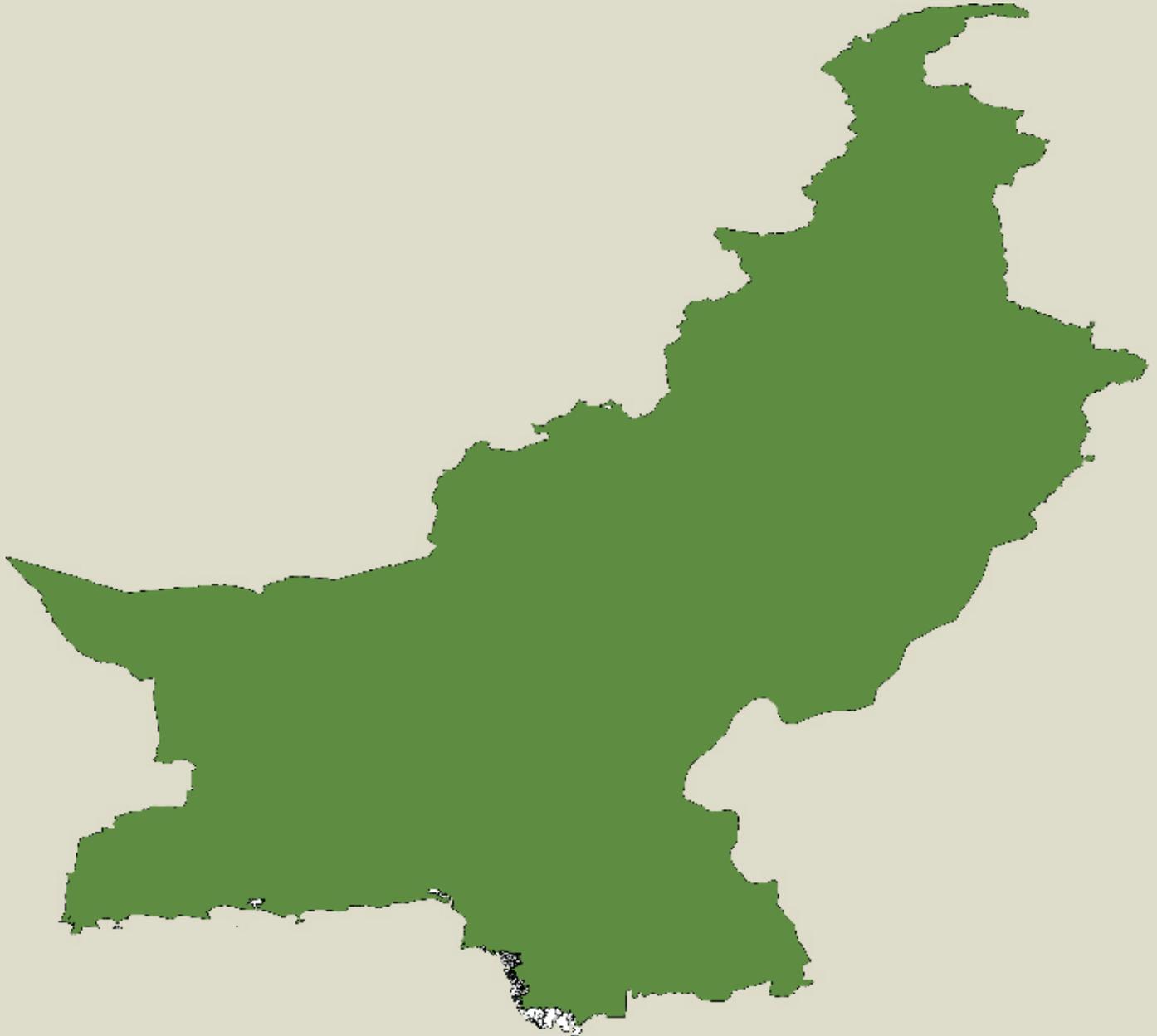


SEPTEMBER 2019

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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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
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रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, September 2019

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Deal Politics, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 06 September¹

Conspiracy theories of a “deal” between the Sharifs and the Miltabishment originate mainly from media touts of the Miltabishment or PTI. They allude to secret meetings between Miltabishment emissaries and Shahbaz Sharif focused on the “voluntary” exile and silence of Nawaz and Mariam, plus a pledge not to undermine the Miltabishment or destabilize the Imran Khan regime, in exchange for some relief from NAB prosecution of the Sharif family and an enlarged role for Shahbaz Sharif in the affairs of the current parliament and future government. *Why is the Miltabishment keen on a “deal” with Nawaz?* There are two main reasons for this initiative. *The first is the abysmal failure of the Imran Khan regime to deliver the Miltabishment agenda of good governance and development without which no artificial political dispensation can last for long. The second is the nature of the geo-strategic crises facing Pakistan which can only be contested successfully on the basis of a national consensus which is lacking because of Imran Khan’s vindictive, single minded pursuit of one sided “accountability” via NAB.* The Miltabishment dilemma is accentuated by the fact that the more the judiciary bends before its will, the more it loses credibility; the more Imran Khan’s “selected” government flounders, the more its puppeteer is discredited; and, by corollary, the more Nawaz and Mariam Sharif’s narrative gains in the popular imagination. *Until now, the Miltabishment has got away with its political shenanigans because two opposition leaders have gone against the grain of popular opinion. Asif Zardari and Shahbaz Sharif have not sided with Nawaz and Maulana Fazal ur Rhman in launching a popular movement to dislodge the PTI government.*

¹ <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/deal-politics/>

Defiant Nawaz, stone-faced Zardari, Murtaza Solangi, *The Friday Times*, 06 September²

Sharif, who has been languishing in jail following a verdict by issued by Judge Arshad Malik on the eve of his birthday last year, is reportedly not budging from his position. It is said that he is refusing to cut a deal with the powers that be. In the same vein, it is rumored that efforts are afoot to woo former president Asif Ali Zardari, but there seems to be no positive response from his side either. Positions of opposition parties are hardening as Maulana Fazal ur Rehman prepares to strike Islamabad in October, with or without his allies. *The deal offered to Sharif revolves around silencing him and his daughter Maryam Nawaz Sharif. It includes the possibility of exile for a few years. The objective of the move is aimed at providing political stability to the “engineered” political set up in place since last year.* The recent move of approaching the ailing former premier was orchestrated by the “Deal Group” of his party in consultation with his brother Shehbaz Sharif, who reportedly has always supported reconciliation rather than resistance against the Miltablishment, sources say. *Sharif holding ground and a cold response from the PPP may force key players to go in overdrive to break both parties and stage a coup d’état in Sindh, says an analyst. The status quo is not sustainable as the present set-up is shaking to its foundations. This is a classic example of abject failure with economy, foreign policy, parliamentary performance and governance, all taking a nosedive with no chances of revival, said another top analyst.*

Sindh vs Centre, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 13 September³

The PTI’s political ambitions in Sindh are no secret. The party ruling the Centre has, from time to time, been trying to make a case for change in the provincial government — being run by the PPP — citing the ‘sufferings’ of people at the hands of ‘corrupt’ and ‘inefficient’ rulers in the province. A change in Sindh is now back on the PTI’s agenda — albeit with a change in strategy, devised by a 12-member Strategic Committee (having six members each from the PTI and the MQM-P) formed by the Prime Minister. And the Strategic Committee head Federal Law Minister Barrister Farogh Naseem says that he plans to advise the PM to invoke Article 149, a constitutional clause, and take over the administrative control of Karachi for its uplift. The suggestion that the barrister plans to make has already provoked *the ire of politicians, writers, intellectuals and civil society activists in Sindh — some of whom have gone as far as calling the proposal a conspiracy against Pakistan, and demanding the proposer’s resignation.* All that indicates that the political temperature in Sindh is all set to rise in the coming days, with the people of Karachi continuing to suffer as always.

² <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/defiant-nawaz-stone-faced-zardari/>

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2055029/6-sindh-vs-centre-2/>

PTI's lopsided anti-corruption drive, Syed Mohammad Ali, *The Express Tribune*, 13 September⁴

While our current government made tall claims about uprooting the scourge of corruption within the country, its track record thus far is not inspiring. *Despite these irregularities, the current PTI government's probe has avoided focusing on corruption in Musharraf's era and focused on the PPP and PML-N governments, a fact that the Transparency International (TI) has now noted.* In 1996, TI rated Pakistan as the second most corrupt country out of the 54 it surveyed. The corruption situation has improved but it has still not been overcome, given Pakistan ranked as the 117th least corrupt nation out of 175, in 2018. What then is the difference between the vindictiveness of politicians against opponents in earlier eras and the anti-corruption drive of the current PTI government? *Despite having rallied against Musharraf's government, the PTI government seems reluctant to probe the actions of political heavyweights who were part of it, especially those who have now joined PTI ranks.* The PTI remains hesitant to probe corruption within the so-called "deep state". *It has not been able to stop giving discretionary funds to MNAs and MPAs, despite the tensions it creates between local governments and public representatives whose job is to legislate rather than dole out funds to their constituents.*

Lopsided accountability, Editorial, *Dawn*, 13 September⁵

Amidst the political tumult unleashed by the accountability process, and its ever-widening ripple effect, Chief Justice of Pakistan Asif Saeed Khosa *has voiced his unease about the way the wind is blowing on several fronts.* The country's top judge, who has a little over three months to go before his retirement, described as *"dangerous" the growing perception "that the process of accountability being pursued ... at present is lopsided and is a part of political engineering"*. They indicate a realization at the highest levels of the justice system that we stand at a critical juncture where the rule of law is fast being eroded by a charade of accountability, and a political witch-hunt becoming more farcical by the day. *Two former prime ministers and a former president are behind bars; several duly elected representatives of the people have also been silenced, thrown behind bars for one reason or another; there is no longer even an appearance of probity.* The media, far from acting as a check on this abuse of power, is in retreat, intimidated into acquiescence rather than acting as a conduit for diverse opinions. While it is unfortunate that Justice

⁴ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2055046/6-ptis-lopsided-anti-corruption-drive/>

⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1504948/lopsided-accountability>

Khosa has recognised the clear and present danger to democracy somewhat belatedly, *that he has done so at last, and laid out the perils in such a comprehensive a manner, is heartening.*

The regime, Cyril Almeida, Dawn, 15 September⁶

Perhaps Imran really has no interest in anything beyond becoming PM as a final chapter in a life well spent. Or perhaps in finding their latest useful collaborator the competence deficit is more than what had been hoped for. Either way, in eviscerating great chunks of his political capital in little over a year, Imran has landed himself in an awkward and potentially perilous situation: on balance, it's not quite clear if the veneer of legitimacy Imran brings to the hybrid regime is really worth the headaches he's created for the regime. *But if what's gone wrong is obvious and how we've got to this miserable point in double-quick time is fairly clear, there's a more fundamental problem with the hybrid regime: it can't work, no matter who is trotted out to front it.* That Imran has proved rubbish at managing the provinces, and thereby undercut the rationale of the hybrid regime, has obscured the point that the provinces can't be managed from the centre. But then no regime can tolerate multiple power centres across the provinces. It's a riddle with no solution. *The internal contradictions of a hybrid regime are too many and too varied to be adequately and sustainably overcome. By now, it's apparent to all what this is: it isn't very pretty and it's probably going to get a whole lot uglier.*

Maryam's place in PML-N, Editorial, Dawn, 18 September⁷

Ruling on a complaint by some PTI politicians, the ECP has confirmed Ms Nawaz can remain vice president of the PML-N, but at the same time has banned her from playing a more active role in the party's affairs. The details of the verdict have been reserved but from what emerged in the media immediately after a short ruling was announced, the ECP apparently deems *the position of vice president as ceremonial and of no consequence.* Having been convicted by a court of law, Ms Nawaz has been barred from holding any 'functional' office in the party. This means that she cannot take charge of the PML-N as its secretary or president or under any other title, even in a temporary 'acting' capacity. The argument is that, instead of proving it is better than others on the basis of its performance in government, the PTI as a political party is just too eager to celebrate developments where its rivals are incapacitated because of court actions or other reasons. Whether or not a convicted person can hold party office is a legal question that any citizen can

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1505305/the-regime>

⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1505856/maryams-place-in-pml-n>

raise. But the matter is bound to be viewed in a different context if PTI lawmakers *show too much enthusiasm in pursuing the case and petitioning the ECP to remove Ms Nawaz from her post in the PML-N.*

The new media monitoring cell, Khurram Husain, *Dawn*, 19 September⁸

In case you haven't noticed, the government is now taking strong fire on the airwaves. Night after night, highly rated TV anchors, many of whom were equally vociferous supporters of the government about a year ago, are taking to the air to pummel the regime on its governance and economic management track record. One take that naturally starts doing the rounds in times like these is that there has been some sort of a 'falling out' in critical quarters between the government and its powerful backers. Another take is that the economic pain has now risen to a level that it has become impossible to ignore, and TV anchors, being a fickle lot, have picked up on the pain and have decided to jump the barricades. *In any case, what is significant to note now is that the politics of the adjustment are in full gear, and Imran Khan is struggling to find his footing.* For the moment, the high interest rates have placed a mammoth burden on industry. The documentation drive and the exchange rate depreciation has hit the traders and associated services industries very hard, disrupting supply chains and rocking their cash flows violently.

JUI-F campaign against the PTI government, Dr Raza Khan, *The Express Tribune*, 19 September⁹

The Jamiat Ulema-e Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) has stepped up its efforts to contact other opposition parties to launch a "decisive" agitation against the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The JUI-F head, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, has vowed to launch an all-out campaign against the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The mainstream opposition party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), has pinned its hopes on the JUI-F and its leaders to work as a spearhead against the incumbent government and use the prowess it derives from young students of seminaries affiliated with the group. However with the changing political situation in the country due to rifts within the ranks of the PTI, the government's near-failure to provide much-needed relief to the people, *and instead making their lives more difficult due to its economic policies and prevalent and pervasive incompetence in the federal, Punjab and the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) governments, the JUI-F's protest against the PTI government has become profoundly important.* Historically, religio-political parties have launched important anti-government movements in Pakistan

⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1506067/the-new-media-monitoring-cell>

⁹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2059620/6-jui-f-campaign-pti-government/>

and been quite successful in weakening the governments against whom they spearheaded protests.

Imran Khan's headache in Punjab, Arifa Noor, Dawn, 24 September¹⁰

Punjab is and will continue to be the main political prize — partly for its size and partly because it has not been and will not be a single-party province. *The failure of Buzdar will, unfortunately, strengthen the notion of Punjab needing a strong, centralised leadership.* Shahbaz Sharif may have his good points, but he lent credence to the idea that good governance is about a good administration, where only one personality mattered (and decided). And it was an overly centralised governance model, which was heavily dependent on Shahbaz Sharif and bureaucrats. *And now it seems the PTI does not have anyone competent enough and trusted enough to run the province.* Even if Khan finds someone he trusts enough (and who proves to be more capable than Buzdar), the rest of the party will not stop trying to undermine him in the hope of landing the position. The party culture of infighting makes it impossible any other way. *Even if Jahangir Tareen had not been disqualified and landed the position, he would have faced a constant struggle. And this search for the ideal number two to replace the real life number two (aka Shahbaz Sharif) will be Khan's constant challenge while he is in power.*

Trump's 'offer', Editorial, Dawn, 25 September¹¹

Though Donald Trump's offer to mediate between Pakistan and India on the Kashmir issue may come across as a sound idea, there's very little reason to believe that the American president is keen to pursue it. For one, *Mr Trump is known for his mercurial character, saying one thing and then making a U-turn within days or even hours.* Secondly, *mediation can only work if New Delhi sheds its rigid stance that the burning issue of India-held Kashmir is an 'internal' problem.* The fact is that while Pakistan should welcome mediation, it should not have any expectations on this front from Mr Trump. While bilateral attempts to resolve the Kashmir issue have stalled, Pakistan should continue to engage with world capitals and inform them of India's atrocities in the held valley. *Indeed the UN General Assembly is an ideal forum to tell the world of the plight of Kashmiris who have been suffocating under Indian occupation for decades.*

The diplomatic battleground, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 25 September¹²

¹⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1507025/imran-khans-headache-in-punjab>

¹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1507228/trumps-offer>

¹² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1507229/the-diplomatic-battleground>

Carried away by such off-the-cuff remarks, our foreign minister takes no time at all to declare it a diplomatic victory. *He ignores the fact that such an offer comes with the condition of India accepting arbitration. "If I can help I will certainly do that," said Trump.* "If both (Pakistan and India) want, I am ready, willing to do it," he added. India's position not to accept third-party arbitration on Kashmir is very clear, and there is no pressure on it to change its stance. *Pakistan's diplomatic clout has eroded over the years because of political instability and economic insecurity.* The government has failed even to build a national narrative on this critical issue. Imran Khan has been warning the world of catastrophe if the Kashmir issue is not resolved. *But the internal political strife in Pakistan and its economic dependency on other countries have raised questions about our ability to defend ourselves.* While the prime minister is fighting a diplomatic battle, the political situation at home does not give us much confidence.

Inverted priority for media, I.A. Rehman, *Dawn*, 26 September¹³

The government has wrongly been advised about the creation of special courts to try media owners and journalists because, firstly, no rational justification for the move has been offered and, secondly, neither the media community nor democratic defenders of freedom of expression are likely to allow the media's strangulation. *The first argument against the media tribunals is that they are not needed. Institutions capable of dealing with any possible media offences are already in existence.* The announcement about media tribunals followed the prime minister's complaint that certain media outlets had made libelous attacks on government figures. That alone cannot justify the creation of special courts for the media. The media community's angry reaction to the nakedly sinister move has been clear on basic issues. *The Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors has called for a joint struggle by media organisations against government's intention to introduce dictatorial and black laws.* The All Pakistan Newspapers Society has described the special courts as a means of "intimidating and strangulating the media; they are not only unconstitutional but also contrary to the spirit of democracy.

Heart attack? Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 27 September¹⁴

The fact of the matter is that the US is walking a tightrope between two objectives: in the short term, *it tactically needs Pakistan's unstinting support to extricate itself honourably from Afghanistan – it now wants Pakistani to*

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1507452/inverted-priority-for-media>

¹⁴ <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/heart-attack/>

bring the Taliban back to the negotiating table with the US – and it needs Pakistan to stand with it and Saudi Arabia in their simmering conflict with Iran; in the long term, the US is committed to propping up India as a strategic partner in its conflict with China. The last thing President Trump wants in his election year is a conflict between India and Pakistan that drags Pakistan away from focusing on getting America a good deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan. When Mr Khan was asked whether President Trump had sought his mediation between the US and Iran, Mr Khan replied: *“President Trump asked me to talk to Iranian President Rouhani which I did...” without elaborating further.* It’s no wonder then that Imran Khan told Richard Haas at New York’s Council on Foreign Relations that if he (Mr Haas) had had to deal with this situation, he would have had a heart attack!

Local governments in Punjab: for better or worse, Hasaan Khawar, *The Express Tribune*, 17 September¹⁵

It is interesting to note that during the last forty years, the local governments functioned for 10 out of 12 years of military rule, all 6 years of civil rule under a uniformed president but only 9 out of 22 years of complete civil rule. Notwithstanding the fact that military-led governments used local governments to create an alternative political base, the political parties cannot be absolved of their responsibility to not let the grassroots democracy prosper. *For the PTI, the real test will come with the opposition winning a few large local governments. With direct elections of mayors, it is not merely a possibility but a certainty.* Will these opposition-led local governments be allowed to run smoothly and operate with autonomy? This is where most of the past governments had failed. Whether the PTI will be any different is yet to be seen but the fact that local governments in this country have only flourished under military rule serves as a sobering reminder of our weak democratic values.

Media courts, Editorial, *Dawn*, 20 September¹⁶

An extraordinarily unwise and provocative idea, rather than having been discarded after due reflection, is instead being embraced by the PTI government. *The federal cabinet approved the setting up of ‘media courts’, ostensibly to expedite the disposal of media-related complaints within 90 days.* After at least a year of unrelenting assault on the freedom of the press, we can be sure the proposed tribunals will be yet another device to harass and persecute outspoken journalists. An independent press is supposed to hold the

¹⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2057930/6-local-governments-punjab-better-worse/>

¹⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1506257/media-courts>

authorities' feet to the fire; for the government to insert itself into the system that regulates the media presents an obvious conflict of interest. *One can, in fact, ask whether this latest move has anything to do with television anchors of late becoming a tad more critical of the government's performance, something that has undoubtedly discomfited some PTI legislators.* Moreover, if they are indeed set up, what punishments will the courts be empowered to mete out? Should we expect public floggings of journalists, as in the days of Gen Zia?

Khursheed Shah's arrest, Editorial , Dawn, 20 September¹⁷

Senior PPP politician and lawmaker Khursheed Shah has landed where he was expected to a long time ago. He belongs to a party that has forever been fighting allegations of its leaders amassing assets beyond their declared sources of income. *The newest arrest will intensify the battle in the country's political arena. Government ministers might say they have played no part in Mr Shah's arrest, but that has not prevented PTI activists from gleefully celebrating the capture of the seasoned parliamentarian. Regrettably, the government does not mind being blamed for trying to undermine parliament whenever an opportunity presents itself. Nor do the rulers seem to be concerned at the flak that NAB gets over the manner in which it selects individuals and then proceeds against them.* The PTI conveniently maintains that NAB is an invention of the parties which were in power then and are in opposition now, i.e. the PPP and PML-N. Indeed, this view would have secured the government some brownie points had it not been for the sheer defiance of common sense betrayed by NAB's operations. *No investigating authority can retain its neutrality and escape critical censure and public outcry if it appears too sluggish or eager in its methods. The accountability bureau is far too slow in its investigations — but loses no time when it comes to identifying and then arresting suspects.*

How to pull Karachi from the brink? Dr Moonis Ahmar, The Express Tribune, 20 September¹⁸

The recent debate about invoking Article 149 of the Constitution, where the federal government can direct the provincial administration regarding these issues, deepened the polarization between the PPP, the MQM and the PTI. While the last two mentioned rendered their support for Article 149 as the only viable option to prevent a complete breakdown in the city's system, the PPP-led Sindh government vehemently rejected any interference from the Centre and blamed PTI's federal government and MQM's city government

¹⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1506256/khursheed-shahs-arrest>

¹⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2060478/6-pull-karachi-brink/>

for messing with Karachi's issues. *Why has then, despite being a lifeline of the country, Karachi in the past four decades succumbed to poor public transport and infrastructure, water crisis, land-grabbing mafias and a deteriorating law and order situation?* Why have those with Karachi's mandate failed to deliver? Why are its citizens cursing the city, provincial and federal governments for leaving them vulnerable to diseases emanating from heaps of garbage and filth which across the city? Karachi has not degenerated in a day, week, month or a year. It has been a victim of criminal neglect, exploitation and corruption since the last several decades.

Course correction, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 20 September¹⁹

The independent press, which had succumbed to junta pressure, is beginning to anticipate the prospect of breathing freely again. Proof of a halting revival comes from two opposite developments: a significant gang of "journalists" who had sold their souls to Imran Khan, or simply couldn't resist the indiscreet charm of the Miltabishment, *have suddenly taken a U-Turn and launched a barrage of criticism against the cult hero for whom they voted.* Alarmed, the PTI government is trying to rush through emergency legislation to establish anti-media, speedy Tribunals, an effort that is likely to be fiercely resisted by the opposition in the Senate no less than by the media in the courts. *Cracks are also beginning to appear in the upper echelons of the Miltabishment. The loudest whisper is that not everyone is happy with the PM's decision to extend the tenure of the army chief. And the more the political model fails to deliver, the more its chief architects and beneficiaries come under critical scrutiny.* The continuing mismanagement of the economy and its ensuing hardships, in the backdrop of developing crises in relations with India, Saudi Arabia, Iran, America and Afghanistan, is giving sleepless nights to all and sundry. Now Maulana Fazal ur Rahman has announced a million-man march on Islamabad. Nawaz Sharif is on board even if Asif Zardari is still hedging his bets. At the minimum, this will destabilize the government and set back its reform agenda. Maximally, it may spur a change of horse's mid-stream to salvage the situation.

Putting the media on trial, Hassan Niazi, *The Express Tribune*, 24 September²⁰

In a week filled with ludicrous decision-making by the PTI, its decision to establish "media courts" is perhaps the most ominous. Is this how decisions are made by the PTI Cabinet? Does Imran Khan sit in these meetings twiddling his thumbs while people propose making undemocratic laws for the sole purpose of protecting their fragile egos? But if the PTI is actually

¹⁹ <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/course-correction-2/>

²⁰ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2063318/6-putting-media-trial/>

pondering over establishing “media courts” it should get some misconceptions out of its head. *First, the PTI thinks that the media is unfair in its criticism towards it. Pointing out that it is disproportionate as compared to previous governments. This sort of thinking is a product of the PTI's goldfish memory and the fact that Imran Khan is new to power in a democracy.* The PTI also feels that the media doesn't criticise the opposition, or past governments, who are to blame for all the problems that the PTI can't fix. *But, it's the PTI who is in government. Not the PML-N or the PPP.* The PTI owes the media for its popularity. It owes the media for covering protests that lasted for weeks from dawn till dusk. In those days the PML-N government was the one being assaulted in print and on television. Often by columns and news shows in which members of the PTI contributed. Yet, no mention of “unnecessary criticism” was made then, because it seems the PTI gets to decide what is “necessary”. *Imran Khan doesn't like criticism, that seems to become clear with each passing day, but Khan should learn from the history of the perils of groupthink.*

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Economic anxiety, Editorial, Dawn, 02 September²¹

Two months into the ongoing economic adjustment and there are signs emerging of growing anxiety within the government. The IMF programme that the government signed on to in June carried some of the steepest and most challenging targets ever seen, and the task of meeting them is proving to be a herculean feat. *Already there is clamour within industry circles about the rising cost of doing business coupled with collapsing demand, and reports from industry leaders suggest many manufacturing outfits are seeing an approximately 30pc decline in sales.* Coupled with this is the aggressive revenue collection drive that the government has no choice but to pursue to meet a historic 30pc hike in the revenue target for this fiscal year. This pursuit has pushed the government into a confrontation with retailers countrywide, *as well as vigorous entreaties from industry because the documentation measures are resulting in a severe disruption of their distributor networks*

A mini budget in sight? Hasaan Khawar, The Express Tribune, 10 September²²

Ironically, the FBR is not to be blamed here. The problem instead lies in the unrealistic target. Tax collection after all is a function of overall economic

²¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1503069/economic-anxiety>

²² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2053039/6-mini-budget-sight/>

performance and it is no secret that sudden devaluation and exponential increase in interest rates have significantly suppressed demand and slowed down economic activity. In this situation, even achieving the target of Rs4.5 trillion would be miraculous. *IMF has already taken notice of this and is reportedly dispatching a technical team to Pakistan later this month. It seems that the only option to make up for the shortfall is through a mini-budget, with measures like increase in sales tax.* And even this will not mark the end of it. We might need yet another mini-budget within the same fiscal year, which along with some downward revision in the agreed target, might help in reaching a middle ground with the IMF.

SECURITY SITUATION

Where is Jagjit Kaur? Kamal Siddiqi, *The Express Tribune*, 02 September²³

Time and again we have seen Hindu girls being kidnapped and then converted to Islam before being married to a Muslim man. Time and again we have seen the woman then affirm her new faith and identity in a court of law or before law enforcement officials, leaving the family of the girl struggling to find answers. In March, the PM had ordered the Sindh government to launch probe into reports of abduction, forced conversion and underage marriages of two teenage Hindu girls and to take immediate steps for their recovery. Nothing came of the inquiry or the promises made by the government. *Hundreds of girls from religious minority communities are kidnapped in Sindh and other provinces, forcibly converted to Islam and then married off against their will every year in Pakistan.* The disappearance of Jagjit Kaur, a Pakistani Sikh girl from Nankana Sahib, and how the government has handled the matter leaves a lot to be desired. The facts of the case are simple. Jagjit Kaur – the daughter of a Sikh granthi, was kidnapped at gunpoint by a group of men in Nankana Sahib.

On PM's 'no-war' announcement, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 04 September²⁴

In time of tension and trouble, generated from the other side of the border by India's recent actions in held Kashmir, Prime Minister Imran Khan's statement that Pakistan will never start a military conflict is promising and a pro-peace gesture. As Pakistan and India are nuclear-armed states, any deliberate or inadvertent step can be disastrous for both countries and for world peace. The government has struck well on diplomatic fronts in recent days. The world is speaking openly about the now month-long curfew in occupied Kashmir, confining millions to their homes. But back home, statements by some senior

²³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2047172/6-where-is-jagjit-kaur/>

²⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/459507/on-pms-no-war-announcement/>

cabinet ministers and politicians about all-out war on the Kashmir issue are irresponsible, and the prime minister must take note. *At a time when the prime minister is speaking against war because of the nuclear element, a statement by Minister Sheikh Rasheed that Pakistan has several nukes ready to be struck is escalatory and dangerous.* Another minister, Fawad Chaudhry, supported war while speaking in the House. Mustafa Kamal flew from Karachi to Azad Kashmir only to announce waging a war. Similarly, former legendary cricketer Javed Miandad brandished a sword to wage jihad. Side by side, the media is playing the role of a bully brat, inciting the nation to war.

Police brutality and reform, Editorial, Daily Times, 04 September²⁵

The killing of two people in police custody – one in Rahim Yar Khan and the other in Lahore – in as many days demands a moment of reflection from the ruling party, which had made police reforms in Punjab a leading point of its manifesto. Had the police officials involved in the killings of citizens in Sahiwal been punished, the recent incidents of the custodial killings would not have happened. In one of the recent incidents, Salahuddin Ayubi, the man caught after famously breaking an ATM machine, died in the custody of the Rahim Yar Khan police. In Lahore, a middle-aged man, Amjad Ali, died in hospital due to alleged torture by the Gujjarpura police in a torture cell unearthed some days back. He was kept at the building of the forest department in a jungle. *The custodial deaths of Ayubi and Amjad have one again brought the issue of police reforms to the fore. Though customary inquiries into the deaths have been initiated, the most important thing is the intervention of Prime Minister Imran Khan into the affairs of the Punjab police.*

Reforming institutions, Faisal Bari, Dawn, 06 September²⁶

There was a lot of talk of changing the 'thana' culture by introducing police reforms in Punjab when this government took over. But this has gone nowhere over the last year. Many of the people who were brought in to lead the change have already left their respective positions. The IG's pronouncements are indeed not credible. What is missing in Pakistan are the institutional and organizational mechanisms that can initiate, debate, finalize and then implement reform. This is why promises of accountability of individuals or institutions, from the IG Punjab up to the prime minister, ring hollow. Credibility of and trust in state institutions can only develop when they deliver on services in a responsible and predictable manner, when they acknowledge mistakes of omission or commission that are made, when they commit to

²⁵ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/459506/police-brutality-and-reform/>

²⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1503841/reforming-institutions>

credible processes for learning from mistakes, and — most importantly — when individuals/institutions are effectively held accountable for their actions. *This is as true of the rail system as it is of the intelligence agencies. We are nowhere close to this situation in Pakistan.*

Policing The Police, Sabbahuddin, *The Daily Times*, 09 September²⁷

List of complaints against police is long yet genuine. Transgression of authority, harassment, extreme highhandedness, lethargic attitude, failure to respond in time, hesitation to register cases, acceptance of illegal gratification, financial corruption, moral turpitude, connivance and partnership with anti-social elements are few allegations rightly hurled at the Police department. Beside these, public grievances related to institutions professional inefficiency such as biased discretionary actions, misapplication of law, defective investigation and inability to submit evidence-based challans are few amongst a host of condemnations against the department. However these accusations seldom become formal complaints and see an exemplary disciplinary action unless it is highlighted by electronic or social media. The reform efforts carried out during various regimes to improve the institution have so far remained short of achieving their objective probably for the reason that these could not be applied to all police structures in all the provinces. In today's media savvy environment, breach of discipline and bad conduct by Police does not remain hidden and creates instant yet negative ripples in society. *But government's response on such incidents never go beyond an immediate dressing down of senior police officers by dictatorial Federal Ministers who take it as their right to bully and humiliate the officials while nothing concludes on legal front. No heads roll and no punishments are given which further increases distrust by common people on the institution.*

Roots of custodial deaths, I.A. Rehman, *Dawn*, 12 September²⁸

There have been many ineffective campaigns against deaths in police custody in the past, and we should like to hope that the present public outrage will lead to some concrete steps to rid the country's criminal justice system of one of its major flaws. *The recent excesses by the Punjab police include deaths in police stations and torture at unauthorised detention centres.* The way the law enforcement agencies have been kept unaware of modern, non-violent means

²⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/463071/policing-the-police-2/>

²⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1504770/roots-of-custodial-deaths>

of investigation betrays a streak of sadism in the state's mindset. *Deaths at police stations will continue so long as the archaic, torture-based methods of investigation remain in vogue.* That suspects are often tortured at unauthorised places of detention has been known to the government and citizens for decades. These torture dens have been found in police functionaries' official quarters, rented premises and even in a mosque. The country surely needs a new people-friendly police law that will offer citizens firm protection against custodial death. *The state is not bothered about a moral justification for its system of rule, and relies more on force than reason. It has also become more vengeful than ever.* Nothing short of radical changes in the system of governance and social structures will enable the people of Pakistan to redeem themselves as a civilised community.

Ghotki violence, Editorial, Dawn, 17 September²⁹

The vandalism of temples and the destruction of private property, following the registration of a blasphemy case against a Hindu school owner in Ghotki, once again reminds us of the extent to which the social fabric of Pakistani society has been eroded. Though the Hindu community has been living in Sindh for centuries, violent incidents like these leave them defenseless. *The case against the school owner was registered when a student claimed he heard him making objectionable religious statements; he told his father, who then informed the police.* Though it can be argued that those whose religious sentiments have been hurt have the right to protest, no one can be absolved of taking the law into their own hands and targeting another community. *Unfortunately, there have been several incidents that show the blasphemy law's potential for being misused.*

Chaman blast and implications, Editorial, Daily Times, 30 September³⁰

Militants struck in the border town of Chaman in Balochistan and killed senior leader of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F) Maulana Mohammad Hanif and two others. The explosion, detonated with remote control in the main bazaar of Chaman, also left 11 other people injured. *The police say the blast aimed at the life of Maulana Hanif, an influential cleric of the town and deputy*

²⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1505644/ghotki-violence>

³⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/475311/chaman-blast-and-implications/>

general secretary of the JUI-F. The JUI-F has never been a known player in Taliban related affairs. Their rival, the late Maulana Samiul Haq, however, was known as the father of the Taliban. So, apparently it is hard to relate Maulana Hanif's death with Taliban affairs. The fact already established, in the wake of the killings in Kuchlak, is that Taliban elements are present in the province. Their presence will keep creating multiple security challenges to the writ of the government and local populations, such as the Shia Hazara. The occasional resurgence of militants points to the reality of the presence active cells of militants in Balochistan. The conduct of the JUI-F in the wake of its leader's killing is very mature as it has not blamed any quarters unless some irrefutable proof is found. The party is in the middle of preparation for its political battles in Islamabad. Keeping crime and politics apart is the sign of political maturity.

PROVINCES & REGIONS

GB

Revisiting our Gilgit-Baltistan policy, Afzal Ali Shigri, Dawn, 09 September³¹

Mindful of the forthcoming election in GB and a week-long tour of Baltistan by the PPP leadership, the PTI scrambled to hold a workers' convention in Gilgit, with its central leadership promising to settle outstanding issues faced by the citizens including the conferral of their long sought constitutional rights. In view of the changed geo-strategic situation and its national interests, Pakistan must rethink and reset its GB policy by announcing urgent measures to counter India's recent moves in Kashmir. It is important to remove any irritants in the existing opaque governance arrangements without further delay and provide a transparent governance structure based on the consent of the local assembly and a sound legal instrument establishing a strong linkage with the federation.

RTI vital for improving governance in Gilgit-Baltistan, Mehdi Abul Hasan, Pamir Times, 21 September

The Gilgit Baltistan is constantly and continuously kept aloof from the political process for last seven decades. Their political and constitutional right are constantly usurped by the Pakistani Government. The democratic as well as the military dictators vehemently denied the inborn rights of people of Gilgit

³¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1504360>

Baltistan. Although, the area best served the interest of Pakistan through tourism and many other ways. Currently, a democratically elected government is sitting in the federal capital with two third majority. **We demand from the honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Imran Khan, who seems very keen in solving issues and fixing problems of Pakistan to implement the right to information law in Gilgit Baltistan to protect the fundamental rights of citizens of Gilgit Baltistan.** The Government Institutions in Gilgit Baltistan are ridden with financial corruptions. Common people do not have the realization and access to the records as a result of which government servants do massive corruptions especially in WAPDA, PWD, NATCO, Agriculture, Police, AGPR, etc. Moreover, the citizens will also get acquainted of their basic rights. The extension of RTI law to Gilgit Baltistan will also address some grievances of the region as there exists a severe desperation among the people. **People are of the opinion that the state of Pakistan has cornered the people of Gilgit Baltistan. This continuous marginalization will lead someday to radicalisation.so, we demand from the central government to take this matter seriously and do something in this connection.**

Kashmir

Kashmir diplomacy, Abdul Basit, *The Express Tribune*, 20 September³²

From lack of clarity to hyperbolic and inconsistent statements, the government does not seem to have any substantive and long-term plan of action beyond creating optics mostly for domestic consumption. Moreover, using Kashmir for personal aggrandizement is a curse that continues to hobble our capacity to come up with coherent and effective policy responses. Hence, and it pains to say, we will likely end up struggling with hortatory narratives with little traction abroad. *And then we bestow individuals with official positions to accommodate their private comforts. Our entire bureaucratic system unfortunately has become hostage to well-connected people who make to the top on nepotism and have also learnt to continue living in power corridors long after retirement.* We would never learn and even use crisis situations to promote personal agendas. We do not tire of depicting these inconsequential consultations as a historic victory for Pakistan. In fact, even this informal meeting would not have taken place if China had not come to our rescue. *Our reliance on telephone and letter diplomacy is another reflection of our seriousness of purpose. If we are happy and content with the informal consultations and term them as "historic" why should the world oblige us with more?*

³² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2060481/6-kashmir-diplomacy/>

Kashmir & militancy, Editorial, Dawn, 23 September³³

Coming back to the Americans' commendation of Mr Khan's recent move, it must be added that the tone of State Department official Alice G. Wells was patronizing, 'reminding' Pakistan "of its commitment to counter all terrorist groups". While indeed this country needs to do more on this front for its own security, the US is hardly in a position to lecture others. Where South Asia is concerned, the US once played the main role in building the jihadi infrastructure in Afghanistan, then, after settling scores with the USSR, it cut and ran, leaving Pakistan in the lurch. Terrorism is a transnational, complex issue and needs a cooperative approach to tackle; it should not be exploited, and certainly, those states with rather prominent skeletons in their own closets should not lecture others on the need to crack down on militancy.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Capital talk with Hamid Mir, Geo News, 04 September³⁴

On this episode of Capital Talk Hamid Mir invites Shafaqat Mehmood of the PTI, S.N. Iqbal of the PML-N and Maula Bakshi Chandio of the PPP to discuss the internal politics of Pakistan. The host starts by asking question to SN Iqbal about the government's progress in one year? *He answers by saying that the PTI government has totally failed in its efforts on all the fronts, in handling the economy, national security and foreign policy matters and that there is a 50% cut in the development expenditure with economy down by 3%.* He adds that even the government has failed to handle the Kashmir issue, at one hand where the Indian PM is visiting and meeting officials at various international forums, he says our PM Imran Khan and its party members have not travelled outside the country to garner support for the Kashmir issue. To this Shafaqat Mehmood counters and says that all the protests inside Pakistan as well as outside countries are called by the government of Pakistan. *Hamid Mir asks about the rumours that the opposition is planning to protest against the government and are aiming to conduct elections next year and that Maulana Faz-ul-Rehman is preparing for a long march in October.* Shafaqat replies that

³³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1506833/kashmir-militancy>

³⁴ <https://www.geo.tv/shows/capital-talk/246476-capital-talk-2nd-september-2019>

the Maulana has been planning the protests for a long time but he has not done it so far and he will not get support of the PML-N as even there MNA's does not want elections. He adds that that the Maulana is trying to convince and collect a few madrasa students and not all are with him for his selfish political goals. When asked about the PML-N support for such along March, Iqbal informs that during the Rehbar committee meeting, Rehman has requested us to support the march, to decide on this we will convene a meeting of heads of all parties soon. Mr. Chandio questions the government's incapability to gauge the BJP governments move in Kashmir. He reminds that the on May 27 2019, President BJP Jammu and Kashmir announced that they will remove article 370 soon, and even Pakistani intelligence had some input. Why the PTI government took no action and built momentum for the same a bit sooner. *He adds that the real credit to the protests in Pakistan should be given to Indian PM who clamped curfew in Kashmir and abrogated the article 370.*

Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Geo News, 17 September³⁵

In this episode Hamid Mir Invites three prominent leaders **of the opposition Akram Khan Durrani (JUI), Syed Nabi Kamar (PPP) and Ahsan Iqbal of the PML-N** to discuss the looming internal crisis in the country and their strategies to counter the PTI led government. *Hamid Mir hinting towards Shah Mehmood Qureshi's statement that all the political parties should focus on the Kashmir issue now and should not think of protests, he asks the JUI leader to react to his appeal.* Durrani sharply criticizes the PTI government and argues that Imran Khan has sold Kashmir during his visit to US and met Donald Trump. *Except China, Imran could also not gain any support from the international community on the issue of Kashmir.* He underlines that JUI is putting all efforts to unite the nation over Kashmir issue and is organizing a *rally in solidarity with Kashmir on 19th September 2019 in Muzaffarabad, which will be attended by Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman.* Ahsan Iqbal reveals that Nawaz Sharif wants PML-N to take an active part in the long march organised by JUI in October and that the party will look into the logistics and management of the march and are hoping to announce it formally (jointly) with JUI. *PPP leader informs that all sections of people are not happy with the current government and it looks like that PTI is using a regress policy to put*

³⁵ <https://www.geo.tv/shows/capital-talk/247854-capital-talk-17th-september-2019>

people behind jails, thus ignoring serious issues like economy. Ehsan Iqbal also justifies PML-N's decision to join the long March and argues that the PTI is talking about the long march as an attempt by religious party to disturb the peace of the country, *and therefore we want to join and give message that it is indeed a political campaign against the corrupt government.* The host asks about India's external Affairs minister, Jaishankar statement yesterday which emphasized that soon India will have physical jurisdiction of PoK. Ahsan Iqbal replies that Pakistan should not ignore his statement as it is a very serious issue. He underlines, just like they announced that soon article 370 will be scrapped through their manifesto and did it, this time also India might have a backup plan. *The PPP leader adds that the Imran Khan government has failed to take any tangible action on Kashmir and the opposition will unite together to highlight his failures.*

Sethi Se Sawal, Najam Sethi Official, 26 September³⁶

Q: What is the best way to bring back civilian supremacy in Pakistan?

A: It cannot be denied that the military is the most powerful in Pakistan, and the best way is to work together with the army. There can be civilian supremacy in Pakistan only when the following three conditions are met: *First*, relations with the public needs to be improved and the government has to win the heart and minds of the people. *Second*, the menace of corruption has to be uprooted in a democratic way, and *third* and most important factor is that the civilian government should not lock horns with the military on un-necessary issues. Government should at least complete its five year term and work alongside the military. Civilian supremacy cannot be achieved in five years and it will take another 15 to 20 years to reduce the influence of military in politics.

Q: Is Nawaz Sharif on the right track to achieve civilian supremacy?

A: Nawaz Sharif was brought into politics by General Zia ul Haq and two times he became Prime Minister with the help of army, but the third time when he came to power he showed much eagerness to sideline the military and strengthen the democratic institutions. Also he looked his horns with Musharraf post the Kargil war for which he had to remain in exile. When he came back to power he immediately started to build of case for Musharraf's arrest, which was not liked by the military. Also, Nawaz showed too much eagerness to meet Narendra Modi for peace talks as he was of the view the relations with India improves the power of army in Pakistan will reduce indirectly and the government do not have to divert major chunk of fund

³⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucWGY--9DaM>

towards the army. But unfortunately it could not work and the army made sure to pull the rug from under his feet and send him behind bars. Today Imran Khan Government says that his government and army are on the same page but the real deal is that army calls all the shots and Imran has allowed the army to have a **military secretariat from where they make all their plans and policies**. For example, the army wants tenders and contracts for CPEC projects that will be handled by the military organization, frontier work organisations.

URDU MEDIA

Question marks on Performance of PTI Government, Special report, Ummat, 04 September³⁷

The continuing worsening in handling of the economy, political instability and defensive position on Kashmir by the PTI government is facing some serious criticism from all the quarters including the opposition. *As per source government has disappointed its well-wisher and supporters. Rumour mills are rife with the talk of huge scale protests in the upcoming months against the government and that the Imran Khan government will be shown the door by December this year.* The crux of discussion in media circle of Islamabad is that PTI led government could not put country's economy and internal affairs on right path even after passing of one year. Now they completely failed to tackle Kashmir issue. *Due to complete failure, well-wishers are raising questions. Therefore a rumour of preparing a new set up to replace the current government is going on in all the circles of Islamabad.* Earlier decision making circles were hopeful about some positive results in one year. Since results are not favorable so a political alternate is under consideration to avoid further damage. From November conditions will start worsening and by December new setup will take position, according to sources. As per other sources investigation into foreign funding will speed in the coming months which can be a setback for the PTI and Imran Khan.

Welfare society with Zionist's interest based economy, Editorial, Ummat, 17 September³⁸

Because of the lack of bad performance of Pakistan's economy in first two months of the current fiscal year, a special IMF mission is visiting Pakistan. The financial team of Prime Minister Imran Khan is calling it a routine visit. *The mission would hold an in-camera meeting with the Finance Committee of the*

³⁷ <https://ummat.net/2019/09/03/news.php?p=story1.gif>

³⁸ <http://ummat.net/2019/09/17/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

National Assembly Secretariat which will be presided by Asad Umar. The mission will talk to the officials of the finance ministry about the economy. How to increase income and reduce the government expense will be discussed. ... *The three people, financial advisor to Imran Khan Hafeez Shaikh, governor of the SBP Reza Baqir, and chairman of the FBR Shabbar Zaidi have all failed in providing any relief to the people of Pakistan.* It cannot be ruled out that SOS (Save our Souls) mission of the IMF is visiting to further strengthen its control over Pakistan's economy. *Is it not enough to prove that the economy is in the control of IMF that the meeting is organized in closed doors?* ... Prime Minister Imran Khan had said at the time of elections that he has a team of people who can bring out Pakistan out from its economic crisis. *In contrast, Imran did not let Asad Umar even work because the he wanted to complete the agenda of the IMF and the US.* Hafeez Shaikh and Shabbar Zaidi have said that they would not do any business on taxes. But they did not say on what they would do so? *They said that the country is out of economic crisis but did not give any proof for that. How can they be trusted?* ... Lastly, how can a state like Medina be built on existing Jewish institutions when Allah says in the Quran that taking interest is like fighting with his/her Prophet?

Fear from God before saying economy is stable, Editorial, Jasant, 17 September³⁹

Prime minister's adviser on finance, Hafeez Shaikh, recently revealed that Pakistan has entered in a phase of stable economy during a press conference on Friday, claiming that tough decisions by PTI is showing good signs in case of the economy. *He also claimed about improvement in the Stock Market with an increase of 6 Lakh in tax net. But to be honest he seems to be lost in a dream world and also trying to keep the PM impressed though these dreamy figures of improved economy.* Dr. Hafeez Shaikh can evaluate the level of improvement in Stock Market by just comparing it with the time Imran took charge of the government. Dr. Hafeez should correct his record regarding increase in tax net as tax net did not witness increase by six lakh but rather this is increase in income tax return filers, which include serviceman who were already paying tax but not filing the return. Now it is time for head of FBR Shabbar Zaidi to educate us how much extra money he collected in income tax. *Despite all efforts income collected as tax is not increasing. The major reason behind this is unemployment.* After devastating the whole economy of country FBR could not achieve its target of tax collection while at the same time Prime Minister Imran Khan is waving off three Arab rupees of few companies. *Salary and allowances of members of Punjab assembly have been*

³⁹ <https://www.jasarat.com/2019/09/17/190917-03-4/>

increased manifold silently. The press conference where Hafeez Shaikh was making these big claims, Shabbar Zaidi was also present. Shabbar Zaid should enlighten the country who evades income tax. *Tax evaders are people or big companies of different sectors. But Hafeez Shaikh and Shabbar Zaidi are not ready to initiate any action against them.* Whatever steps have been taken by Hafeez Sheikh and company, have resulted in freezing the economic activities in country. *It happened first time in the history of the country that all aviation companies including national carrier PIA have fixed their fares in dollar. This may tell us the status of economy of our country.* It is because of Imran Khan and his team on finance which include Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, on duty IMF employee Raza Baqar and head of FBR Shabbar Zaidi that Pakistan is now counted among Latin American and poor African countries. *Instead of showing these faces the door, Imran is still relying on them. Economy of Pakistan reached to even worse level then Afghanistan which has been in continuous war for last forty years.* Increase in interest, anti-industry policies and environment of fear has speed up the withdrawal of capital from the country. *In situation like this how Hafeez Shaikh and Shabbar Zaidi can claim that economy of country is achieving stability. And if economy is improving then why we see rise in inflation rate on daily basis, lowering of import graph and decrease in income.*

Preparation to control media, Editorial, Jasarat, 19 September⁴⁰

Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister has approved **special courts for media.** Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority and Press Council will also be restructured. *Why government needs special courts while PEMRA and Press Council are already there.* When Imran Neyazi was in opposition he invented the tradition of *Oye Nawaz Sharif.* If somebody calls him now *Oye Niyazi,* it should not anger him. In the same way he started alleging leaders without any proof. *Now if any other leader presents charge sheet against him, it should not make him furious. Establishment of special tribunal for media means that Prime Minister neither trust judiciary of Pakistan nor he is satisfied with the performance of PEMRA and Press Council.* In other words it is his own failure as he is head of state and government institutions are not working to his charter. If he sees issues with judiciary system then he should restructure the whole judiciary to prevail justice in whole country. *The fact of the matter is Prime Minister Imran Khan and his kitchen cabinet wants media dance to their tune and to convert them as government spokesperson they want more restrictions. This fear comes from people associated with media and opposition.* After Imran Khan became Prime Minister this impression got stronger and stronger that government, judiciary and army are on same page. Judiciary should not be on same page but rather it should pronounce judgment

⁴⁰ <https://www.jasarat.com/2019/09/19/190919-03-9/>

on the basis of merit. If everyone gets justice on the basis of merit then government doesn't need any special tribunal. *Now ball is in the court of government that if it wishes to invite resistance at domestic level and shame on international level or write it name with golden words in history by reforming the judiciary system of the country. Prime Minister should pay some attention at the uncontrolled tongue of his ministers and aids before suppressing media.*

Maulana and dharna, Aizaz Syed, Jang, 24 September⁴¹

Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman asked the American ambassador that if he were to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan, would the Americans do a deal with him? *Fazl-ur Rehman warned the American ambassador that Washington is putting all its eggs in one basket and entirely focusing on Benazir Bhutto.* America should not underestimate the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F). This conversation was on 20 November 2007 which was leaked by the WikiLeaks later. ... While Maulana was having these discussions with the Americans, on the other side, then American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had negotiated a deal between General Pervez Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto. *Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman had almost become Prime Minister in 2002 when he was heading the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal which had emerged as largest party in the elections.* He was not allowed to be the one because of the 'war on terror' and his religious image. *This shows that Maulana is not only a religious leader but a shrewd politician. He has contacts with the people in power.* Maulana is one of the few leaders who have been able to use religion more rationally than emotionally. This author met him recently and could draw four main conclusions. *First, Maulana is in contact with every powerful people/institutions in Pakistan; second, for the moment Maulana is entirely focused on his 'Azadi march'; third, when Maulana announces the date for the march then no one will be able to stop him; and fourth, Maulana has said he would bring 15 lakh people to Islamabad.* Even if he is able to assemble only one lakh, that would shake the roots of the PTI-led government.

⁴¹ https://e.jang.com.pk/09-24-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_009.png

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Bajaur ⁴²	02/09/2019	Man killed in Bajaur bomb blast	01	00
North Waziristan ⁴³	14/09/2019	4 Pakistan Army soldiers martyred in firing by militants near Afghan border: ISPR	04	01
Balochistan				

⁴² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/458477/man-killed-in-bajaur-bomb-blast/>

⁴³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1505182/4-pakistan-army-soldiers-martyred-in-firing-by-militants-near-afghan-border-ispr>

Quetta ⁴⁴	04/09//2019	CTD operation kills 6 terrorists in Quetta	06	04
Quetta ⁴⁵	06/09/2019	One killed, 10 injured in two Quetta IED blasts	01	10
Chaman ⁴⁶	28/09/2019	3 including central JUI-F leader dead as explosion rocks Chaman in Balochistan	03	11

⁴⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/459716/ctd-operation-kills-6-terrorists-in-quetta/>

⁴⁵ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/460750/one-killed-10-injured-in-two-quetta-ied-blasts/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1507830>