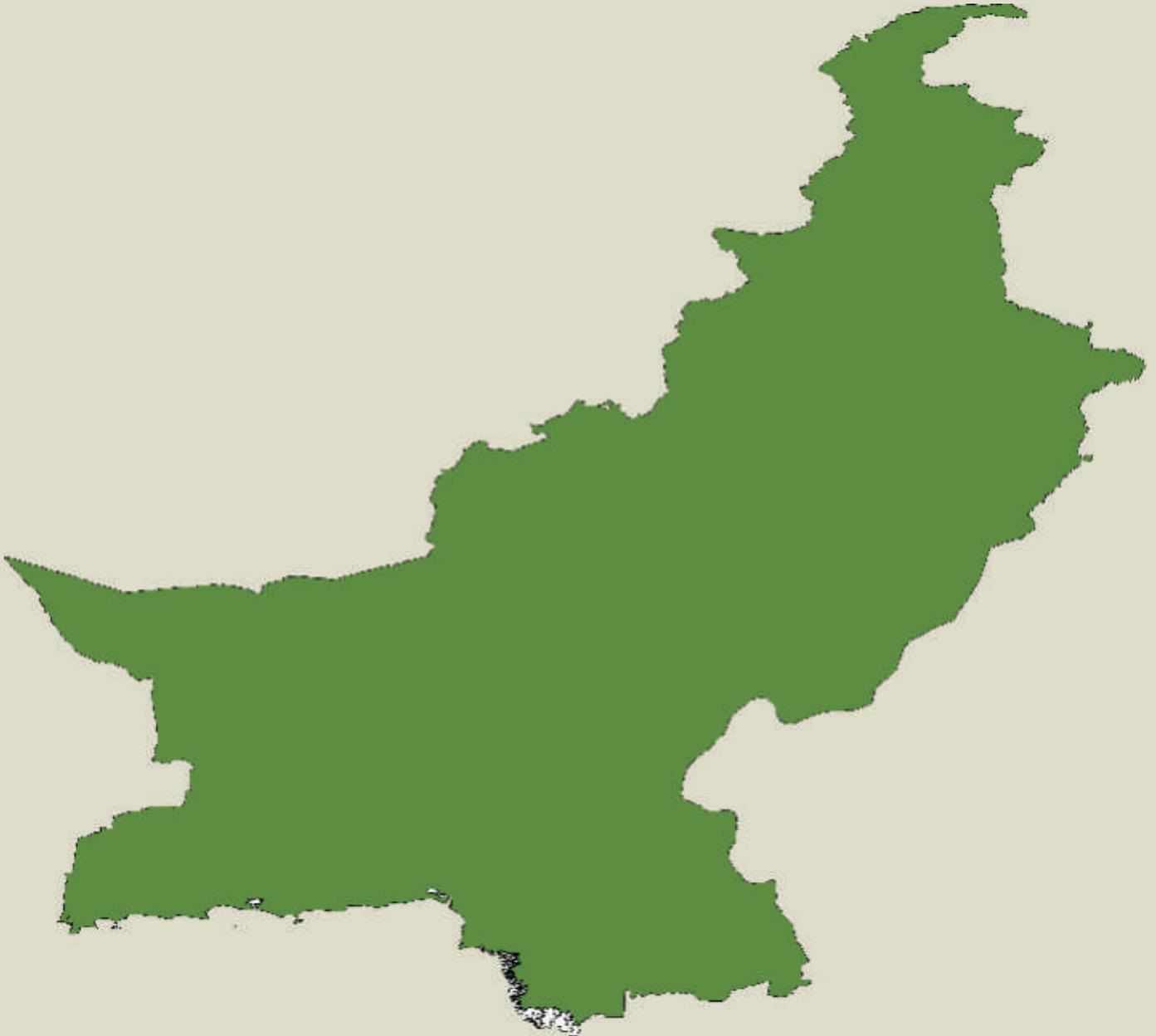


September 2020

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



Prepared by

Dr. Zainab Akhter

Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir

Dr. Mohammad Eisa

Dr. Ashok Behuria



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर परिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Pak-Afghan dialogue, Editorial, Dawn, 02 September¹

[T]he process initiated through the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity, which started in 2018, offers both sides a chance to help improve ties in a mutually beneficial manner. Bilateral meetings under this framework were held in Kabul on Monday, with the foreign secretary leading the Pakistani delegation. The action plan covers a gamut of areas, namely political and diplomatic exchanges, military ties as well as the economic sphere. *Indeed, if such high-level exchanges continue regularly, the mistrust between Kabul and Islamabad can be reduced and a more constructive relationship can be built. This will no doubt be difficult, as there are some in Kabul's corridors of power that bear a long-standing grudge against Pakistan, while certain states in the region will not want Afghanistan and this country to forge closer ties.* Moreover, the presence of the self-styled Islamic State group in ungoverned parts of Afghanistan is a grave security threat for both countries, as well as the region. ... It would be naive to assume that mutual distrust will melt away overnight.

Putting special assistants and advisors in their place, Editorial, Daily Times, 01 September²

The Islamabad High Court's (IHC) order that disposed of the challenge to the selection of Shahzad Akbar as Advisor on Accountability and Interior set the record straight about the prerogatives of the prime minister in appointing whomever he wishes as advisor, but experts increasingly feel that it also put all the special advisor's and assistants in their place. Everybody belonging to this special breed of experts, whom nobody less than the PM himself relies on for the effective running of the state on some very crucial matters, has been prohibited from any sort of policy-making, exercising executive authority of any kind, *taking important decisions, or even acting as official spokesperson at any forum whatsoever; all according to the honorable court's interpretation of the constitution and Rules of Business 1973.* Now that Imran Khan is prime minister, he's also bypassing parliament and running things in consultation with a core committee of sorts, but the main problem is that an uncomfortably large number of people in this committee is unelected. *The court also directed relevant secretaries to take over in situations where elected people are not heading ministries, which can be quickly expected to lead to a little more*

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1577474/pak-afghan-dialogue>

² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/661512/putting-special-assistants-and-advisors-in-their-place/>

friction between the government and the bureaucracy. That is why legal experts expect the government to knock on the doors of the Supreme Court regarding the matter.

In Chains, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 18 September³

Last Wednesday the government bulldozed eight bills without debate in a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament. The government said three bills Islamabad Capital Territory Waqf Properties Bill, 2020, Anti-Money Laundering (Second Amendment Bill) 2020, Anti-Terrorism (Third Amendment) Bill 2020 were related to the requirements of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and were therefore in the national interest; the opposition argued that some clauses in the bills went beyond the scope and requirements of FATF and were aimed at targeting critics of the government. Earlier, these three bills had been passed by the National Assembly but rejected by the Senate. Meanwhile, Imran Khan is going hammer and nails. The government is constantly threatening Governor's Rule in Sindh to keep the PPP in line. Now it has launched a full throated campaign against the Sharifs, having succeeded in declaring Nawaz Sharif an absconder from justice, turning the screws on Shehbaz Sharif and his family, and appointing Umar Sheikh as CCPO Lahore to use strong arm tactics to keep Maryam Nawaz and her passionate supporters at bay. Unfortunately for the opposition, the mainstream media has also caved in. If PEMRA has become unusually aggressive in banning and fining TV channels and anchors, the government has also roped in NAB to do its bidding. Democracies across the world have learnt to balance the national with the public interest by making good laws for accountability and enforcing them without discrimination. But with the press and opposition in chains, Pakistan under Imran Khan is headed in the direction of fascism.

MPC resolution, Editorial, *Dawn*, 22 September⁴

Pakistan's chequered past has seen many a military takeover, with the unfortunate result that the security establishment in the country has remained involved in civilian affairs even when the military has not been in power. However, it is also a fact that their involvement has largely been accepted — even encouraged by political parties in the past few decades, as they sought help to oust political rivals. Although both Shahbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari say they have learnt from past mistakes, it is difficult to predict how these parties will practically galvanize support on their foremost issue of 'non-interference of the establishment' when their present aim is to oust the incumbent PTI. This time, the challenge is even bigger. In these early

³ <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/in-chains/>

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1580995/mpc-resolution>

days, it is unclear how the PDM alliance will oust the government and simultaneously neutralize its alleged backers. Much will depend on the revised charter of democracy that they have promised to prepare and adopt. The coming days will decide how committed these parties are to their pledges at the MPC and the resolutions adopted there. *Until then, the political game of push and pull may go on, with the government maintaining its age-old position that the alliance is a group of corrupt politicians, and turning its guns on Nawaz Sharif for leading the way for a future street agitation from what appears to be a self-imposed exile.*

Going forward, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 25 September⁵

Nawaz Sharif has finally broken his silence. Significantly, he has not minced his words by laying into the Miltablistment for destabilizing and undermining the national consensus. The PMLN's prospects have brightened by Nawaz Sharif's intervention. There is significant anti-IM sentiment that stretches from the periphery in Balochistan and FATA to Sindh, Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. In the event of the Pakistan democratic Movement(PDM) taking off, the Miltablistment will be directly pitted against this popular sentiment, a domestic conflict prospect it can ill afford as the guardian of the national security consensus in view of the external conflicts east and west of the country. *In short, in view of the dead end facing the opposition, the revival of political space for the opposition is directly proportional to its do-or-die aggressive stance rather than the other way round. So we should anticipate some doors to slowly open, however discreetly.* By the same yardstick, the political space for the PTI government is likely to diminish since the Miltablistment may hold it responsible for pushing the opposition into a dead end that makes the Miltablistment a direct target of the political confrontation. *Nawaz Sharif and Fazlur Rahman have arrived at a juncture where they have nothing to lose except, metaphorically speaking, their chains. So they have opted for a showdown.* Going forward, Asif Zardari and Shahbaz Sharif could do worse by not seeing the writing on the wall.

Leaks after MPC, Editorial, *Dawn*, 25 September⁶

Meetings between opposition and military leaders, on the request of either side, have been a regular feature of our political history. Where issues of national security are concerned, the details are usually not revealed by participants. *But the series of leaks and political statements of late about such engagements are a strong indicator of the thorny political games and unscrupulous backdoor schemes in progress. The developments raise several questions. Why were the 'disclosures' made after the MPC? Do they indicate panic? The weeks ahead*

⁵ <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/going-forward-2/>

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1581513/leaks-after-mpc>

will show whether or not the formal opposition alliance remains a united front or splits up on account of these revelations. Clarity from all quarters is needed. Perhaps more immediately, the opposition should explain its position on contacting and meeting the top ranks of the security establishment, especially in view of the MPC. *Whatever the motive behind these leaks, they have been a source of embarrassment for the opposition politicians. Meanwhile, where the military leadership is concerned, the public discourse around such questionable, unofficial meetings with politicians begs introspection.*

Pakistani Military's Political Ties Set off Political Storm, Abubakar Siddique, Gandhara, 29 September⁷

Pakistan is on the cusp of a political storm after most major opposition parties demanded the country's powerful generals surrender their stranglehold over politics and withdraw support for Prime Minister Imran Khan's administration, which the opposition has vowed to oust through street agitation. On September 29, the newly formed Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) announced it would kick off a nationwide protest campaign on October 11. The announcement came a day after the showdown between the government and the opposition reached a fever pitch following the arrest of opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif in a money-laundering case that he says is politically motivated. Asif Ali Zardari, a former president and leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), was indicted in a separate money-laundering case the same day. *Political turmoil in Pakistan is growing a week after Shehbaz's elder brother and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, leader of the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), declared military interference as the root of political instability, economic decline, and diplomatic isolation for the Muslim country of 220 million people.* Khan's administration and the military, however, have rejected Sharif's criticism. They blame opposition leaders for fomenting instability as a pressure tactic to get rid of the anti-graft investigations and court cases they face.

Political chaos, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 30 September⁸

The current situation is perhaps at its historical worst where the government and the opposition are not even on speaking terms with each other. Recently, a key national discussion between the two sides on Gilgit-Baltistan did not have the Prime Minister in attendance, according to media reports. The acrimonious relationship between the incumbent rulers and opposition parties is all set to aggravate further with the latter having united against the

⁷<https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/pakistani-military-s-political-ties-set-off-political-storm/30864920.html>

⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2266243/political-chaos>

former under the umbrella of 'Pakistan Democratic Movement' with the sole purpose of dethroning them through street agitation. A couple of recent incidents have already enflamed the war of words between the two sides. They include the arrest of PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif by NAB for allegedly accumulating assets beyond means; PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and her sister Faryal Talpur, MNA, have been indicted in a corruption reference; and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has been summoned also in an assets-beyond-means case. *Already there for at least two years, the political chaos in the country is now clearly growing something that threatens government efforts on governance, economy, international diplomacy and internal and external security.*

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Trouble with the IMF? Editorial, Daily Times, 14 September⁹

It would be *very* bad news if reports suggesting that things might have come to a head in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) turn out to be true. *If there is indeed some trouble about the fiscal deficit and the Fund indeed wants it slashed, along with gross financing requirements, in the current fiscal then we might really be headed for an impasse because considering the current state of the economy there is no way the government can do much about these things in the immediate term.* Yet even if the government is able to impress upon the IMF the magnitude of the difficulties it faces and the sheer impossibility of arresting the budget deficit immediately, and things work out for now, this is not something that can be put off forever. And it doesn't really seem that the economy is going to get much better anytime soon. Those celebrating the back-to-business feeling as everything is reopened should remember just what it was like before the pandemic, when the economy was in utter freefall. And it's also not like we are going to get over our need for aid and bailouts just yet. So a painful period of adjustment, just to keep the loans flowing if nothing else, is inevitable. *The timing will be important, especially from the government's point of view. If it can't push the Fund back on the reforms for too long, and progress is associated with the present bailout program, then things might get a little uncomfortable at the time of the election.*

⁹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/666057/trouble-with-the-imf/>

Pitfalls after the MPC, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 23 September¹⁰

There may be nothing in Nawaz Sharif's 'no-holds-barred' address from London to Sunday's multiparty conclave in Islamabad that he has not said before. *But his words seem to have galvanized the fractured opposition groups at least for now. Coming out of a prolonged hibernation, the former prime minister has revived his anti-establishment narrative that seemed to have been put on the back-burner by his party out of political expediency. For long, the target was Prime Minister Imran Khan and not his alleged backers. But now the guns have been turned on the ubiquitous security establishment.* This change of tack has not been without reason. Besides other factors, it also shows the growing frustration over the relentless persecution of opposition leaders in the name of accountability. With the prime minister refusing to deal with the opposition, even where key national issues are concerned, and this responsibility has also been taken over by the establishment. The opposition also seems to have accepted its role as arbiter. So effectively it's not a parallel system or a state within the state but the state itself. *Indeed, there is a need for establishing civilian supremacy, but the question centres on how it will be achieved. It's certainly not possible without a strong democratic culture and ethos. That is lacking among most political parties.*

Circular debt worries, Editorial, Dawn, 24 September¹¹

Pakistan's circular debt challenge is getting bigger by the day and the government is struggling hard to get a firm handle on the problem, which is threatening the very stability of the power sector. Notwithstanding the claims by ministers and other government officials of having controlled the pace of increase in the power-sector debt stock, the latter has almost doubled over the last couple of years to reach Rs2.1tr. Indeed, the present government has inherited the issue from its predecessor. Yet the people have a right to ask as to what it has done in the last two years to manage it and why it has been pursuing the same power policies followed by the previous administration. After all, it is the people that have to bear the brunt of wrong power policies and gross mismanagement of the sector in the form of electricity rates that are higher than the regional average. *With the PTI into its third year in power, the public expects it to come up with a tangible short- to long-term power-sector reform programme to fix matters instead of constantly looking back.*

¹⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1581171/pitfalls-after-the-mpc>

¹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1581343/circular-debt-worries>

SECURITY SITUATION

Truth of the matter: Bajwa Case, Najam Sethi, *The Friday times*, 04 September¹²

The issue relating to General (Retd) Asim Bajwa is hanging fire for two main reasons. First, there is increasing public resentment against the absence of any accountability of the Miltablishment even as two mainstream parties with an overwhelming majority of the national vote are being hounded to the wall by its puppets. So it is natural to vent against a spokesman of the Miltablishment who has suddenly become vulnerable. Second, General (Retd) Bajwa as DG-ISPR didn't exactly endear himself to the supporters of the PMLN by his relentless #ThankYouRaheelSharif propaganda blitz which eventually translated into a conspiracy with the PTI to try and knock out Nawaz Sharif. General (Retd) Bajwa hasn't helped his cause by appearing to fudge his family's asset disclosures as SAPM. It should be noted that his civil and not-so-civil benefactors have already targeted an elected and popular prime minister and a respected independent Supreme Court judge for the same reasons. That is why the philosophy of "what is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander" is trending against him. General (Retd) Asim Bajwa's cultivated army of Twitterati and media persons are now accusing his detractors of being "Indian agents" and "traitors" for targeting the head of a national asset like CPEC. This is ridiculous. No such thought was spared for the prime minister who launched CPEC but was accused of being an Indian agent! General (Retd) Asim Bajwa has finally responded to the allegations against him. The mainstream media which was too scared to run the story earlier will now begin his trial in earnest. Hopefully, there will only be one yardstick to measure politicians, judges and generals.

Murder by another name, Editorial, *Dawn*, 07 September¹³

Rarely does a day go by without reading horrific reports of murders committed in the name of 'honour'. On Friday, while hearing a jail petition, Supreme Court Justice *Qazi Faez Isa pointed out that the use of the word 'honour' should be dropped when referring to such cold-blooded killings.* Justice Isa is correct. In conservative societies such as ours, attaching the notion of 'honour' to a crime is a way of justifying brutality, typically committed by the victim's own family members. *Instead, an 'honour' killing should be called what it is: murder.* Unfortunately, Pakistan has one of the highest incidences of 'honour' killings, and conviction rates remain low. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *an estimated 1,000 murders take place across the*

¹² <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/truth-of-the-matter/>

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1578362/murder-by-another-name>

country each year in the name of 'honour'. In Sindh alone, a police study found that 769 people were killed on the pretext of 'honour' between 2014 and 2019. The primary target is women and girls who are perceived to have strayed from social or tribal customs, and brought 'shame' upon their family, or at least this is the justification given in the courts. Despite the passage of a landmark bill which made life imprisonment mandatory for those who kill in the name of 'honour' such blatant acts of violence continue. While it is predominately women who are burdened with carrying notions of 'honour' and 'shame' in their bodies, a number of men and boys have also been killed. But, as noted by Justice Isa in his judgement, there is no 'honour' in murder.

FATF bills, Editorial, Dawn, 09 September¹⁴

Prime Minister Imran Khan used harsh words against the opposition for blocking these two bills. In a meeting of party spokespeople, the prime minister was reported to have said that *the opposition and India were on the same page on FATF because India was trying to put Pakistan on the blacklist. He said by blocking the passage of the bills, the opposition was trying to blackmail the government. This was an unfortunate choice of words.* There is no doubt that bills relating to the requirements of FATF are critically important and it is in the interest of Pakistan to legislate them, but the opposition is fully within its rights to raise questions about the provisions of these bills wherever required. This is what a parliamentary debate is meant for. If the opposition feels that certain provisions of the bills could be misused for political purposes then the government must provide an explanation instead of hurling accusations. *The rigid and confrontational attitude displayed by the government makes it difficult for parliamentarians to have a healthy discourse. It also creates unnecessary acrimony and makes the political atmosphere toxic. Questioning someone's patriotism is condemnable and no one should resort to such rhetoric for political one-upmanship.* The government should dial down its inflammatory rhetoric and get down to the business of negotiating with the opposition on the floor of the two houses. The need of the hour is to make these laws with consensus.

The outrage machinery, Arifa Noor, Dawn, 15 September¹⁵

Politicians are holding forth the government ones should do nothing but agree to the removal of the CCPO and the opposition to condemn. *Not for them any nuanced talk on the real issues such as the problems within our legal system, or how we need more resources for better investigation of rape cases or the need for special training of police personnel who respond to such crimes. What steps*

¹⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1578698/fatf-bills>

¹⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1579782/the-outrage-machinery>

can be taken for a smoother judicial process and treatment of rape survivors during the court case? But few bothered, for such discussions would allow little room for shouting and confrontational exchanges. Male journalists continue to dominate, and were allowed to hold forth on every aspect of the matter from the incident, to crimes against women to the CCPO to even the night of the incident. Did we really need so much mansplaining? Women were still in short supply to discuss women rights, it seems. The women lawyers, women activists and women police officers were conspicuous by their absence on the channels. As one young academic noted in a tweet, one programme had a discussion about police training and gender sensitivity training of the personnel with only men on the panel.

Rise in missing persons' cases, Voicepk, 15 September¹⁶

The Islamabad High Court has termed the rise in the number of missing persons as alarming saying that the police had informed the court that there were 50 cases in the federal capital alone. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, who was hearing a petition for the recovery of a missing person Abdul Qadoos in Islamabad, said that according to a police report more than 50 cases of missing persons had been filed in the federal capital. "Put the issue of missing persons before the Prime Minister and see if it is a law and order situation or something else," the judge told Tariq Mehmood Khokhar, the additional attorney general.

Sectarian tensions, Editorial, Dawn, 21 September¹⁷

The PPP's parliamentary leader in the Senate, Sherry Rehman, sounded the alarm in the upper house on Friday when *she brought up the intensifying anti-Shia campaign and described it as "extremely shocking that this issue is not being raised"*. The state's silence is indeed inexplicable. It appears to have willfully chosen to close its eyes to this sinister development. Recently in Karachi, *three 'Azmat-i-Sahaba' rallies were taken out on successive days the first and second by Deobandi and Barelvi organisations respectively, and the third by the Ahle Hadith. The first two were mammoth gatherings, underscoring how quickly matters could go out of the authorities' control if the momentum by ultra-right-wing elements is sustained. Takfiri slogans were raised by the crowd at one of the events and an Imambargah along the route was reportedly pelted with stones by participants. Emboldened by this unchecked show of extremism, a similar rally in Islamabad on Thursday openly included members of the banned Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat with its leader Maulana Ahmed Ludhianvi among the speakers. The situation is ominous. While it is difficult to say definitively what has provided the impetus for this*

¹⁶ <http://voicepk.net/2020/09/15/rise-in-missing-persons-cases-alarming-ihc/>

¹⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1580818/sectarian-tensions>

renewed sectarian tension, it first manifested itself around the time of the debate over Punjab's divisive *Tahaffuz-i-Bunyad-i-Islam bill*. Then during Muharram, blasphemy cases were filed against at least 40 Shias in connection with speeches at their religious gatherings.

FinCEN Leaks and money laundering: Is FATF for Pakistan only? Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, *Daily Times*, 24 September¹⁸

FinCEN leaks have jolted the whole world. The most reputed banks of the world were being used to launder money by organized crime groups, drug dealers and fraudulent companies. *It seems that FATF and anti-money instruments are only used to secure political and economic interests of few powerful Western countries and allies.* Besides, these instruments are also used against countries which do not obey the instructions of Western countries to secure the business interest of their countries and companies. *In Pakistan the debate has already started that Pakistan is being punished to be ally of China. It has also been argued that the real target of FATF is to stop the CPEC and CPEC investment in country.* The other element of debate is that the Western countries, especially USA wants that Pakistan should help them to leave Afghanistan with honour. So, the FATF is being used to secure the political and economic interests of these countries. *When Pakistan refused to abandon China or to be part of campaign against China, then the instrument of FATF is being used. Pakistan is in grey list and trying hard to come out of it. Owing to FATF investment in Pakistan has been greatly impacted. It has also impacted international business linkages and business.*

PROVINCES & REGIONS

GB

Gilgit-Baltistan on the Horns of a Dilemma, Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai, *Daily Times*, 21 September¹⁹

If it is true that Pakistan plans to elevate Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) to a full-fledged province with all constitutional rights, it will unwittingly disturb the disputed nature of the State of the Jammu & Kashmir. It will be akin to the unilateral action taken by Narendra Modi on August 5, 2019 when Article 370 & 35 A were abrogated. Both these actions will be in violation of the United

¹⁸<https://dailytimes.com.pk/670017/fincen-leaks-and-money-laundering-is-fatf-for-pakistan-only/>

¹⁹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/669186/gilgit-baltistan-on-the-horns-of-a-dilemma/>

Nations Security Council resolutions # 91 of 1951 and 122 and 126 of 1957. The plan was announced by Ali Amin Gandapur, Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan on September 17, 2020. He further said that people of GB would be given representation in the Senate and the national Assembly of Pakistan. *Obviously, if Pakistan makes Gilgit Baltistan the province of Pakistan, then India has all the right, perhaps not legal but as a matter of principle, to justify her stand that Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India. And on what justification will Pakistan protest? As the saying goes, what is good for the goose may also be good for the gander.* One of the highly noted London-based Kashmiri scholar, Professor Zafar Khan says, "If Gilgit Baltistan is absorbed as 5th province into Pakistani Federation, Kashmiris of all hues, will consider such an action unfriendly by the Government of Pakistan, similar to the one, taken by the Narendra Modi government in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir on 5 August 2019." *Whatever the shape and form of future governance, one possibility should be out of consideration, i.e., making it a province of Pakistan. Let's not forget all the sacrifices given by the people of Jammu and Kashmir to exercise their right to self-determination.*

GB as a province? Editorial, Dawn, 23 September²⁰

This has been a long-standing demand of the people of GB because they have been in a constitutional limbo for decades. This has led to deep grievances and political unrest that have continued to fester in the absence of any serious attempt by Islamabad to address them. In this sense, the decision to make GB a province is a welcome step. However, there are caveats. The final status of GB is connected to the ultimate resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The main reason that Pakistan had not integrated GB into the federation was to ensure that such a step should not impact the disputed status of Kashmir as per the resolutions of the United Nations. There is concern that by integrating GB as a province, Pakistan may weaken its case in the way that India has. *However, the problem may be addressed if Pakistan can say GB's status as a province will be a provisional one and the final status will depend on the resolution of the Kashmir issue. It could keep our legal position on Kashmir intact while providing the people of GB the full constitutional status they have always deserved.*

²⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1581166/gb-as-a-province>

The government is promoting corruption, Tanvir Sadiq, Daily Pakistan, 01 September²¹

The current regime was elected to power because the PTI had promised it would fight against corruption in the country. *There is a lot of buzz about corruption, nothing concrete has happened so far. Many people were arrested but no proof was found against them. Then are some who could not explain their sources of income but no action has been taken against them. The government has even made NAB controversial.* It has to explain and defend every action taken by NAB. During all this, the common man continues to suffer. Corruption is promoted by different stimuli. *In Pakistan, the elite are the main cause of corruption. Politicians spend billions of rupees to get elected. To get the money back, there is no other way but corruption.* They get bureaucracy involved in making the money and thus it becomes corrupt. *The second corrupt section is the middle and lower middle class. These people want and accumulate to increase their social status.* These people first establish contact with some influential person and later become middle man in the whole game. Since they are not powerful people, they behave like henchmen. The government also likes such people because they do not ask many questions. *The third section involved in corruption is the common people. They do corruption to satisfy their basic necessities. Their income is lesser than expenses.* Their situation forces them to raise some money by unfair means. The inflation, lack of basic commodities, unemployment and failure of the government to meet the people's expectations imply that the government is responsible for the corruption in the country.

An analysis about Army Chief Gen Bajwa, Assadullah Ghalib, Nawa-i-Waqt, 01 September²²

I am writing this column by dipping my pen in the blood of three Pakistan Army soldiers killed in North Waziristan the other day. *The Pakistan military is proud of such people. Pakistan is like the fort of the gulf and Gen Bajwa its guardian.* In 2000, I had to intervene and say to a US general that India might be a big market for you but Washington could not overlook Pakistan's strategic significance. *Today Pakistan has both strategic and economic significance for the whole region. Success in BRI, for which CPEC is vital, would make China to dominate trade in three continents of the world. Pakistan plays a central role in this dream of China and the security of Pakistan is in the hands of Gen*

²¹ <https://dailypakistan.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-09-01/page-9/detail-2>

²² <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-09-01/page-8/detail-1>

*Bajwa. Gen Bajwa is not outspoken. He does his work silently. Despite the fact that he was attacked when chosen as the army chief and then when given extension, Bajwa did not speak. He was defending Pakistan against India when the latter tried to attack and violate our sovereignty. The current government inherited a Pakistan which was in crisis. Gen Bajwa acted as a diplomat and brought bailouts from China, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Some people do not like Gen Bajwa. In Pakistan, elections have always been disputed. It is said that they are influenced by the army. The army is blamed for the “fall of Dacca”. Politicians are groomed by army generals. It is said that Hamid Gul made IJI and paved the way for Nawaz Sharif to become the Prime Minister. **Prime Minister Imran Khan and the army are on the same page. It is good for the country. But some do not like it. They see it as the army’s influence in the PTI led government. If that was the case, why did not the army block Imran’s attempt to implement the PTI’s manifesto or stop him from resolving the Afghan conflict? Even the army did not stop him from releasing Abhinandan.** On foreign policy, the government and army are on the same page, the government considers China as a model (to be followed) and the army agrees. The Pakistan army deserves a pat on its back for all it has been doing for the country.*

Opposition feels threat of presidential system, Report, Ummat, 06 September²³

PML-N and PPP are concerned that if there was further delay in starting an anti-government movement, not only the country would be inching towards a presidential system of government but also the current government would be able to pass any law after the next year’s Senate elections in the country. Next Senate elections would take place in March 2021. It is possible that after the election, PTI and its allies would form the majority in the Senate. *The two main opposition parties are planning to launch a movement to send the government packing before the Senate elections. In the recent Rahbar Committee meeting, the opposition expressed concern about the reports/rumors of the presidential system in the country. The opposition parties have taken it seriously after four petitions were submitted in the Supreme Court in this regard. In the next APC meeting, an anti-government movement strategy would be decided. Also, in the meeting, scheduled on 20 September, it would be decided whether there would be in-house change or next-elections would be held in the country.* According to the source, while the PPP is in favour of in-house change, the other parties are supportive of new elections in the country. It is said that PPP wanted to complete five years in Sindh where it is in power

²³ <http://ummat.net/2020/09/06/news.php?p=story1.gif>

Now Nawaz Sharif has become the subject, Editorial, Jasarat, 17 September²⁴

Nawaz Sharif has become a talking point for the media, assembly and judiciary all over the country. How in a day Nawaz Sharif's bail was cancelled then non-bailable warrants were issued and an arrest order was issued. *Both the Pakistani courts and the rulers know that they cannot bring back any one from UK accused of murder, terrorism or money laundering.* Neither they could bring Altaf Hussain nor Ishaq Dar nor now do they talk about bringing Nawaz Sharif back. Judges at Islamabad High Court observed among other things that fugitives did not deserve any concessions. The judges did not *explain that only one fugitive from the law doesn't deserve a waiver or that the same law and principle would apply to other fugitives.* On the one hand, there is a debate across the country as to which punishment should be imposed on the perpetrators of rape and on the other hand, FATF laws are being passed. *In such a situation the motive of the discussions on media about bringing Nawaz Sharif seems to be to divert the attention from the real issues.* This can be gauged from the fact that a few days ago the subject of the media was something else. Chairman CPEC Asim Bajwa and his assets were subject of discussion and a motorway tragedy occurred and everyone started talking about it. *The problem is that we and our media are becoming accustomed to raising new issues every day instead of bringing a single issue to its logical conclusion.* Ten days ago, the hot topic was Asim Saleem Bajwa, then the tragedy of the motorway and now it is Nawaz Sharif. Now it is test time for courts and the government and it has to be seen how many fugitives they bring back to the country?

Lawlessness across the country, Editorial, Daily Pakistan, 21 September²⁵

The Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court (IHC), Justice Athar Minallah said that it appears there is no law in the country. The state does not exist anywhere. *Justice Athar asked why are the state institutions like the federal investigative agency among others, involved in real estate businesses. The words of Justice Athar Minallah may seem harsh but if seen in the context of the overall situation in the country, they appear apt.* In whichever side one looks, something is constructed or has been raised on the roads that is not legal. Generally, it takes years to get approval for establishing a new society and constructing high rise buildings. But for the societies associated with government institutions, the process is fast and without any hiccups. It is possible that the government institutions that work on their own projects might face some issues but those are minor. *If it does not work for them this way, they know other ways to get their work done. Any government institution that*

²⁴ <https://www.jasarat.com/2020/09/17/200917-03-3/>

²⁵ <https://dailypakistan.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-09-21/page-9/detail-0>

has some public dealing, no department can come in its way. Since Justice Athar was hearing a case in Islamabad, there are many such constructions which are a reflection of such powerful government institutions. They may be illegal but no one can touch them. Bani Gala is one example. Every home in Bani Gala would show that all laws were thrown in the dustbin while construction. Despite the fact that the court heard the cases and accepted that the laws were violated and instructions were also given in that regard but nothing happened. There was some reporting for a few days, then the issue was cold. The Prime Minister himself says that the country has separate laws for the elite and the poor. But he would not change it. Therefore, Justice Athar Minallah was right: there is lawlessness in the country. No one is going to change it!

Mass movements will not bring down the government, Nasim Shahid, *Daily Pakistan*, 23 September²⁶

The Pakistan Army has made its stand clear: Pakistan Army has nothing to do with the politics in the country. But it seems that the political leadership of the country has not fully accepted the explanation. Nawaz Sharif talked about the role of the army in Pakistani politics in his speech at the multiparty conference on Sunday (20 September). *All the same, one needs to appreciate the military leadership for reaching out to the opposition before the All Party Conference (APC) and putting forth its point of view. It was expected that the military's role would be brought up in the meeting.* The army made it clear that it would not stop any peaceful protest against the government, clearing the air that it stands by the government and would protect it. It is upto to the opposition how it is going to pursue its anti-government policy. *After the military distancing itself from politics, it is clear that deploying any unconstitutional way to topple the government is unlikely. That means it is impossible to send the Prime Minister packing. Therefore, if the opposition protests, organizes dharnas or carries out long marches, that would not yield the same results like in the past.* Government would not be dissolved now. The powers that used to do it in the past have made it clear they would not engage in such activity. The points raised by the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif are correct, they describe the bitter past of Pakistan. They are irrelevant now. Despite the fact that the army has distanced itself from politics, it is likely that the opposition would still try to drag it back. There are other ways to attack the Imran Khan led government. Still if the opposition wants someone else to do it for them, this is sheer disappointment.

²⁶ <https://dailypakistan.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-09-23/page-4/detail-6>

Nawaz Sharif's "drone-attack" on CPEC, Assadullah Ghalib, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 28 September²⁷

First he was hiding and attacked using parachute. It failed. *Finally Nawaz Sharif came out and carried out "surgical strike"*. The allegations spelt out by the former disposed Prime Minister were the same that were earlier raised by one PML-N member and one media group in Pakistan. These allegations were based on some unknown American website which was all rejected by Gen Asim Bajwa. *Nawaz Sharif detailed those allegations in his speech which were not in reality directed at Asim Bajwa per se but at his work as the Chairman of CPEC Authority: they were directed at CPEC.* CPEC does not have any website nor are any details of its projects given anywhere. Ahsan Iqbal would not provide any information about CPEC either. Only one book has been written so far and that too by some authors of Punjab University who accept that they used internet sources for the book. *Why had Nawaz Sharif kept the details of the CPEC projects secret? As it turns out, he had limited CPEC to Punjab only. He had two goals: one, to win elections in Punjab and come back to power; second, through these projects he made lot of money which he kept secret by using accounts of his drivers, gardeners, and by creating fake companies to transfer that money in foreign countries.* He made sure that his sons and son-in-law were sent out of the country. All this loot was done from CPEC. The Sharif family wants to bring down the current government, come back to power so that it can make more money. *Nawaz is attacking from the behind while Shahbaz Sharif is trying to highlight how the army helped Imran Khan to come to power. With the support from the army Imran should have succeeded but has destroyed the country. This attack is not on Imran Khan. It is in the same direction like Nawaz Sharif. The government has failed because of the army.* CPEC is at its best at the moment.

Media and the government, Editorial, *Jang*, 29 September²⁸

In a declaration passed by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) after their meeting in Quetta the other day stated that the behavior of the current government towards the media is based on hatred. *The statement should immediately draw the attention of the leader of the party who was talking about freedom of expression in the country before coming to power. According to the declaration, after the PTI came to power, disregarding Article 19 of the Constitution, freedom of expression has been continuously attacked. Media houses are forced to toe a particular line. And if some resist it, then they bear the brunt.* The leader of the largest media group in the country, Mir Shakil-ur-Rehman has been in jail illegally for the last seven months. *To suppress the*

²⁷ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2020-09-28/page-8/detail-1>

²⁸ https://jang.com.pk/news/825684?_ga=2.253955597.480739053.1601359730-1172285561.1585539487

media in the country, undeclared censorship, threatening the owners of media houses on phone, creating financial issues, kidnapping journalists and making female journalists target of online trolling, all methods are being used. The declaration stated it rightly that the government should sit with the media industry and civil society and iron out the differences. Response from the government and the subsequent action can reflect on its intentions and image. While ignoring the proposal would further damage it internally and internationally.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Will Nawaz Sharif attend IHC September & the politics on Karachi, Geo News, 01 September²⁹

Two important developments are discussed in the latest episode of Capital Talk, *first*, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has given notice to Nawaz Sharif informing he has to appear before the court on 09th September or face legal proceedings for absconson. *Second*, the bigwigs of the government, opposition and army i.e. PM Imran Khan, Shehbaz Sharif and army chief Qamar Bajwa (already visited) are heading towards Karachi as Karachi has become a political spotlight especially after the heavy rains and the destructions caused by it. **Guests:** Shibli Faraz, Federal Information Minister; Mohsin Ranjha Shahnawaz, PML-N and Nazir Hussain Shah, Information Minister Sindh. *When questioned about why the government is adamant to bring back Nawaz Sharif and not others like Parvez Musharraf who has been termed absconding since 2017 in the murder case of Benazir Bhutto. Shibli Faraz replied that the two cases are separate and should not be mixed are talked about in the same platform.* He argued that this sends a very wrong signal that the government is treating them unequally and suggested the other case should be discussed separately at a different point. He added Nawaz Sharif has no moral authority, he has been the PM of Pakistan and a tall leader, he should return to the country on his own. He also informed *that Prime Minister Imran Khan would visit Karachi on Friday and unveil 'Karachi Transformation Plan'*. **Mohsin Ranjha Shahnawaz** disapproved the comments of the minister and underlined they are in no position to bring back an army general to Pakistan, therefore they are putting all their efforts on Nawaz Sharif). The government is arguing that the medical reports were forged then why not they cross check the report as well as health of Nawaz Sharif through Pakistan embassy in UK as also directed by the IHC. He argued if federal minister Shibli Faraz thinks that it is his right to

²⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzkucMyDM20>

access legal help in his foreign funding case going on from two years, then Nawaz Sharif also has the right to legal aide. **Nazir Hussain Shah** argued that the government, army and opposition should have shown a united front in case of Karachi but PM has always avoided talking to opposition on major issues. *Talking about Shibli Faraz's offer to help Karachi and what he said in the same programme days back that "Karachi needs 10 Arab dollar to restore and that even if government had such kind of money will not give it to them" Shah informed that we have not asked for any help from government and they are just playing politics over Karachi.*

11th Hour with Waseem Badami, Asim Saleem Bajwa resigns as SAPM but retains post of Chairman CPEC Authority? ARYNews, 03 September³⁰

After the much trending #Bajwaleaks pertaining to Asim Bajwa's foreign assets and the Pizza joint Papa John's controversy, Asim Saleem Bajwa special assistant to PM (SAPM) on information has finally decided to resign from the post. But he also informed that he will continue to be chairman CPEC authority. In this episode the host discuss the issue at hand and bring out different views. **Guests:** Shibli Faraz (Federal Minister for Information) & Sabir Shakir (Anchor Analyst).

Shibli Faraz has in a previous talk informed that Asim Bajwa will come out with the details of his assets soon, he has now come out with the resignation but not the details of his assets. *The Minister tried to balance the view and underlined that the decision is personal but he is a competent and mature kind of officer. He will now focus on one thing completely that is the CPEC related issues.* He informed that the decision has to do nothing with the government and it is a personal decision and the government has neither denied nor supported him on this issue. Yesterday Bajwa has tweeted in this regard, *I strongly rebut the baseless allegations levelled against me and my family. Alhamdulillah another attempt to damage our reputation belied/exposed. I have and will always serve Pakistan with pride and dignity.* He also attached a press release in which he vehemently denied the news broke by Journalist Ahmed Noorani on 27th August 2020 and underlined that it was on an unknown website. **Sabir Shakir** *the issue at hand, the resignation has more to do with the debate of elected and non-elected members in the PTI cabinet and more SAPM's will be sent home by the government in the coming days.* He argued that otherwise the level of allegations pressed on him, on this basis he should have resigned from both posts, SAPM and chairman CPEC but he will hold the later post and this is much bigger and valuable post. There is pressure on Imran Khan from the elected cabinet to remove non-elected ones. He informed that Asim Bajwa

³⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHIjZV2VSzw>

always use to say I am not a political person and have not given any political statements but the problem is that once you are an SAPM you naturally become part of the government and political system.

Power Play with Arshad Sharif, IHC issue non-bailable arrest warrants for Nawaz Sharif? ARYNews, 15th September³¹

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday *issued non-bailable arrest warrants for former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif while dismissing his application seeking exemption from personal appearance in the hearing of appeals* against his conviction in the Al-Azizia and Avenfield Properties reference. The next hearing date in this matter has set to be September 22. His lawyer, Khawaja Haris cited the terms and conditions of Mr Sharif's departure according to which the federal *government was supposed to verify the medical reports of the former premier in case he required to extend his stay abroad*. Maryam Nawaz in a series of tweets questioned the judgment and asked if the courts are also under some pressure, one of the tweets read, *Mr. Chief Justice! Will you tell the public about this external pressure, who is obstructing justice and in front of whom the judges are helpless?* In this episode the host asks, what will be PML-N's strategy? Will Nawaz Sharif surrender to the court when it looks clear that he is not in a mood to come back to the country? **Guests:** Nadeem Afzal Chan (PTI), Barrister Mohsin Shahnawaz Ranjha (PML-N). When asked what is the government doing to bring Nawaz Sharif back, **Nadeem Afzal Chan** he has to come back, the law will take its own path to bring him back. If he does not come back and surrender it means that Nawaz Sharif does not believe in the court and laws of Pakistan or the other interpretation will be that in Pakistan there is separate laws for rich and poor. *As a political worker Nawaz Sharif should come back himself but it looks like that the government has to bring him back through legal ways.* **Barrister Mohsin Shahnawaz Ranjha** argued that Nawaz Sharif is our Qaid (head) and we are all concerned for his good health. He will come back as he did in the past when he was under radar of NAB, he left his ailing wife and daughter behind and came to Pakistan even when he knew about the possibility of arrest. *The main procedure of Nawaz Sharif got delayed due to corona and the government of Punjab never gave us in writing saying that Nawaz Sharif is absconding and he has exhausted the stipulated time, then we would have taken steps and challenged it.* He added that if Nawaz Sharif comes back, the PTI government will be in a big problem, he underlined that it looks like the government will not be able to complete five years because the team of PM that gives him suggestions are mostly non-elected and inexperienced.

³¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsCEjQOP6rU>

Power Play with Arshad Sharif, Bilawal Bhutto states army should not be consulted for politics, ARYNews, 22 September³²

The PPP President Bilawal Bhutto has underlined that the political leaders/workers should not meet the establishment/army in relation to political problems but the host informed at the same time according to media reports all the party leaders including opposition from PPP and PML-N including Bilawal attended a meeting called by ISI Chief and COAS Bajwa in order to discuss the legislation and elections in GB.

Guest: Faisal Wada (Federal Minister for Water Resources. Faisal Wada argued that the speech given by Nawaz Sharif during the APC *was the narrative of India and the Indian media was having a gala time reporting the scathing attack of Sharif on the army. These opposition leaders have a double face, in media they criticise establishment but behind the curtains they dine with them and ask for favours.* The army has clearly said that they are only there to provide security even during elections and keep them away from politics. He argued that if you are abusing the army then do not go and hug them behind closed doors. We in the PTI publically accept the truth that we have a great relation with army and they keep coming to the PM house. He informed that the meeting with army chief and the political leaders lasted for three hours and during this time mainly politics was discussed. *The Minister argued that the APC is nothing but a pressure tactic to allow Maryam Nawaz to flee the country.*

11th Hour with Waseem Badami, Asim Saleem Bajwa should be arrested instead of Shehbaz Sharif: Maryam Nawaz, ARYNews, 28 September³³

Shehbaz Sharif has been arrested by NAB for Money laundering and assets beyond known source. On one side Maryam Nawaz in the press conference underlined that her Uncle is arrested because he refused to be pressurized by the PTI government and did not leave his brothers side. On the other hand the PTI leaders are arguing that Maryam Nawaz gave a victory speech in the press conference and that they are happy to finish Shehbaz Sharif's political career and send him behind bars. *Maryam Nawaz in the press conference after Shehbaz Sharif's arrest challenging the army clearly underlined in the press conference that if there is some semblance of law in Pakistan then Asim Saleem Bajwa's should have been arrested not Shehbaz Sharif because of the business fraud and the company he created. The 99 companies and the franchise of Asim Bajwa, is the NAB not able to see it? The host ask what will be the fate of opposition's plan of protests. Will they resign from assemblies or PTI government will arrest opposition leaders one by one?*

³² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAFZX7A8INk>

³³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kT49QCH0Xo0>

Guest: Saleem Bukhari (Senior Analyst); Uzma Bukhari (PML-N) & Andleeb Abbas (PTI)

Uzma Bukhari underlined that Shahzad Akbar of the PTI take keen interests in the cases of the opposition but he has no right to do so and he is a 'certified liar'. The PML-N does not have to fight the case to prove anything to Shahzad Akbar, it will take a legal action and do so through courts. *She argued that money laundering is not done through transactions, it has various other hidden ways, and the problem is whenever opposition try to raise its voices against government they start sending the leaders to jail. What happened to the case of Usman Buzdar regarding liquor licence, why the NAB is slow on that case? What happened to Jahangir Tareen case regarding sugar mills?* **Andleeb Abbas** of the PTI asked if the opposition has so many details of the PTI leaders then instead of going into media why don't they go to the courts and register a case. She argued that on one side they criticise the army and refuse to cooperate with the government on bills related to national interest of the country, on the other side PML-N leaders (Mohammad Zubair) are sent to meet the DG-ISPR to talk about Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif case and to give concessions. DG-ISPR has openly said that they directed the PML-N leader to go to courts for the political matters. *She pointed out that Nawaz Sharif in his speech openly said that there competition is not with Imran Khan but with the army and the Indian media picked these lines and headlined it as Nawaz Sharif ready to attack army. This was APC's main aim.* **Saleem Bukhari** pointed out that Shahzad Akbar of the PTI has on every new case assured that this is the biggest case and that it will finish their career. The chaos created in the country in the name of justice by the PTI government has reduced the credibility of Imran Khan as a PM. *He pointed that the multi-party APC is the last big push by the opposition and its success will depend on the opposition's unity to run the campaign in the future and if any internal matters within opposition crop up, it will destroy the whole plan.* If the opposition reaches Islamabad and be able to convince the people then there is some chance of the oppositions plan to take off.

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)				
Karak ³⁴	09/09/2020	22 mineworkers killed in Pakistan	22	01
North Waziristan ³⁵	14/09/2020	Military Says 'Terrorist Commander' Killed In North-western Pakistan	04	01
North Waziristan ³⁶	15/09/2020	Blast In North-western Pakistan Kills Soldier, Wounds Three Others	01	03
Balochistan				
Quetta ³⁷	04/09/2020	Blast wounds multiple people in Quetta.	00	04
Hyderabad ³⁸	27/09/2020	Passenger bus catches fire in Pakistan, 13 killed	13	05

³⁴ <http://www.industriall-union.org/22-mineworkers-killed-in-pakistan>

³⁵ <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/military-says-terrorist-commander-killed-in-northwestern-pakistan/30837666.html>

³⁶ <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/blast-in-northwestern-pakistan-kills-soldier-wounds-three-others/30839891.html>

³⁷ <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/375776/pakistan-blast-wounds-multiple-people-in-quetta-on-september-4>

³⁸ <https://www.deccanherald.com/international/world-news-politics/passenger-bus-catches-fire-in-pakistan-13-killed-893619.html>