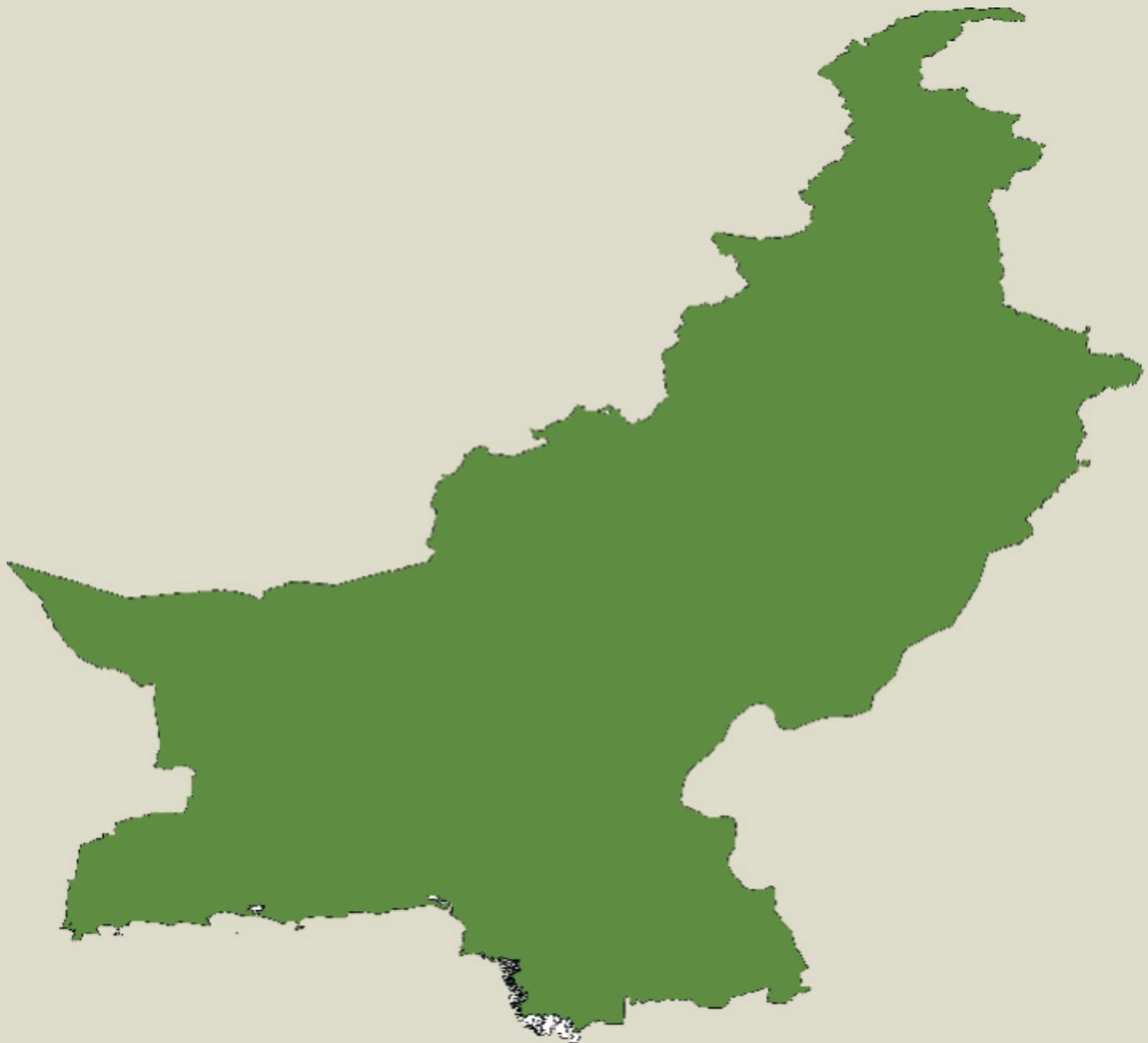


May 2025

# PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



*Prepared by*

Dr. Zainab Akhter

Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir

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## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### Of benches and judges! Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 15 May<sup>1</sup>

It is also incumbent at this point of time to revisit the 26th amendment and take a judicial review to ascertain whether the principle of the separation of powers is functioning as per the Constitution. *The so-called 'court-packing' under the amendment has led to widespread societal unrest, as the executive holds a sway over judiciary in terms of bench formation, allegedly dictating it and side-lining senior judges. The case under review, and the bench in vogue, have also hit some legal snags as the review petition is not being heard by the honourable judges who authored the July 12 decision. This altercation, already raised by a bona fide judge on the bench, as well as the SIC concerns on judges' leaning must get a fair hearing too for the sake of transparency and broad-based legitimacy. As an outcome of the controversial 26th amendment, the formation of the Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench is under the scanner.* Conventionally, the constitution of benches and the nomination of 'like-minded' judges come under discussion as and when it pertains to hearing of high-profile litigations. Our political history testifies to the fact that judicial decisions, at times, have not been sacrosanct and leaned on the wrong side of the divide for reasons of exigency, trampling the judiciary's credibility in contravention of the dictates of the Constitution. In this Armageddon, all political parties were found to be tainting their image for a time-served concession as they went on to torpedo the spirit of rule of law and merit in decision-making.

### Political off-ramp, Editorial, *Dawn*, 15 May<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of every crisis, there lies great opportunity. With the nation basking in the afterglow of Pakistan's successful military engagement with India, there is an opportunity to quickly heal certain internal vulnerabilities. *This, of course, is a reference to the bitter social and political divisions created over past years as various actors have vied for influence and control over the nation's governance structure. As the events of the past week have taught us, no matter how strongly opposed they remain in ideological terms, all actors are steadfast and united while confronting any crisis that threatens the sovereignty of Pakistan.* This realisation seems to have been missing from the national political discourse for some time now, and it is good fortune that it has now come to the fore. *With feelings of national pride at their strongest in many years, the environment is particularly amenable for all stakeholders to set aside their personal differences, even if momentarily, and extend each other a hand of reconciliation. Doing so quickly*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545874/of-benches-and-judges>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1911136/political-off-ramp>

*will send a strong message to those hoping to prey on the country's internal divisions. The stand-off last week has underlined an existential imperative to strengthen Pakistan's defences in all domains.* The country must be as strong internally as it is externally. The citizenry needs to be united under a shared social and political vision, and the state needs to create space for opportunities that promote economic growth and equitable prosperity.

### **Allying with Iran, Editorial, *The Nation*, 27 May<sup>3</sup>**

Following Pakistan's visit to Turkey, its next diplomatic stop in Iran is telling. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met not only with his Iranian counterpart but also with the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. *The meetings focused on escalating tensions in the Middle East, particularly Israel's aggression towards Iran, as well as India's recent hostilities against Pakistan. In both strategic and symbolic terms, this visit was a diplomatic masterstroke. While India struggles to justify its actions, and its television anchors veer into shrill propaganda against any nation that supports Pakistan, Islamabad is quietly but deliberately strengthening regional alliances.* Iran, though not overtly hostile to India, has long been an important partner for New Delhi economically and diplomatically. India has also sought to leverage Tehran as a counterbalance to Pakistan along its western flank. But by deepening ties with Iran grounded in shared religious, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic connections Pakistan is positioning itself as a more dependable and beneficial partner on Iran's eastern border. *Close coordination especially joint intelligence and military action against the BLA is essential. Such cooperation will allow both countries to focus on their real adversaries: not the proxies sowing chaos on the ground, but the larger geopolitical forces chiefly India and Israel whose interests are advanced through regional destabilisation.* This visit to Iran is, therefore, not just about diplomacy; it is about reimagining a regional order in which Pakistan and Iran can stand together as strategic partners, not just neighbours.

### **Whither strategy? Editorial, *The News*, 23 May<sup>4</sup>**

The political inertia within the PTI has become increasingly conspicuous. Once a movement-driven party that promised change and disruption to status-quo politics, it now finds itself in a state of strategic confusion and political irrelevance. *The recent contradictory signals emerging from the party's top leadership only reinforce the perception that the PTI has no clear plan for its political future. First, there were murmurs about no-confidence motions against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq. The idea, floated in certain media*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nation.com.pk/27-May-2025/allying-with-iran>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1314248-whither-strategy>

*circles, was swiftly denied by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar. That denial, however, raises more questions than it answers.* If the party was never seriously considering such a move, why were the reports allowed to circulate without immediate clarification? If it was a trial balloon to test political waters, it was clumsily handled and revealed more about the PTI's internal disarray than any real strategy. The numerical reality in parliament makes such a move not just unlikely but almost laughably impractical. Unlike the PDM's successful maneuver in 2022, the PTI lacks the crucial support of the PPP. Recent events, including the resolution of the Cholistan canal dispute and Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's elevated diplomatic role, suggest a renewed strength and unity within the coalition. Any notion of the PTI replicating the opposition strategy of 2022 without the PPP's support is simply delusional.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

### **Moody's warning, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 06 May<sup>5</sup>**

Moody's assessment that the hovering war clouds could adversely impact economic prospects, especially for Pakistan, needs to be attended to. India's war-mongering has put the entire region on tenterhooks, with the situation badly tilted towards an imminent conflict. *The New York-based global rating agency fears that sustained escalation in the ongoing tensions would hamper Pakistan's growth and derail the ongoing fiscal consolidation measures, besides rolling back the little attained macroeconomic stability. Islamabad, under a highly-dictated IMF programme, has inched towards improving its socio-economic indicators and forex reserves, besides witnessing an ease in inflation.* India's obsession to pull Pakistan into a war is part of its horrendous hegemonic designs meant to destabilize its archrival, and make it subservient from an economic perspective. This is tantamount to economic genocide and is in contravention of civilized norms of neighbourhood, despite Pakistan's willingness to cooperate in counter-terrorism protocols and to be part of any neutral probe into the Pahalgam killings. But India needs to keep in mind that any misadventure could come back to torment it in the long run. Moody's projection is that higher defence spending could impact New Delhi's fiscal strength, and it is quite unlikely that this offensive approach towards its small and lower riparian neighbour will remain conventional. Pakistan is clear that in case of an existential threat, the spectrum will be full blown with a finger on nuclear option. Time for India to step back from the madness of assured destruction.

### **All eyes on Budget '26, Editorial, *The News*, 19 May<sup>6</sup>**

As Pakistan inches closer to presenting its budget for FY2026, scheduled for June 2, the stakes have rarely been higher. After years of economic turbulence, there are cautious signs

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<sup>5</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2544144/moodys-warning-1>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1312845-all-eyes-on-budget-26>

of recovery, and the finance team, led by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, exudes a quiet confidence. *Early statements suggest that the FY26 budget will be “export-driven” and “strategic” a familiar refrain in Pakistan’s economic playbook. Yet, it is not the intent but the execution that has consistently failed us. The structural flaws in Pakistan’s economy are well documented. High financing costs, exorbitant energy tariffs and a convoluted tax system have repeatedly been identified as major impediments to growth.* These issues have been dissected by some of the best economic minds globally, whether academics, financial analysts or institutions. What Pakistan lacks is not a diagnosis but a cure. If this year’s budget is to mark a turning point, the government must ask itself: what are we doing differently this time? Another key area to watch is the rollback of tax exemptions. In theory, such exemptions are designed to support nascent industries. In practice, they have often become a tool for rent-seeking by entrenched interests. *Removing these privileges is fiscally responsible and a step towards a more equitable economic model. The government must now ensure that the savings from these withdrawals are redirected to human development and social infrastructure.* Indeed, public spending priorities must also be re-evaluated. Pakistan’s ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI) 168 out of 193 is a national embarrassment.

#### **Tighter conditions, Editorial, *The News*, 21 May<sup>7</sup>**

With the country’s next budget ostensibly less than a month away, the government and the IMF began high-level talks in Islamabad on Monday to discuss the upcoming budget. *The talks will focus on ensuring that the budget meets the various targets and conditions Pakistan has agreed to under the IMF’s \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility, with the country securing \$1 billion from the Fund earlier this month and approval of a fresh \$1.4 billion under the IMF’s climate resilience fund. While the help of the EFF in stabilising Pakistan’s economy is undeniable, the programme has required the country to make some pretty brutal adjustments and has arguably come at the cost of more growth.* Now, with regional tensions mounting and an increasingly fraught global trade and economic landscape, the IMF has tightened the loan conditions Pakistan will have to meet going forward. Pakistan must reportedly seek parliament’s approval for the federal budget for the next fiscal year (FY25-26) in line with the IMF agreement by June, implement agricultural income tax reforms across all provinces and draft a plan for phasing out industrial incentives by the end of the year. *The lender has also sought timely electricity and gas tariff adjustments, which are already proving too much to bear for many Pakistanis, and proposed legislation to convert the majority of the energy sector debt in a bid to reduce the financial burden on power firms.* And while the government and IMF have reportedly tentatively agreed to a tax target of Rs14, 307 billion, negotiations continue to

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1313566-tighter-conditions>

potentially lower it to Rs14, 100 billion. The lower tax target would be contingent on further expenditure cuts.

## SECURITY SITUATION

### **Securing the West, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 01 May<sup>8</sup>**

While Pakistan remains vigilant in the face of rising tensions along its eastern border, the situation along its western frontier remains deeply volatile and not without connection. It has become increasingly evident that the instability plaguing our western regions is being fuelled, in part, by the very same adversary across our eastern border. *The attacks on the Jaffar Express, the incidents in KP, and especially the continued violence in Balochistan bear the hallmark of foreign interference. India's collaboration with groups such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), and other armed factions is aimed squarely at destabilising Pakistan from within. It is imperative, then, to recognise that our security efforts cannot be viewed in isolation.* Defending Pakistan's sovereignty and unity from east to west, north to south is a single, coherent mission. *Any step taken to secure one region ultimately strengthens the whole. This disarmament is not just a tactical achievement; it is a powerful symbol. It shows that despite the meddling of external forces and the persistent threat of violence, the people of Kurram are standing firm with the ceasefire, with one another, and with the state.* Their commitment to peace is further strengthened by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's decision to establish a road protection force for the region. Already, 200 personnel have been recruited, with more to follow.

### **Field Marshal Asim Munir, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 22 May<sup>9</sup>**

Army Chief Gen Asim Munir is now a Field Marshal. While Pakistan's second Field Marshal, Asim Munir is the only one who has been awarded with the prestigious, five-star title by the government of the day. The other one, Ayub Khan, was a case of self-promotion. *A well-deserved one, Gen Asim Munir's promotion has come in recognition of his*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nation.com.pk/01-May-2025/securing-the-west>

<sup>9</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2547110/field-marshal-asim-munir>

*"brilliant military leadership, courage, and bravery" that ensured "Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and courageous defence" during the recent four-day military conflict with the far bigger, power-intoxicated, hubris-laden enemy India.* The elevation serves as a message to the adversary which, while licking its wounds, is still immersed in working out something more nefarious that could atone for the loss of face it suffered worldwide in the wake of the May 2025 combat that we have not lowered the guard and are ever ready to deal with any shenanigans with full military might, national unity and unyielding determination. *The trilateral huddle in Beijing agreed to "promote regional security" apart from "economic connectivity" something that can be interpreted as an assurance of 'continued support' from China as well as a 'here for you' gesture from Afghanistan whose rulers had been contacted by India just last week in what marks New Delhi's first minister-level outreach to Kabul.*

### **Connect the region, Editorial, *The News*, 26 May<sup>10</sup>**

The Beijing meeting marks the second significant diplomatic overture since Dar's visit to Kabul in April. Both meetings are being seen as confidence-building measures that may yet chart a path out of the current stalemate between Pakistan and the Taliban regime. *Relations between the two neighbours have been strained, mainly because of the presence of TTP sanctuaries in Afghanistan and the Afghan Taliban's refusal to act decisively against the group. China's growing role in the region as a mediator, investor and stabilizer has added new momentum to regional diplomacy. As a close partner of both Pakistan and Afghanistan, China is uniquely positioned to nudge both sides towards meaningful cooperation. Beijing's emphasis on regional connectivity through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the proposed extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into Afghanistan offers tangible incentives for all parties involved.* If the Afghan Taliban are serious about rebuilding their war-torn country and securing international legitimacy, they must demonstrate that they are willing partners in ensuring peace and regional collaboration. A shared recognition is what will really make the trilateral meeting a success: economic goals cannot be met unless the security situation stabilizes. Pakistan and China's reiteration of their strong stance against terrorism, in all its forms, is a message the Afghan regime cannot afford to ignore. Continued support, whether passive or active, for militant elements like the TTP will only isolate the Taliban further from the international community. Afghanistan must understand that providing sanctuary to such groups undermines regional peace and risks derailing its own aspirations for development.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1315251-connect-the-region>

### **Killing journalists, Editorial, *Dawn*, 28 May<sup>11</sup>**

Amid constant socio-political turmoil, Pakistan's journalists have been under siege for long. As attempts to intimidate them into silence grow more blatant, Balochistan's reporters, caught between the state and violent militants, battle an exceptionally hostile environment. The perilous circumstances our media functions in are reflected in the Committee to Protect Journalists' statistics, which show last year as the deadliest for media persons in 30 years: some 124 journalists were killed in 18 countries; Pakistan stood at number two, with Sudan, for the highest journalist fatalities. *Recently, Abdul Latif Baloch, a journalist at Daily Intikhab, was gunned down in Mashkay area of Awaran district. According to reports, gunmen barged into his house with the intention to kidnap him. On resistance, the gunmen shot and killed him. The Balochistan Union of Journalists has issued aggressive condemnations and called for the immediate arrest of the culprits, but his family refuses to comment.* Media freedom fortifies representative democracy by holding power accountable and exposing injustice, while conveying truth to the public brings transparency into the business of the state. But the truth is that successive governments and the legal framework have proved ineffective in ensuring action against murderers of journalists. Their failures have shaped a culture of impunity whereby journalists are hounded by incessant threats and attacks.

### **URDU MEDIA**

### **Chinese nationals in Balochistan guaranteed security, security personnel to get all facilities, *Daily Sangar*, 05 May<sup>12</sup>**

*The government in Balochistan has claimed that the security of Chinese citizens has been made fool proof. It has been decided to provide full facilities to the personnel assigned for the security of foreigners. In this regard, Additional IGP Commandant Balochistan Constabulary Agha Muhammad Yousuf has said that the Balochistan Constabulary plays a key role in improving law and order and the personnel remain alert to deal with any emergency situation. He said that the security of foreigners has been made fool proof. Wherever the personnel of Balochistan Constabulary are engaged in the security of Chinese and foreigners, basic facilities are being provided to the personnel in every case so that they are alert on their duty.* If any personnel from any zone is not

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1913810/killing-journalists>

<sup>12</sup> <https://dailysangar.online/?p=60915>

found present, it will be considered negligence of the Zonal Commander and strictest action will be taken against him. No one should be asked to work more than eight hours, he added. These views were expressed while chairing a meeting at the Badar Line Headquarters, Quetta on 4 April. Deputy Commandant Balochistan Constabulary (Retd) Lieutenant Commander Attaullah Shah, SSP Headquarters, Zonal Commander – IV-III-II and A.D Asadullah BC Head Office Quetta and other out zone zonal commanders participated through video link. *Additional IGP Commandant Balochistan Constabulary Agha Muhammad Yousuf said that Balochistan Constabulary is being developed on modern lines. Attendance and checking points are being ensured through cyber mode so that the duties of the soldiers will be checked through the dashboard and the soldiers will be briefed about the orders and duties in a modern way. And the problems of the soldiers will be resolved immediately without wasting time.* No one should be asked to work more than eight hours.

#### **14 Pakistani army personnel killed in Bolan and Tigran bomb blasts, BLA , Daily Sangar, 06 May<sup>13</sup>**

*Junaid Baloch, spokesperson of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has said in a press release that BLA killed 14 Pakistani army personnel in the Bolan and Tigran bomb blasts. The spokesperson said that BLA's Special Tactical Operations Squad (STOS) targeted a vehicle belonging to the Pakistani army convoy in a remote-controlled IED attack in the Machh area of Bolan on 6 May. As a result of the explosion, all 12 personnel including Special Operations Commander Tariq Imran and Subedar Umar Farooq of the occupying army were killed, while the enemy army vehicle was completely destroyed in the explosion.* He said that in another operation, the BLA Sarmachars targeted the bomb disposal squad of the occupying Pakistani army in a remote-controlled IED attack in Kech at around 2:40 pm on 5 May, when they were busy with clearance. Two enemy army personnel were killed in the explosion. The spokesperson said that the hired killers who call the BLA a foreign proxy, the Pakistani army itself is a hired armed force that thrives on Chinese capital and Papa Jones. The meaning of the army's uniform is sometimes guarding ports, sometimes guarding corridors, sometimes pleasing lenders, an army that decides its direction according to the will of changing masters in every era, is not a national army, but a commercial army. *The attacks of the real heirs of the Baloch land on these hired killers, the occupying Pakistani army will continue with more intensity.*

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<sup>13</sup> <https://dailysangar.online/?p=60936>

## **7 youths forcibly disappeared from Gwadar-Wapsani by Pakistani forces, *Daily Sangar*, 07 May<sup>14</sup>**

*Pakistani forces have forcibly disappeared seven youths from an area of a coastal district and CPEC hub, Gwadar and Pasni.* The youths who were forcibly disappeared from Gwadar have been identified as Nazir Ahmed, s/o Rahmatullah, Liaqat Ali, s/o Muhammad Anwar Shahwani, Hikmatullah, s/o Azizullah Shahwani, Wazir Ahmed, s/o Rahmatullah, Mumtaz Ali, s/o Muhammad Ismail Shahwani and Iqbal, s/o Ghulam Rasool Shahwani. *All six youths who were forcefully disappeared from an area of Gwadar, are said to belong to Nal and are labourers by profession. All of them were detained and forcibly disappeared on the same day, 5 May. On the other hand, the youth who was forcibly disappeared from Pasni has been identified as Sartaj, s/o Saleh Muhammad.* Sartaj was abducted by forces from a shop in Pasnion 6 May. Sartaj is a fisherman and a resident of Pasni. The Baloch Solidarity Committee (BYC) has confirmed the enforced disappearance of all these individuals.

## **Trial of civilians in military courts justified, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 09 May<sup>15</sup>**

*The Supreme Court's constitutional bench has announced its reserved verdict on the intra-court appeals related to the trial of civilians in military courts. The seven-member bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, delivered the verdict by a majority of 7 to 2. Justice Jamal Mandokhail and Justice Naeem Afghani dissented from the majority opinion. The Supreme Court nullified its earlier decision that had declared the trial of civilians in military courts as unconstitutional, and has reinstated clauses 2(1)(d)(i) and (ii) of the Army Act. The constitutional bench referred the matter to the government to legislate for granting the right to appeal against the decisions of military courts. The court directed that amendments be made to the Army Act so that appeals can be heard in the High Courts.* This verdict came after 56 hearings. It has now been two years since the May 9, 2023, incident, involving attacks on military installations, offices, statues, and the Corps Commander's House in Lahore. Some of the accused were transferred to military courts, and verdicts in these cases were delivered within two to three weeks. Military courts were initially barred from issuing verdicts on Supreme Court orders, but were later allowed to proceed. The accused received various sentences, ranging from a few months to ten years of rigorous imprisonment. Meanwhile, cases related to the May 9 events are also ongoing in civilian courts, but no verdicts have been delivered there so far. More than 100 cases were decided in just a few weeks in military courts, whereas civilian court cases remain pending. This delay in civilian courts has become a key justification for transferring cases to military

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<sup>14</sup> <https://dailysangar.online/?p=60969>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2025-05-09/page-9>

courts. After all, justice delayed is justice denied. Military courts were also established after the APS (Army Public School) tragedy, which had the full support of Parliament. The current legislation for trying civilians in military courts was also passed by Parliament, but was declared null and void by a five-member bench of the Supreme Court, triggering a debate on institutional supremacy. *Now, the constitutional bench has upheld that same law that was previously nullified. The bench also stated that those convicted by military courts should have the right to appeal. The matter has now been sent to Parliament, and if legislation is made to allow appeals in High Courts, it could address the concerns of those objecting to military court verdicts.* Ultimately, if the flaws in the justice system are corrected and speedy justice is ensured, the need for military courts would no longer arise.

### **CPEC: Afghan Inclusion, Editorial, *Roznama Jang*, 23 May<sup>16</sup>**

*During a trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China in Beijing, an agreement was reached to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, marking a significant step forward for the region's economic development. In this high-level meeting hosted by China, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi expressed their commitment to strengthening diplomatic ties and border cooperation, promoting regional stability and development, and addressing the shared challenges of terrorism. A major breakthrough in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations was the mutual decision to upgrade their diplomatic relations and, in principle, agree on appointing full-time ambassadors. China welcomed this decision. China was the first country to send a full-time ambassador to Kabul and had accepted the Taliban-appointed ambassador in March this year.* The issue of terrorism was one of the key points of discussion. All three ministers agreed to enhance security cooperation to combat all forms and manifestations of terrorism. *Recognising trilateral cooperation as an important platform, it was decided that the sixth trilateral foreign ministers' meeting will be held soon in Kabul. The recent agreements reached through mutual understanding between Pakistan and Afghanistan have opened up promising prospects for improvement in bilateral relations, which had been under strain. The elimination of terrorism is in the security interest of both countries, and extending CPEC to Afghanistan will contribute to the region's economic development.* China is a steadfast and all-weather friend of Pakistan. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar thanked China for supporting Pakistan's sovereignty, regional integrity, and defence rights. China praised Pakistan's steadfastness and expressed satisfaction with the second phase of CPEC, showing willingness for third-party participation.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://e.jang.com.pk/karachi/23-05-2025/page6>

## ELECTRONIC MEDIA

### **Youm-i-Tashakur: The success of Operation Bunyan Marsoos, Analyses by Imran Riaz Khan, 16 May<sup>17</sup>**

People from across the country in Pakistan came on streets as they observed *Youm-i-Tashakur* for giving a befitting response to Indian aggression against Pakistan and on the success of Operation Bunyan Marsoos. First part of the celebrations was on 11<sup>th</sup> May and PTI took part in these celebrations all over the country, all provinces including Gilgit Baltistan came on roads for the celebrations. But he added the PML-N was not seen so much in these rallies and now the government has decided to celebrate it again on Friday 16 May 2025. Government was late in the first part of the celebrations and now the second part of the rallies all over the country. The PPP is claiming that they took part in the conflict and against the Indian propaganda but in reality its supremo Asif Ali Zardari was nowhere to be seen. It looks like PML-N and PPP were the only party involved in fighting against India in this conflict. He informed that PTI is planning to start the protests soon, but whenever there is this kind of news, there is always another narrative that PTI is establishing contact with the army. He added this is a propaganda to break the momentum of the PTI and its supporters. Imran Khan has said that right now his focus is on protests and this is important to put pressure on the government for talks. There is a momentum in Punjab and KP for protests by PTI. The narrative against PTI that it is anti-nation was proved wrong during the recent conflict when PTI participated equally against the aggression by India. Talking about the statement by Fazl Ur Rehman, the JUI-F chief that read that Pakistan has taken revenge for Gaza by beating India, he added but this equation is totally wrong. Neither can it be the answer of the 1971 War that could be only when Kashmir is independent. The Saudi's are very influential and it has to lead to resolve the issue in Gaza. Talking about the deal between Indonesia and US in which the former was about to buy raffle jets from US, looks like are in danger after the Chinese made jets brought down the Raffle used by India. This may impact the US and there can be shift towards China for buying technology. After Syria Trump visited the Middle East and did a deal with Qatar for buying Boeing airlines.

### **Army gets back public support? | Dr. Adeel Malik with Azaz Syed, *Talk Shock*, 19 May<sup>18</sup>**

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFBQuTv6ERs>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jBPw5Aq8e0>

In the latest episode, journalist Azaz Syed discusses Pakistan's economy and polity with Adeel Malik, an Oxford professor, focusing on the impact of the recent India-Pakistan war-like situation. *When Azaz asked how the conflict affected Pakistan's economy, Adeel explained that both Pakistan and India suffered economically. He noted that India's stock market lost \$83 billion and incurred \$500 million in losses due to Pakistan's closure of airspace to Indian flights. Additionally, India's transit trade with Afghanistan was halted. Both countries faced reduced freight charges in the shipping industry, with India experiencing greater losses due to its larger economy.* Adeel also highlighted that rising ship insurance costs during the conflict and the uncertainty caused by instability deterred investors and reduced foreign direct investment (FDI) in both nations, as war-affected regions are less attractive for investment. He suggested this economic strain was a key reason India pursued a ceasefire. Dr. Adeel argued that while Pakistan has faced economic setbacks due to the ongoing conflict with India, the recent skirmishes have also yielded strategic benefits. He emphasized that the war has provided Pakistan with a unifying force, fostering cohesion and relative calm in its domestic political landscape, which had been plagued by instability in recent years. Additionally, he noted that the conflict has bolstered Pakistan's image among Gulf countries, a key source of remittances for its economy, as well as among European nations and the United States. Malik highlighted that these countries perceive Pakistan as militarily robust, capable of retaliating effectively despite its fragile economy. He further stated that, in recent years, Pakistan struggled to secure financial assistance despite Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's repeated foreign visits. However, he believes that the post-war context with India could lead to increased financial inflows from foreign countries.

### **Pakistan's Budget & IMF's Grip: IMF Sounds the Alarm, 365 Plus, 19 May<sup>19</sup>**

The host informed that the IMF team is currently on a visit to Pakistan and they have put some more conditions to the existing list. The host added that IMF is very vital for Pakistan and even the budget is made on the bases of these IMF funds. One condition of IMF was to sell state own enterprises that are running in loss, and Pakistan tried to sell the PIA airlines but couldn't do it. IMF has strictly said that till 2030 they will not get any money from privatization. IMF has clearly said it that Pakistan should not think this is the last IMF funding and added that due to the pressure from the external financing Pakistan will be forced to take the next loan from the IMF. The *IMF has warned of risks to Pakistan's economic outlook from global developments, noting:* "Risks to the outlook remain significant, including from global financial conditions, commodity price volatility, and geo-economic fragmentation." It noted regional tensions as a key concern, stating that "renewed clashes

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGbBHzLX3HQ>

with India could unsettle financial markets, deter investment, and distract from reform implementation.” **Guests:** Qadir Khan Mandokhel-PPP & Ahmad Owais-PTI. **Qadir Khan** Mandokhel pointed out that he challenge the fact that no department in Pakistan that is standing on its feet, He added that teachers are working on daily wages and in fact the whole Pakistan is working on daily wages. He underlined that the problem in our government is that all old and retired officials are eating up the departments rather than giving job to the youth of the country. Most of the departments are running on extension given to the senior officers and the current decision of the government to allow youth to appear in the CSS till 35 years of age. **Ahmad Owais** pointed out that Pakistan has faced many issues due to been a frontline state and we need to collect data on the same and should take a report to the US and say that Pakistan has fought on their behalf. Pakistan should request them to freeze the IMF loans and give us ten years to heal. Agreeing to the fact that old officers should retire with grace and dignity and give chance to the youth to take the country forward.

### **Imran Khan versus Establishment: Second round of Clash? Asad Toor Uncensored, 28 May<sup>20</sup>**

Asad Toor informed that in a new round of events Imran Khan and the establishment are getting ready for new round of clashes and talks. He also talked about the reserved seats, the case that is fought in the Supreme Court. There is an effort to give the reserved seats to the government and its allies and an effort to sideline the opposition, especially the PTI. The establishment has gained a new popularity these days after the clash with India, he asked will this popularity last? **Guests:** Senior Journalists: Adil Sarfaraz and Matiullah Jan. **Adil Sarfaraz** talking about the reserved seats he informed that all judges were talking about the case and added that this case is not as easy as it seems and Faisal Siddique, PTI lawyer came to the court fully prepared, he asked for two days. Talking about Qazi Faez Esa he added he had his own charm but the present judge is trying its best and most of the judges in the case seems to have not read about the case. The PTI’s symbol of bat has also been snatched and the judges are saying the election commission did it. But the court has some role in the overall case and they should take this case seriously as it impacts the whole political system of the country. We were hoping sanity prevail and PTI will hold the guns, but now Imran Khan has again given a statement against the establishment and now army thinks its powerful now and can crush PTI and Imran Khan. **Matiullah Jan** pointed out that the judge want to resolve the issue before he embarks on Hajj and therefore time is of immense factor. The Supreme Court is

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<sup>20</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNCMKgG\\_auQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNCMKgG_auQ)

playing its role and in the past also gave its judgment on military court. The PTI is fighting the fight and it has to fight to meet Imran Khan in jail. In the India-Pakistan clash although the PTI stood with PM Shehbaz Sharif and the country. The government has taken advantage of this honeymoon period and now are in the race to grab the reserved seats too. The judges of Pakistan are pressurized under the judgments they made in the past. Establishment has made sure that the new found popularity is limited to military and not the government. Although the credit goes to COAS and to elevate him to Field Marshal is also ceremonial but that does not mean they use this to sideline the opposition. This is a good opportunity for the establishment and government to review the policies and give some relief to the PTI.

