

October 2024

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



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

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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

SCO Leadership, Editorial, *The Nation*, 17 October¹

Sitting as the chair of the 23rd meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Council of Heads of Governments at the Jinnah Convention Center in Islamabad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presented a commanding presence, surrounded by leaders from around the world. As anticipated by citizens across the nation, the Prime Minister delivered a compelling speech addressing the multifaceted crises facing the region. *He covered a wide range of issues, from trade and connectivity to energy and infrastructure projects, counter-terrorism, military cooperation, and the prospect of shared currencies and independent SCO-run financial institutions. His remarks encapsulated the hopes of many in the region for these countries to move beyond the binary roles imposed by the global hegemonic struggle between superpowers, a struggle that has kept them in an unwanted state of conflict from which they seek to escape.* Beyond expressing the desire to unite a region historically divided by external forces, Prime Minister Sharif also outlined a vision of a connected Eurasia. The lands at the heart of the SCO the Eurasian steppe, the Iranian plateau, and the nations bordering this vast region—once served as the cradle of civilizations that thrived through trade and cultural exchange. Pakistan shares deep historical linkages not only with South Asia but also with Iran, China, and Afghanistan, connected through this extensive land bridge that ties them all together.

Conciliatory approach, Editorial, *Dawn*, 15 October²

Though a variety of militant groups are active in Balochistan, till date no one has claimed responsibility for the Duki massacre. *While there is surely a need to neutralise violent elements that present a danger to public safety in the province, the fact is that militarized responses to terrorism and insurgency have been tried in Balochistan for decades, but have failed to bring permanent peace to this tortured land. The sad truth is that when the powers that be marginalise and defame peaceful voices calling for change and rights, then disaffected populations are pushed*

¹ <https://www.nation.com.pk/17-Oct-2024/sco-leadership>

² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1865293/conciliatory-approach>

towards radicalisation and confrontation with the state. The recently concluded jirga in Jamrud, organised by the proscribed PTM, raised many of the same points that Baloch activists have been highlighting for years. It includes the problem of enforced disappearances and the extraction of KP's resources, with few benefits reaching the common people from this natural wealth. ***In order to stem the tide of disaffection, efforts to maintain law and order have to be supported by political initiatives that allow deprived segments of the population to freely air their grievances, with appropriate responses from the state. Pakistan can only move forward when disillusioned segments of society particularly in Balochistan and KP are brought into the mainstream,*** and are given their constitutional rights. In the long term, this can be amongst the most effective counterterrorism measures.

PTM Jirga, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 14 October³

The PTM's two-day Jirga in Khyber Agency had kept the government and security apparatus on the tenterhooks. It is, however, a good omen that it went ahead peacefully, with both sides exhibiting an exceptional understanding, making it an example for further interactions with estranged elements in the socio-political realm. ***The Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement, nonetheless, vented out its anger against the system in vogue, boasting a sizeable gathering despite all odds. It goes without saying that the revulsion in Afghanistan and the war on terror, coupled with home-grown terrorism, have devastated the region and its polity and warrant a political solution.*** Likewise, the PTM has been in the eye of the storm and its politics of extremism has always kept it on the run. But it was soothing to note that an undeclared accord with the party helped it come on the same page with the state. Thus, there was no crackdown on PTM, and its supporters from across K-P and Balochistan were free to travel up to Jamrud, the venue of the Jirga. The question is: why can't this module be emulated with other opposition political forces, especially the PTI? ***The cooperation between the PTM and the state must graduate to a broader consensus on dealing with dissent, and addressing it in the parameters of law and the Constitution. The onus is now on the PTM to walk the talk and show that it believes in a negotiated solution under the writ of the Constitution, and refrain from playing the geopolitical card of otherness.***

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2502579/ptm-jirga>

Grand Jirga, Editorial, *The Nation*, 11 October⁴

In response to the now-banned Pashtun Quami Jirga, led by the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), the government has organised a rival grand jirga, to be headed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, with Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur leading the initiative. The aim is to address peace-related issues and provide a platform for reconciliation in the province. *The lines are clearly drawn. On one side is the banned gathering of peace activists under the PTM banner, and on the other is the government's invitation to engage in addressing the longstanding militancy in the province, regardless of its potential success. This is a necessary decision by the government.* Simply banning the PTM without offering any means for their legitimate concerns to be heard leads to a dead end and furthers alienation. If a party is considered problematic from a security standpoint, the government must also provide an alternative channel to address the grievances that gave rise to the movement. The grand jirga, along with subsequent meetings, should now reflect the government's comprehensive effort to tackle these challenges. More importantly, it should listen to the concerns raised by the Pashtun members of the jirga and work to address them. *It is hoped that Ali Amin Gandapur's ethnic rhetoric, which had become a problem during his protests, can now be channelled into constructive dialogue. His background and influence may resonate with members of the PTM, enabling him to bridge divides and foster understanding.*

26th Amendment, Editorial, *The News*, 21 October⁵

The 26th Amendment has been a long time in the making, with months of political back-and-forth between government allies and opposition parties – the PTI of course opting to sit this out despite efforts by the PPP and JUI-F to bring the party on board. *The provision for a fixed three-year term for the CJP, one of the key features of the amendment, has generated substantial debate. Supporters of the amendment argue that it introduces much-needed accountability and transparency in the judiciary's operations, emphasizing the importance of*

⁴ <https://www.nation.com.pk/11-Oct-2024/grand-jirga>

⁵ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1242212-26th-amendment>

parliamentary involvement in judicial appointments and asserting that parliament has the right to play its role in shaping the country's highest legal offices. The logic behind this, they say, is that the judiciary should not function in isolation from democratic oversight. The 26th Amendment that is likely to be passed by the time Sunday is over is a 'diluted' version of what the government's initial draft was, which had been called draconian and undemocratic by critics and which had led to the drawn-out negotiations in the first place. If the government had been transparent from the beginning, the process might have been less contentious and the outcome more widely accepted. Ultimately, the 26th Amendment is a momentous but polarizing development. Whether it will usher in a more accountable judiciary or diminish the independence of one of the country's most critical institutions remains to be seen. *What is certain is that the delicate balance between the judiciary and the legislature has been irrevocably altered. As the amendment's provisions take effect, it will be vital to closely monitor how these changes impact the judiciary's functioning and, most importantly, the public's trust in its ability to deliver justice impartially.* The coming years will be a critical test of whether these reforms truly serve the public interest or merely reflect the shifting tides of political power.

New CJP, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 24 October⁶

The appointment of a new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court seems to have a malafide intent. The 26th constitutional amendment has taken its first toll, and as desired the senior puisne judge, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, has been axed. *The elevation of a third judge on the seniority list is a managed affair and has come in an utter bad taste as an attempt to control the judiciary.* The tailor-made legislation has worked to the pleasure of the men at the helm, leaving behind all those in the republic who advocate for a culture of merit, transparency and rule of law in fixation. Justice Yahya Afridi, irrespective of his outstanding credentials, will carry the stigma of being backed by the executive in the light of his nomination by a Special Parliamentary Committee under a new law that is controversial to the core. *Justice Afridi will wear the robes as the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) for three years, and his era is likely to see some contested cases at the apex court. His*

⁶ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2504860/new-cjp>

independence and non-partisanship will be up for test, especially as his predecessor, Justice Qazi Faez Isa, had left behind a traumatised judiciary in the backdrop of many of his controversial decisions. With many of the pleas of the opposition parties, especially those of the PTI, soliciting a judicial review of the February 8 election outcome, as well as pending decision of electoral tribunals, Justice Afridi will be looked up in awe for putting his weight behind the law and the constitution in all fairness. But for many that would remain a wish-list and the crossing of swords among the organs of the state under abject political instability will keep all and sundry on tenterhooks.

CJ Isa's tenure, Editorial, *The News*, 25 October⁷

As Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa retires today, his tenure will be remembered both for the work done in the judicial sphere as well as for the polarizing effect it had. *CJ Isa's tenure, spanning just 13 months, will be remembered for bold reforms, high-profile decisions, a struggle against both political and institutional challenges, and much controversy including the continuation of a divided court.* When Justice Isa assumed office in September 2023, he brought about several 'firsts' in the history of Pakistan's Supreme Court. From the live telecast of court proceedings, a move praised for promoting transparency, to the appointment of the first female registrar of the Supreme Court, his leadership signaled a break from tradition. His decision to call a full court on his first working day set the tone for an inclusive judiciary, one that seemed open to change. *A major reform during his time as CJP was the implementation of the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023, which aims to distribute judicial powers more evenly across the bench.* This reform, though lauded by many as a step toward improving transparency in how cases were assigned, was met with resistance by those who believed it diluted the powers of the chief justice. *Nonetheless, Chief Justice Isa's resolve to prioritize collective decision-making was evident, even at the cost of inviting controversy.* As Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa retires, Pakistan's judicial system finds itself at a critical juncture. The hope is that his successor will be able to restore public trust in the courts. The passage of the 26th Amendment and the establishment of constitutional benches present both challenges and opportunities.

⁷ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1243565-cj-isa-s-tenure>

Furthering instability, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 29 October⁸

The coalition government's refusal to act upon the apex court decisions is furthering political instability. The resolve afresh from Speaker Ayaz Sadiq that he will "not comply with the Supreme Court's order regarding the reserved seats case" is a step towards the brink. *This policy decision of the government has put the ECP too in a catch-22 situation. It is mandatory for the electoral watchdog to obey the top court orders and notify the PTI legislators on reserved seats, but it finds itself in a dilemma as the executive wants it to abide by the dictates of the parliament.* This defiance on the part of the executive and the legislature has led the eight judges - who, as part of a 13-member bench of the top court, ruled in favour of the PTI in the reserved seats case - to clarify twice that non-compliance with the July 12 verdict is not an option. The new decorum of the Supreme Court, in the wake of Qazi Faez Isa's exit, has come with new undercurrents. *It will not be easy for the embattled dispensation to restrict the superior judiciary for long. What needs to be understood is that working with the opposition and upholding the dictates of law is the best way to move forward, helping in lowering political tensions and, likewise, contributing to economic revival and social peace.* This standoff for the last two years has bred contempt and organs of the state are in a state of quandary.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Billion Boost, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 10 October⁹

The government has received a billion-dollar financial boost from friendly countries, thanks to the support of the Special Investment Facilitation Council and the government's efforts. We are told that several Asian and European countries are ready to invest \$27 billion in direct investment in Pakistan. *The proposed investment includes \$5 billion from Saudi Arabia, \$10 billion each from the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait and*

⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2505892/furthering-instability>

⁹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1233385/billion-boost/>

\$2 billion from Azerbaijan. The pledges look rosy but they lack timelines. If timelines are added to the plans, such a massive influx of foreign capital would open a new era for Pakistan.

This represents the largest foreign investment since the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC is often referred to as a game-changer for the entire region, not just for Pakistan. However, tangible results of CPEC investments have been less visible. If the commitment of \$27 billion is not merely talk, it is, no doubt, a plan that can change the whole scenario. However, while these agreements are promising, our institutions and government should not become complacent. They must ensure that foreign investors receive all the necessary facilities, including adequate space for projects and a conducive environment for investment. Energy supply should not only be sufficient but also affordable, as high energy costs have previously driven local investors to relocate their businesses to other countries. Not to forget, improving the law and order situation is crucial. In the past, many Pakistani investors moved their businesses abroad due to the lack of *bijli*, *mehngai* and security concerns. If these issues can be addressed, there is a real possibility of attracting even more investment into the country

IMF's estimate, Editorial, Dawn, 24 October¹⁰

The IMF's economic growth projection of 3.2pc for Pakistan falls short of the 3.5pc target that the government has set for the present fiscal, but it still seems rather optimistic given our balance-of-payments constraints. *This is also in contrast to the 2.8pc growth rate forecast by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The State Bank has predicted the economy will expand between 2.5pc and 3.5pc this year. The Washington-based lender, which recently approved a \$7bn rescue package for Pakistan, expects the country's growth rate to gradually improve to 4.5pc by 2029.* Moreover, in its latest World Economic Outlook, the Fund expects headline inflation to decline from 23.5pc last year to 9.5pc this year and to 6.5pc in 2029. Likewise, the current account deficit is seen by it as stabilising at 0.9pc of GDP. The IMF's estimates are apparently based on the projections made by its staff under the assumption that Pakistan would meet all the targets of its new funding programme leading to increased foreign inflows, which would ease its balance-of-

¹⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1867284/imfs-estimate>

payments position, further stabilise its economic fundamentals and allow the authorities to pursue growth that is slightly higher. *There is no doubt that the economy is showing signs of 'improvement' after a couple of highly turbulent years, with moderate growth returning, inflation declining, external pressures easing due to IMF funding, the exchange rate stabilising and the current account deficit shrinking.* But these improvements are due to cuts in essential public spending and restrictive policy decisions including limits on imports and high interest rates.

Underwhelming IMF forecast, Editorial, *The News*, 28 October¹¹

Even though the government has secured a vital \$7 billion bailout from the IMF, the multilateral 'lender of last resort' still expects Pakistan to miss its growth target for the current fiscal year. *In its World Economic Outlook report released on Tuesday (October 22), the IMF forecast that the country's economy would grow by 3.2 per cent in the current fiscal year, falling short of the government's 3.5 per cent target for the same period. The IMF also projects inflation to remain in the single digits for the current fiscal at 9.5 per cent and a relatively modest current account deficit of around 1.0 per cent.* While the IMF's forecast is not exactly blue skies and sunshine for a developing country with a rapidly growing population like Pakistan, it is still more optimistic than the 2.8 per cent growth rate and 10 per cent inflation projected by the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. It must also be noted that meeting the IMF's comparatively rosier projections is contingent on the government meeting the targets set under its new funding programme. *This is something Pakistani governments have mostly failed to do in the past often due to political pressure. Even if one looks further ahead, the IMF only expects growth to rise to about 4.5 per cent by 2029. By then, it is estimated that the country's population will have grown by as much as 10.1 per cent and, given our disproportionately young population, the working-age population will likely rise even faster.* This means more stiff competition for a rather small pool of jobs and meagre incomes.

¹¹ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1244627-underwhelming-forecast>

SECURITY SITUATION

Russia's Taliban tilt, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 09 October¹²

Taliban are making inroads in diplomacy. The realisation from Moscow to normalize ties with Kabul is a game-changer in their otherwise suspicious module of interaction. The decision, of late, by Russia to remove the Afghan Taliban from the list of terrorist organisations has come as a major CBM, and underscores the changing perspective with which Afghanistan and its reigning dispensation is being viewed by regional players. *China was the first to kick-start a dialogue process with Taliban when they thronged to power in 2021, and subsequently accepted its ambassador. It was following by Russians coming out to engage the militia leadership and hosting them at the highest level at Kremlin.* That paradigm of cooperation has come from President Vladimir Putin's special representative on Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, who was quoted as saying that Moscow sees Taliban as an ally. That squarely reflects the undercurrents through which Russia wants to win over Afghanistan by citing the excesses of the United States, and helping it rebuild once again. For many it speaks of a doctrine in burying the hatchet, after the Soviets themselves being invaders of the landlocked state. *Moscow desires a peaceful Afghanistan to further its interests in Eurasia, and is appreciative of Taliban's anti-drugs policy and the defiance it is putting up against non-state actors.* Moreover, Taliban's thrust to be part of BRICS indicates the commonality of vision, as they foment an anti-West alliance in the making. This new decorum should come with some sense of responsibility from Taliban 2.0 in the form of ushering in inclusivity and cleansing the Afghan soil of TTP and their likes.

Terrorism upsurge, Editorial, *Dawn*, 08 October¹³

The Chinese embassy has not minced its words, demanding that Pakistan “thoroughly investigate the attack [and] severely punish the perpetrators”, and has called upon the state to protect Chinese citizens and projects in the country. *This is the second major*

¹² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2501557/russias-taliban-tilt>

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1863804/terrorism-upsurge>

incident targeting Chinese nationals this year after the Bisham attack in March, in which five foreigners were killed. Simply put, Pakistan cannot afford such acts of terrorism as the economy begins a long journey of recovery, and the country re-engages with the world by hosting bilateral and multilateral exchanges. The Karachi airport is supposed to be a highly secure location, guarded by civil LEAs, and surrounded by military installations. A thorough probe is therefore very much required to uncover how terrorists were able to strike at such a sensitive location. Moreover, the attacks in Karachi and in KP and Balochistan illustrate how varied the militant threat is: ranging from separatist groups to religiously inspired fighters. *Instead of crushing the political opposition, all arms of the state including the administration and the security establishment need to fully devote their energies to eliminating the terrorist threat from the country.* In the short term, this can be achieved through intelligence-based operations that pre-empt violent actors from carrying out their malevolent designs. Economic recovery and national development will be impossible to achieve unless these terrorist threats are addressed. Therefore, the state needs to go beyond rhetoric and take meaningful steps in this regard.

Terror update, Editorial, *The News*, 03 October¹⁴

The data for this year is particularly concerning. So far, 1,534 people have lost their lives to terrorism, surpassing the total death toll of 1,523 recorded in 2023. This spike in fatalities underscores a disturbing shift in militant tactics. *Terrorist groups are not just carrying out more attacks; they are staging larger, deadlier assaults with the intent to maximize destruction. The result is a populace left to bear the brunt of an increasingly ruthless campaign of violence.* KP and Balochistan are, yet again, at the centre of this crisis. Both provinces have endured years of instability, with their people paying a heavy price for the state's inability to establish a firm writ. *While the efforts of the military and police have helped keep terrorism at bay, the absence of a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of militancy in these regions has allowed the problem to fester.* The ongoing conflict in these provinces is a stark reminder that without an enduring political and security solution, the gains made by military operations will be fleeting. This brings us to the critical failure

¹⁴ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1236169-terror-update>

of leadership. In KP, where the threat of terrorism looms large, political leaders seem more preoccupied with scoring political points than addressing the crisis at hand. Rather than focusing on petty political squabbles, the government should be working towards a unified, province-wide strategy to combat terrorism. *A broad-based political consensus is urgently needed – one that transcends party lines and personal rivalries. Pakistan cannot afford to let its political leaders shirk their responsibilities while its security personnel and civilians bear the costs of an unrelenting terror campaign.* Only through coordinated political will and security measures can the country hope to turn the tide against terrorism once more.

Balochistan bleeds, Editorial, Dawn, 01 October¹⁵

Balochistan continues to sink into an abyss of violence and despair, with the province once again experiencing a blood-soaked day when armed terrorists descended on an under-construction house in Panjgur town and killed seven sleeping labourers from Multan. When grief and bloodshed persist, it is the responsibility of all political actors to stand in solidarity with the bereaved and lead the demand for security and justice. *Unfortunately, most seem to have chosen political interests over protest; their calculated caution is not just discouraging, it also demonstrates a lack of conviction and moral responsibility to demand decisions from the state for the benefit of the province.* The writing is on the wall: Balochistan's political representatives should know that serving narrow interests will not serve them well in the long run. They must emerge from their constraints to pursue inclusion, progress and equality with a firm strategy and resolve. Moreover, the ethnic aspect of the recent killings is evidence that resentment towards the exploitation of Balochistan's resources is on the rise. Insurgents, through frequent attacks, seek to incite extensive military action, which lacks approval from the populace and erodes space for political negotiations and dialogue. *Politicians need to launch assertive initiatives to prevent non-political intervention, and also to fill the vacuum created by their own reticence. Or else, violent groups deriving power from sociopolitical and economic misery will spin out of control.*

¹⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1862289/balochistan-bleeds>

Wave of violence in KP, Editorial, *Dawn*, 28 October¹⁶

Another wave of violence is cresting in KP. The past few days have seen multiple attacks that have claimed the lives of a number of security personnel. On Saturday, eight people, including four policemen and two security officials, were martyred in a suicide blast in North Waziristan. An earlier attack took place in Darazinda, in D.I. Khan district, on Thursday night, when militants stormed a checkpoint and martyred 10 Frontier Constabulary men. The rising count of security personnel martyred in terrorist attacks has remained a cause of concern. Among those martyred in the recent attacks was a young off-duty cadet, aged only 19, who was slain in an assault on a Lakki Marwat mosque. *It has been reported that the young man fought off the terrorists, laying down his life while saving many others in the process. It is saddening to contemplate the loss of a life so young, and it compels one to ask how many more soldiers we will lose to such dastardly attacks before the state devises a coherent response mechanism to terrorist outfits, which are growing bolder by the day.* It has been argued that Pakistan needs a dedicated counterterrorism force to meet terrorists in asymmetric warfare, as its regular forces are trained to fulfil a different responsibility and equipped with a different skillset. The recent spate of violence has highlighted this need further. Things have lately been tense in the province due to a three-way stand-off between terrorist outfits, the citizenry and security forces. If recurrent incidents of violence are left unchecked, they will further erode people's confidence in the state and its ability to maintain peace and provide security to its citizens. *The state must, therefore, move immediately and decisively to wrest back control. While doing so, it must consciously avoid taking any action or decision that may antagonize the citizenry and, consequently, create unnecessary hurdles in the implementation of its policy measures.* On the other hand, the civilian leadership of the province must take responsibility for generating a political consensus on how the threat is to be tackled. A concerted effort is needed to rid the country of this menace.

¹⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1868139/wave-of-violence>

Terror alert, Editorial, *The News*, 29 October¹⁷

The grim resurgence of terrorist violence in Pakistan, illustrated by the recent suicide bombing in North Waziristan that martyred six people, including four brave police officers, and an attack targeting former JUI-F Senator Maulana Mohammad Saleh Shah's residence in South Waziristan, signals a dangerous trend. Security forces are fighting back with valour, as evidenced by the elimination of four terrorists in recent operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Yet, while our forces confront this escalating threat, the lack of political unity and clarity on the true adversaries of Pakistan is deeply concerning. Here's a fact: terrorists tend to capitalize on internal discord. So for terrorists a divided political landscape, with parties prioritizing rivalries over national security, leaving the state vulnerable is a dream come true. A stark example of such internal discord would be the PTI considering a protest in Islamabad right during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's recent summit in the capital. *While the party thankfully backed down and Pakistan successfully hosted the event without incident, the tension underscored the precarious balance we maintain in the face of terrorism's growing reach. Recent security reports highlight the ongoing threats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, the two provinces bearing the brunt of terrorist attacks. In a nation where the specter of terrorism looms large once more, it is imperative to identify the genuine enemies of the state rather than misdirecting efforts at nationalists and other local groups in these regions.*

URDU MEDIA

Nawaz Sharif's statement, Editorial, *Roznama Jang*, 16 October¹⁸

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stated that it would have been better if Narendra Modi visited Pakistan himself, but he hopes that the opportunity for dialogue between them is not too far off. This statement came at a time when the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit is taking place in Islamabad, with India represented by Foreign Minister S.

¹⁷ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1244996-terror-alert>

¹⁸ <https://e.jang.com.pk/karachi/16-10-2024/page6>

Jaishankar. Nawaz Sharif has always been an advocate for good relations with all neighbouring countries, including India. His statement is a significant, hopeful step towards improving Pakistan-India relations. The changing dynamics in South Asia and the bitter experiences of the past necessitate an atmosphere of peace and mutual cooperation between the two countries. In this context, the ongoing SCO meeting in Islamabad presents an excellent opportunity for both nations to adopt a wise strategy, benefit from this moment, and begin a new journey, leaving past grievances behind. *During the summit's coverage, Indian journalist Barkha Dutt met Nawaz Sharif in Lahore, reminiscing about his time as Prime Minister. Nawaz Sharif had initiated the peace process with India during his tenure, notably when then-Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee travelled by bus to Lahore and saluted the Minar-e-Pakistan.* Nawaz Sharif also congratulated Narendra Modi on his third term as Prime Minister, sending a message to turn hatred into peace. Unfortunately, in contrast, India's stance has remained aggressive. The Kashmir issue continues to be the biggest obstacle to relations between the two countries. SCO member states should exert pressure on India regarding this issue. If the Kashmir conflict is resolved, the pathways to development and prosperity for both countries will open up.

The visit of Chinese premier, Editorial, *Ummat*, 15 October¹⁹

For the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting the expected participants have reached Islamabad. Some guest leaders are expected on Tuesday. For Pakistan the most important guest, Prime Minister of China Li Qiang. It is because of him that China and Pakistan have friendly relations in defense, business and agriculture. This was reflected in the grand welcome organized for the Chinese Prime Minister. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif went to receive his Chinese counterpart. Two leaders held talks on various issues, including moving ahead with the CPEC projects. Various MoUs were signed between the two leaders on various sectors. Gwadar Airport was also inaugurated virtually. The leaders of China and Pakistan said that they support each other on various matters and expressed their intention to complete the second phase of the CPEC while maintaining high quality. *Prior to the visit of Chinese Prime Minister, common enemies of the two countries*

¹⁹ <https://ummat.net/epaper/news.php?date=2024/10/15/&p=idr1.gif>

attacked Chinese engineers in Karachi on 6 October to create difference and misunderstanding between them was foiled by the leadership of the two countries. Indeed, our Chinese friends know well the forces that try to create a difference between China and Pakistan by committing terrorism. It is expected that while meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister the issue of electricity projects constructed under the CPEC will be raised during the discussion. Because the costly electricity generated from these projects is used by enemy forces to create misunderstanding between two countries at the public level. Also Pakistan's economy faces serious issues because of costly electricity. Therefore, it will be constructive to think about rescheduling of the loans of the electricity projects of the CPEC, instead of importing coal using coals of Pakistan and rate of return. Similarly it is expected that work on ML-1 will be announced during the Chinese premier's visit to Pakistan.

Pashtun National Jirga will take place anyway, Manzoor Pashteen, *Daily Sangar*, 10 October²⁰

In one of his posts on social media platform X, Manzoor Pashteen, the head of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), *while addressing the Federal Interior Minister of Pakistan, Mohsin Naqvi said that “you obedient slave of military generals, you looters are genuinely fearful of the Pashtun Jirga because you make billions of dollars by shedding blood of the Pashtun people and have established businesses by looting resources of the Pashtuns- all that is now further to be closed”.* Manzoor said that it is a fact and the whole world is a witness to this that PTM is a peaceful movement. The Pashtun Jirga is being held for the right of having peace and control of our resources. The Jirga is not of the PTM's but of all Pashtuns. *By attacking the Jirga and the PTM, you people think that if the Jirga fails, then you will be able to continue the dollar wars and plundering the resources of Pakhtunkhwa.* But everyone should remember that if you oppress Pashtuns, we have to stop it. The actions that have been taken from Balochistan to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) for several days, *Pashtuns will definitely hold the generals, the federation and the provinces accountable. And yes, Pashtun Jirga will be held, God willing!*

²⁰ <https://dailysangar.online/?p=51775>

Challenges for the New Chief Justice, Editorial, *Roznama Dunya*, 24 October²¹

After the approval of Justice Yahya Afridi's appointment as Chief Justice of Pakistan by President Asif Ali Zardari, the Ministry of Law and Justice issued a notification confirming his appointment. According to the notification, Justice Yahya Afridi will take his oath as the 30th Chief Justice of the country on October 26, and his term will last for three years. The circumstances under which the nominated Chief Justice will assume office are significantly different and more complex than in the past. While the political and economic conditions of the country are evident, the judicial system is also beset by various challenges. One of the foremost challenges facing the new Chief Justice is the backlog of pending cases. A report from the Supreme Court indicates that as of August 31, 2024, there are 60,508 pending cases in the apex court, including 33,269 civil and 10,335 criminal appeals. In 2013, there were 20,480 pending cases in the Supreme Court, reflecting a 300% increase over the past decade. Expectations are high that Justice Yahya Afridi will take special measures to remove the obstacles hindering the timely delivery of justice. Regarding political cases, much of the judiciary's time has been consumed by these issues in recent years. While constitutional and legal matters can only be resolved in higher courts, the political turmoil has significantly contributed to the judicial burden. Reducing the flow of political cases is essential to ensure that the judiciary's time and attention are dedicated to matters of public importance; otherwise, the backlog will continue to grow. Another significant challenge for the higher judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court, is the recent trend of targeting each other in dissenting notes and correspondence. This has created an impression of division within the judiciary and has facilitated the political narrative against it. Judicial decorum requires that disagreements remain within the bounds of civility, focusing on legal points rather than ridiculing the judges who write the decisions. Ending this division and ensuring a united approach in the Supreme Court is a significant test.

²¹ https://e.dunya.com.pk/index.php?e_name=ISL&edate=2024-10-24&page=25

BNP protests against cases and arrest of party leaders, Daily Sangar, 27 October²²

Protests were held in Balochistan, including in Quetta on 27 October against registration of cases under terrorism provisions against party leaders including head of Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal and arrest of former member of Balochistan Assembly Akhtar Hussain Longo and Akhtar Mengal's personal secretary Shafi Mengal. The participants outside the Quetta Press Club demanded the withdrawal of the case registered against the party leaders and the immediate release of Akhtar Longo and Shafi Mengal. Addressing the protestors, the party leaders said that when the BNP chief exposed to the public the immoral and undemocratic practice of holding party senators hostage and forcing them to vote in favor of the 26th Amendment, they Cases were registered against Akhtar and other leaders. A case has been registered against Akhtar Mengal and BNP leaders under various provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code in the Police Station Secretariat, Islamabad. In the case filed by Joint Director of Senate Secretariat Jameel Ahmed on 22 October, it has been alleged that during the session of Senate on 22 October, Akhtar Hussain Longo, Jahanzeb Mengal, Shafi Muhammad, Ahmed Nawaz and Shafqat Takri entered the galleries and lobbies of the Senate without permission. According to reports, Akhtar Mengal was also with these people. According to the FIR, when the secretariat staff tried to stop them, they scuffled with the concerned staff. It has been stated in the FIR that the accused were armed with weapons. The petition further stated that this action amounts to interfering in the affairs of the Senate and preventing its staff from working. After registering this case, Islamabad Police arrested former BNP MLA Akhtar Hussain Longo and Shafi Mengal. The police produced the two accused in the anti-terrorism court and obtained their seven-day remand.

²² <https://dailysangar.online/?p=52408>

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

SCO Summit in Pakistan & PTI Protest, Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Saath, Geo News, 14 October²³

In this episode the host talks about the SCO Summit in Pakistan and the call of protest of PTI on the same day of the Summit. The government has strongly criticised this decision of the PTI even Maulana Fazl Ur Rehman has asked the PTI not to go ahead with the protest, he called the senior leader of PTI Asad Kaiser and asked to change the date of the protest on *D-Chowk*. It has to be noted that the SCO will take place in Islamabad near the red zone and d-Chowk. The host underlined that even if the PTI go ahead with protest and it is a success but it will not be good for the country. **Guests:** Haider Sherazi-correspondent, Shoaib Shaheen-PTI & Ahsan Iqbal-PML-N. **Haider Sherazi** informed that the PTI has called for meeting and the government has requested the PTI and talked to barrister Gohar and negotiating with the party. The government has given them the option of a full medical check-up of Imran Khan on the day of the summit. The allies of the PTI has said that the PTI should not go ahead with the protest on the SCO day. The PTI senior leaders are debating about the same and will come out with a decision. Maulana has called Asad Kaiser and has asked not to go ahead with the Summit, even Ali Amin Gandapur has accepted that they should not go ahead with the protest. The CM of Gilgit Baltistan and some other PTI leaders want the PTI to go ahead with the protest, there is a divide in the PTI on the same issue. Ali Mohammad Khan of the PTI said in a video that I am not in favour of the protest on the day of SCO Summit. **Shoaib Shaheen** pointed out that we don't know if our policy will change on the policy, but as of now we have not cancelled the protest on 15 October. We are worried about Imran Khan and the attitude of the Punjab government, our protest is conditional we have requested for meeting with Imran Khan and his medical check-up. The government is dancing on the tunes of the army and they do not have any concern for the country, they just want to arrest more PTI leaders and put them behind the bars. We do not want to create any issue and our protest will be peaceful, we have the information

²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YR37uNHfrac>

about the Imran Khan's health issues inside the jail. We have put content petition in the court on the same issue but the government has picked the person who put the petition. *Ahsan Iqbal* talking about the issue said that we are lucky to host the SCO Summit and the Chinese leader has come a day before to talk about the second phase of the CPEC. In this environment the PTI has called for protest which is not a good message for the World. He underlined that the PTI is blackmailing the government to give concession and it is a tactic used by the party and today if we give up and agree to the demands of the PTI, then tomorrow we have to give in to demands of many other parties and people behind bars. All the senior leaders are kept updated on the medical issue, there is no issue with Imran Khan, and the PTI is just cashing in on the chance. Talking about the constitutional amendment he informed that we have the numbers but we want all parties to be on board before going ahead with the bill.

Grand Jirga in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, ARY News, 10 October²⁴

Talking about the grand Jirga the host informed that the governor of KP, CM Ali Amin Gandapur and Mohsin Naqvi sat together in the Jirga. He added that these are the people who said so many things against each other and today they are sitting together. On the other hand Bilawal Bhutto along with PPP delegates had a meeting with Nawaz Sharif, it is giving out good vibes, and they planned to meet Maulana Fazl Ur Rehman. There is a view that the government should not hurry the issue of constitutional amendment, he underlined we have to see what turn it takes in the future. **Guests:** Faisal Karim Kundi (Governor KP) & Asif Kirmani (Senior Politician). *Faisal Karim Kundi* informed that he received a call from CM KP that there will be a grand Jirga for peace in KP and we know that the things are not good in the province that is why I attended. If I skipped the Jirga questioned would be asked to me why I was absent from the meeting. We also formed a committee and are dedicated to resolve the issues of KP, Mohsin Naqvi was happy with the meeting and he supported the Jirga and he took notice of the points said in the Jirga. He informed that there will be a second Jirga which will be hosted by CM, the Pashtun

²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ho0JuLpGM-c>

Tahaffuz Movement will also be joining the Jirga and we will talk within the constitution of Pakistan. Talking about his statement that he is better off as a governor he added that we want to talk about peace in KP and ignore all other useless things. Talking about CM Ali Amin Gandapur he informed that he has come out with different stories about his disappearance, but he added that he does not agree with his stories. He added that if Fazl Ur Rehman and other alliance support us, and have the number games, he informed we will bring the constitutional amendment. *Asif Kirmani* when asked if you are meeting with Nawaz Sharif he replied that it is been long that he has distanced himself from PML-N but he added in any political party there is no one view and the opposite views are put under the carpet. Although PPP and PML-N are family dynasty but some come on merit and not everyone can survive in politics. In a genuine democracy there is no place for dynastic politics, talking about *vote ko izzat du* narrative of Nawaz Sharif he added he wanted to do ideological politics but he was stopped from doing so, even today he want to do a different politics but he is kept aside and his politics is put under carpet. In the elections whatever has happened has impacted the credibility of the PML-N as a party. Nawaz Sharif came back to the country with so much hope but he was not given mandate and his politics is reduced to nothing, it is all about power politics. The real question is can Nawaz Sharif restore the narrative and glory of the PML-N and win the faith of the people, he has to think about it.

The Curious Case of Ali Amin Gandapur (CM-KP), 11th Hour with Waseem Badami, *ARY News*, 07 October²⁵

In this episode the host tried to understand the politics of Ali Amin Gandapur in respective to the PTI. It has to be noted that Amin has pulled out of the scene magically now two times and the PTI blamed that the agencies had taken him but the problem is that whenever he comes out and appear from some other point, he has not talked about the involvement of agencies. The host underlined that it is safe to assume that Amin Gandapur was not taken by agencies as he had not mentioned it. Many in the PTI states that the match is fixed between Amin Gandapur and establishment otherwise how he

²⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnFE6pyn-0o>

can just disappear and appear magically. **Guests:** Barrister Saif (KPK Government), Fawad Chaudhry (Politician) & Kashif Abbasi (Analyst). **Barrister Saif** pointed out that when rangers raided KP house we assumed that Amin Gandapur was arrested but he was taken to house arrest. He added that I said it was forceful disappearance and we have to take the words of CM KP as he is the one who suffered, there was no warrant against him too and he is an elected CM and police could not arrest him. The whole confusion was spread more because there was no contact with Amin Gandapur, in the first case he was in a meeting where jammers were placed and second time there is bit confusion. Talking about the protest on 04 October, he underlined that Imran Khan had directed Amin Gandapur to reach *D-Chowk* and protest and therefore he reached the point and registered the protest. Our political core committee made by Imran Khan will decide the future course of action of the party. PTI totally back the CM of KP and his stand. **Fawad Chaudhry** talking about Ali Amin he added that no one can believe the story of CM KP, not even his family. Amin is not also telling the whole story and we can only guess. One thing is certain neither Amin Gandapur nor Mohsin Naqvi is telling the truth and we have to settle for something in between. He added that the debate is surrounding Ali Amin and not the government and this is worrying for PML-N. If there is a window of dialogue opened for CM KP that again it is a headache for the government. Mohsin Naqvi is not popular with the hard-core leaders of PML-N and there are demands to remove him. His role in the episode are dubious and it shows his failure. **Kashif Abbasi** pointed out that the main decisions of PTI are still taken by Imran Khan from behind the bar, Amin Gandapur reached KP house because he was allowed to go to the house. The interesting point is that people does not believe the points said by Ali Amin Gandapur. There is a high level talk of establishment and PTI but we have to see what result it will give. Mohsin Naqvi is an establishment face and not governments, government is just waiting from the outside. Saying Ali Amin Gandapur is a sell-out is a shame for the party, there are doubts within the PTI and they want Amin to say the truth.

New Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), Justice Yahya Afridi, Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Geo News, 23 October²⁶

The host informed that Justice Yahya Afridi has been appointed the new CJP of Pakistan and he is the first judge from KP to be CJP. He asked after this appointment will the grouping in the Supreme Court will be over and also what are the future challenges for the newly appointed CJP? On one hand there is no reaction from the Supreme Court and especially Justice Mansoor Shah has referred a case to the new constitutional bench but on the other hand PTI and some lawyers have criticised the appointment and has said that they will go on protest against this move. **Guests:** Rana Sanaullah-advisor to PM; & Barrister Ali Zafar-PTI.

Rana Sanaullah on this show argued that there is no rule as to select the senior most judge to be the next CJP of Pakistan, it has been interpreted wrongly. The Judicial Commission last year has taken this decision that senior most does not mean senior in service, but the most suitable is the senior most and he/she would be appointed CJP. The appointment of Yahya Afridi as CJP has been done on this criteria, although the other two are equally eligible, also he is not part of any grouping in the SC, so he is not tainted. Talking about Qazi Faez Esa, the outgoing CJP he said that he has been very independent and he has also done investigation on PML-N and also establishment. He has always followed the law and has faced the music for the same, PTI is not alone, and all parties had to face investigations. Talking about Mansoor Ali Shah he added the he is also an independent judge and his credit can't be snatched from him, it is the media who has divided the nation on these judges. Talking about late Arshad Sharif's hearing in the SC, he added that there cannot be any hearing on the case it was a target killing in Kenya. The issue is that the police is involved in target killing and unless the people who sent him to Kenya and where he was staying in Kenya is exposed, nothing can be done in Pakistan in this case. **Barrister Ali Zafar** agreed that all the three judges are equally eligible and is capable of becoming the CJP but when it comes to principle the senior most should be appointed the CJP and if he has some flaws then should have gone for second or third. He added that we hope a

²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeMvRj5TftY>

lot from the new CJP and he can take everyone along and stop these groupings in the SC. Mansoor Ali Shah would also have united the court and stopped the groupings in the Supreme Court. Talking about the outgoing CJP he added that the down fall of Qazi Faez Esa was when the symbol case of PTI was decided against PTI and it was obvious that he was working against the PTI and Imran Khan. He added that although the PTI requested him not to judge the cases related to PTI, but he forcefully took this and decided cases against the PTI. Talking about the Human rights situation under outgoing CJP, he underlined that he did not taken suo motu notice but the petitioners that included by PTI about kidnapping and human rights cases, he ignored these cases. Talking about Toshakhana one case, he added that this case was ignored and this showed the bias of Justice Qazi Faez Esa against the PTI. Talking about why Justice Mansoor Ali Shah could not become the new CJP he added that the only problem with him according to the government is that he was tilted towards PTI and gave judgment in favour of PTI in many cases.