savvy and can therefore not differentiate between authentic and fake information being forwarded on different platforms. This is exactly how the rumour suddenly turned into a reality for the people of Machhar Colony.

¹⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1716492/fatf-exit>

¹¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2383953/another-lynching-1>

Why was Miftah removed? Mazhar Abbas, Jang, 05 October¹²

The removal of the former Finance Minister Miftah Ismail was neither a coincidence nor because of the economic crisis. Miftah was removed because of the tussle in the PML-N which could impact the 2023 elections in the country. *The story of Miftah Ismail being removed as the finance minister is interesting. Caught between the two prime ministers, Miftah had to get things approved from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from London. On that fateful day the situation was the same. Miftah Ismail said that the prices of petrol had to be increased by calling London to Nawaz Sharif. Nawaz said wait. Miftah called Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and sent a message to Nawaz Sharif. Shehbaz Sharif said go ahead. When the notification was issued, Nawaz got angry and called Miftah. Miftah said I had messaged you but there was no reply and the Prime Minister had given his permission.* According to some sources, it is not limited to Miftah Ismail. Nawaz Sharif has his own cabinet in London which includes Ishaq Dar. It was Shahid Khaqan Abbasi who would answer to the Nawaz cabinet. In a meeting he said to Ishaq that it was easy to criticize by sitting in London. Come to Pakistan you would know the ground situation. On the political front as well, things were not good. It is said the “neutrals” were not happy with Hamza Sharif. Some senior leaders were of

What will happen to Pakistan? Rauf Klasra, Daily Dunya, 09 October¹³

Given the fact that something keeps happening every day, one question is on everyone's mind: What will happen to Pakistan? Someone asked me last week: Where is Pakistan headed? Until some time ago the writer would try to answer these people seriously. Later it occurred to the writer that neither they could be convinced nor be I. *A woman asked the writer: What will happen to Pakistan? There was concern in her voice and eyes. But forget about today. Since the day Pakistan was formed the country has been facing these kinds of issues and questions. During all these years neither have the questions changed nor the answers. I tried to console the woman by saying that with time things may change. There was never an ideal situation. Is the situation in Ukraine or Russia any better than Pakistan?* In the earlier times people used to kill each other. According to some historians today people are living better lives. The kind of situation that existed 150 years ago is not found anywhere now. 150 years ago the average life in Europe was 40 to 50 years. Today people in Europe do not die even at the age of 80. For thousands of years rulers were cruel. They could not be held accountable for any heinous crime of theirs. They would enslave people the same like them. In those times the ruler was like a God. It was believed that all wrong things are done by common

¹² <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/255696%22>

¹³ https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2022-10-09&edition=LHR&id=6409688_48990102

people only and they deserve punishment for the same. ... Today people can elect their rulers with free will. They can speak against them. No one is hanged outside a king's place without a trial for opposing the king. *She remained silent for two minutes and asked: What will happen to Pakistan? I said to myself: What would it cost you if you were to listen to her for two minutes!*

Next elections and the future of religious parties, Shabbir Ahmad Khan, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 13 October¹⁴

*One major reason for the failure of religious groups making an impact in elections has been the conflict between these groups. Whenever they fought elections as a united group they have done. During Zulfikar Ali Bhutto era Mufti Muhammad of Jamiat-e-Islami had formed government in a province. In 1977 nine religious groups united against Zulfikar. Then, this alliance started a successful movement for Nizam-e-Mustafa (the system of governance under Prophet Muhammad) in Pakistan. A vote bank for religious-political parties does exist in Pakistan. If the elections in Pakistan are analyzed one can find that whenever religious-political parties have fought elections together they have done better and outperformed other parties. For example in KP and Balochistan, the vote percentage of some religious groups is almost 20 percent. It is difficult to assess the exact percentage of the religious parties' vote bank as many of their supporters also vote for other political parties: They think by voting these religious parties their votes may get wasted. If the religious parties come together no other party can form the government in Pakistan without their support. All religious parties believe in the constitution of Pakistan. The constitution supports democratic system in the country and is guardian of the Islamic Articles present in the constitution as well. But still without forming an alliance it is not possible for the religious parties to succeed in elections. On that *the cause of the rift between religious parties is not religion: It is politics. The issue between them is who will lead such an alliance, if formed? This issue can be resolved by holding dialogue.* ... Religious political parties can become a formidable political force in Pakistan. For that these parties need to come on one platform.*

US President's unfound statement, Assadulah Ghalib, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 17 October¹⁵

It was America that dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It does not suit the country to lecture Pakistan calling the latter's nukes unsafe. America has been an aggressor for decades; no country of the world is safe from America's aggression. American nuclear submarines travel the world. The American armed forces have destroyed many countries. Washington has no legitimacy to raise questions on any peaceful country. *Pakistan has taken strong notice of the US President Joe Biden's*

¹⁴ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Gawadar/2022-10-13/page-10/detail-5>

¹⁵ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/17-Oct-2022/1626930>

statement that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are a danger. ... Pakistan carried out nuclear tests in 1998 after India did in the same month, i.e. May. Experts of nuclear weapons have time and again certified that Pakistan's nuclear tests were successful while India was a failure. Nuclear weapons/assets in India are so unsafe that thousands of Indians have died because of them. Reports about nuclear things being stolen have made headlines in international media. India is so dangerous that it has deployed 9 lakh security forces in a tiny part of Kashmir. Senseless talk of the great powers is not something new. Britain had cooked up baseless stories about Saddam Hussein: Saddam had dangerous biological and chemical weapons. President Biden's America used this fake report to invade and destroy Iraq. Later former Prime Minister of Britain Tony Blair accepted that the report was false and he apologized for that.

Political uncertainty in Pakistan, Editorial, Daily Dunya, 18 October¹⁶

There is political uncertainty in Pakistan. PTI Chairman Imran Khan is adamant on his political statement that elections in the country should be held immediately. In fact the recent win in the by-elections has further emboldened him. *Speaking at a press conference the other day, Imran Khan said that if the elections were not announced by the federal government he would announce his "Long March". On the other hand the interior minister is talking about using force to stop the march, though he overlooks the changes that have taken place since 25 May when he could stop PTI's long march to Islamabad. It would be wise to avoid such a situation. For that the political factions need to act sensibly. The government and the PTI need to be flexible in their stands and try reach to some agreeable position where no side is seen as loser. If the political factions think about the country's interests instead of their respective vested interests it is not impossible to find a mutually agreeable solution.* Politicians should try to adapt the way of dialogue and resolve their differences and do not throw the country into a deep crisis. Pakistan is already in a deep economic crisis. Even at the social level the situation is tense. The society should have zeal to work together for the betterment of the people of the country; but the society in Pakistan is divided along the political lines of the parties. The issues that Pakistan needs to face as a nation will depend a lot on the country's political culture. The regional countries that Pakistan considers as its rival in economic development and at the international level are much better politically. Benefiting from this they have been able to sustain their development process. ***But Pakistan has been unable to restore political stability. A lot of blame for that goes to the political leaders of the country.*** People believe in the leadership of these politicians but the latter have failed to the belief of the people of Pakistan.

¹⁶ https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2022-10-18&edition=ISL&id=6423399_38602419

All should come together for peace in Swat, Editorial, Jang, 21 October¹⁷

Fear is again taking over in Swat. Apart from terror incidents there are reports of abduction and extortion. Businessmen are openly threatened for extortion. Even the politicians and ministers are not spared. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government minister Altaf Khan has been asked through a letter to pay 80 lakh as extortion. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has rejected that the letter was sent by the group. *Many TTP warriors had come together for talks in June and July 2022 in Afghanistan with the facilitation of the Afghan Taliban. Later they were first seen in the Dir area in Swat in the month of August. Since then there has been a consistency in the incidents of abductions, extortions and violence in the area.* Speaking in the national assembly, the Defence Minister said that the situation in Swat was like it was 12 years ago. The sparks of fire in Swat are reaching Islamabad, he said. Even the centre can face threats. The centre cannot stay silent on this serious issue. *The minister was right in saying that the battle for power between politicians can be fought later. The state issue should be resolved by sitting together. The government in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) should cooperate with the federal government.* The situation in Swat and deteriorating peace and security is neither a provincial issue nor of the center: It is the issue of Pakistan. There should be no politics on the serious issue for point scoring. It should be resolved by sitting together.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Thousands protest against increasing violence in Swat valley? ARY News, 11 October¹⁸

Thousands of residents in KPK's Swat Valley took to the streets on Tuesday 11 October 2022 to protest against the growing insecurity and violence in the city following the killing of a school van driver by unknown assailants a day earlier. The sea of people took to the city's Nishat Chowk, *chanting slogans against the rising number of killings in the area and demanding the government do more to ensure the safety of the residents there.* The protestors demanded the immediate arrest of the culprits involved in the shooting and warned that if their demands are not met within 24 hours, they would march to Islamabad. The thousands-strong demonstration was carried out in the wake of the recent incident of violence in the city where a school van driver was shot dead by an unknown assailant. Two students were also injured in the attack and taken to the hospital for treatment. *The protest – the sixth in the past two months – was reportedly attended by over 15,000 people. Local sources claim that Tuesday's demonstration was the largest ever in the history of Swat Valley. The speakers including Manzoor Pashteen and Mohsin Dawar demanded that the government control the terrorist*

¹⁷ <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/268036>

¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAYah6ZtA14>

outfits the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan who are back and spreading terror in the city. They said that the residents of Swat must be given protection, which is their constitutional right. The police told the media that they had ruled out terrorism because it was a targeted attack on one individual, but they are continuing to investigate. They said that no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Mohsin Dawar, a member of Pakistan's National Assembly and a prominent rights activist, condemned the latest attack and said that it should be a "wake-up call" for the state. He said that he has voiced concerns about the increased presence of militants in the area since joining the parliament, but nothing has been done. Dawar said that the government does not understand the gravity of the situation because they do not directly feel the heat. He said that if the political and military leadership of Pakistan does not sit to resolve this menace, the situation would be out of control in the coming days.

Imran Khan Stuns rivals, grabs six NA seats in the by-elections? Off the Record with Kashif Abbasi, ARY News, 17 October¹⁹

The latest by-elections results simply followed the trend set by the July by-elections — the PTI is on the rise. *The PTI won big in Punjab and KP, and lost one of two in Karachi. One can conclude that the party still doesn't face much competition in KP; that in Punjab, it now poses the most serious challenge to the PML-N; and that the vote in Karachi has fragmented.* In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Imran Khan managed to upstage both JUI-F and ANP. The PML-N did not fare well on National and provincial assembly seats. Out of three PA seats, it managed to clinch just one while the other two went to the PTI. However, the MQM's future as a sustainable political force is now questionable. *Imran Khan has again appealed that the PDM government should go to elections and underlined that he will announce the march soon.* **Guests:** Faisal Kundi-PPP, Ali Nawaz Awan & Farrukh Habib-PTI. **Faisal Kundi** pointed out that if we do not sit and bring electoral reforms there will be rigging in elections. This time elections were free and fair and the election commission has done a fair job of conducting a smooth by elections. There are indeed flaws in the elections commission. We are not part of PDM but are coalition partners and it is not right to say that the seats were handpicked. This time there was not much turn out and on top of it the top leaders of PTI like Imran Khan was in fray, so it worked in their favour. **Ali Nawaz Awan** pointed out that the PDM has fought the elections collectively and tried to chart out a strategy, it was a pick and choose by elections for them. Who has stopped the tall leaders of PDM to fight elections, quit their seats and go in the ground? PTI leader **Farrukh Habib** levelled allegations of differences in the voters' list available with the presiding officer and those provided to the candidates. He said presiding officer's list did not include the names of their voters and a list with complete names was provided after the party workers protested against the ECP officials. ECP spokesperson responding to Habib's accusations, said the

¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AAhG0HurZA>

election in the respective constituency was delayed due to insufficient security. "Voter lists are compiled under a transparent and error-free process," the spokesperson said.

Was it a mistaken identity or Target Killing? Analysis by Najam Sethi, 24 News, 25 October²⁰

Senior journalist Arshad Sharif fled the country after he was charged with sedition. The 49-year-old journalist *fled the country in August to avoid arrest after he was slapped with multiple cases*, including sedition charges over an interview with PTI leader Shahbaz Gill during which the latter had made controversial comments. **Alleging threats to his life, Mr. Sharif had moved to Dubai in August and later relocated to Kenya. The untimely death of the journalist sent shock waves across rights organisations, the media fraternity and civil society and prompted calls for thorough investigation and disclosure of facts.** Sethi pointed out that mistaken identity can be one reason in a place ridden with hostile environment and terrorism. But there should be through inquiry to probe the target killing angle. It has been reported that the people who shot him has been arrested in Kenya. Earlier it was said that Baloch insurgents talk about the army and give antiestablishment comments. Recently FIR was launched against Manzoor Pashteen for anti-army comments. The point is that now antiestablishment comments are made in the mainstream and even in the media there are anti army comments. This is a dangerous development and has a tendency for implosion. The voices by the PTI terming it as a target killings are adding fuel to the present situation. Najam Sethi *underlined that this anger and people outcry against the army cannot be put under the carpet any more.* When organizers invite speakers like Manzoor Pashteen and Qazi Faiz Isa in conferences like Asma Jehangir conferences which is allowed to take by the government, they will speak the truth. These people are been mistreated and they talk about it *and their voices cannot be stopped by FIR's.* These events now go to the social media in a second and they cannot be stopped.

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGsWgXZVY6Q>

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Mastung ²¹	14/10/2022	Former Chief Justice Among 4 Killed in Insurgent Attacks in Pakistan	04	00
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Charsadda ²²	23/10/2022	Two Pak policemen killed in separate attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	02	00

²¹<https://www.voanews.com/a/former-chief-justice-among-4-killed-in-insurgent-attacks-in-pakistan-6790575.html>

²²<https://theprint.in/world/two-pak-policemen-killed-in-separate-attacks-in-khyber-pakhtunkhwa/1179372/>