

August 2022

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



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

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

What next for the PTI? Aasiya Riaz, *The News*, 03 August 2022¹

The ECP has ruled that the PTI knowingly and wilfully received unlawful funds from a number of foreign companies and foreign nationals and has withheld and concealed – from the ECP – the party’s financial information annually. ... *Now that the ECP has declared that the PTI has been receiving illegal funds from foreign companies and foreign nationals, has withheld constitutionally and legally required financial information, and that party chairman Imran Khan has consistently lied about this prohibited funding in successive certificates and has submitted inaccurate statement of party’s accounts to the ECP, what does this mean for the PTI?* With regard to the legally-required confiscation of funding received from prohibited sources, as a first action under Rule 6 of the PPO 2002, the ECP has directed to issue a notice to the PTI to explain its position on why the illegal foreign funds should not be confiscated in favour of the state. *On the remaining aspects also, the legal course is clear: leading not just to dissolution of the party but also in the disqualification of the party’s members in parliament and the provincial assemblies for their remaining terms, barring such disqualified members from contesting any election till the expiry of four (4) years from the date of their disqualification.* However, the dissolution of the party has to be initiated by the federal government, which, based on this ECP order, shall make such declaration by a notification in the official Gazette and within 15 days, refer the declaration to the Supreme Court. It is the Supreme Court which has the final authority to uphold the federal government’s declaration on which the process of dissolution and disqualification would be based. ...

The enemy of the state, Ahsan Munir, *The Nation*, 17 August 2022²

The state just celebrated seventy-five years of independence. The people of the state are also celebrating seventy-five years across the provinces: KP, Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan. *However, there are some questions to be pondered over on this occasion. First, has the state been successful in creating a nation? Second, has the original state existed since its seventy-five years of independence? Third, why does the state get to decide the loyalty of a citizen? Fourth, what has the state provided its citizens with? Coming to the first question of nationhood, we all are either Sindhi, Baloch, Punjabi or Pathan but not always Pakistani.* ... Coming to the second question of seventy-five years of existence for the state born on 14 August 1947. The original state lost one-half of itself in December 1971. But there is no mention of the debacle or any results learned such as statesmanship, dialogue, and inclusivity being the only solutions to any political problem. However, the state decides and hence decided to absolve itself

¹ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/979141-what-next-for-the-pti>

² <https://www.nation.com.pk/17-Aug-2022/the-enemy-of-the-state>

of any blame for the debacle. ... Third, Pakistan was created by its founders to be a homeland for its citizens where they can be free, live independent lives free of any exploitation and prosper. And the state was to help its inhabitants achieve the founders' dreams. However, after seventy-five years, the various organs of the state such as the judiciary and police have matured as tools of exploitation for the state and the people are the serfs of the state. ... Fourth, *the state took it upon itself to decide a person's loyalty. Quaid-e-Azam was the father and creator of the State of Pakistan; and the Quaid's sister, Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, ably helped her brother accomplish this gargantuan task. However, the state later declared Fatima Jinnah an 'enemy of the state'. And since then, the state, to absolve itself of its failures, has been declaring its citizens 'traitors' and 'enemies of the state' with impunity. ...*

Domestic foreign policy issues, Touqir Hussain, The News, 29 August 2022³

A country's leadership is supposed to serve its economic and security interests, advance people's wellbeing, and respond to their aspirations for progress. These objectives are achieved with a combination of domestic and foreign policies that are in synch. A dynamic home front is the platform for success abroad; and poor domestic policies undermine the foreign policy. ... *The country's 75th anniversary is compelling moment to see how Pakistan has fared as a nation, particularly as far as the foreign policy is concerned. For Pakistan, which faced existential challenges in its early years, the foreign policy was the critical external arm to its inevitable struggle for survival and stability. The pioneering spirit of the population, and the clarity of purpose, idealism and ambition of the powerful civil-military bureaucracy set the country on the road to survival and stabilization, giving its diplomats abroad something to defend and be proud of. Foreign policy and domestic polices worked hand in hand in pursuit of common objectives.* The bureaucracy succeeded where the politicians had failed. And in the process took advantage of the leadership vacuum to permanently stake a share in power. Politicians had missed the bus; and never recovered to establish their supremacy. Nor did they try. ... Since then Pakistan has no doubt benefited from the strategic interests of big powers, like the US and China, on account of its geopolitical location and the services of its professional army. But except for the relations with China and the successful completion of the nuclear programme there has been no lasting achievement. Pakistan withstood pressure on the relationship with China as well as on the nuclear programme. Diplomats defended the programme admirably to resist bilateral pressures especially from the US, and fight multilateral challenges.

³ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/986384-domestic-foreign-policy-issues>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Economic cost of uncertainty, Maleeha Lodhi, Dawn, 22 August 2022⁴

Anticipation of the resumption of an IMF bailout package has helped improve market sentiment. But given the turbulent state of politics, there is little reason to be sanguine about the country's political and economic future. Confirmation that the Fund's executive board will meet next week to approve the loan programme has helped to strengthen the rupee and revive market confidence. It also resulted in a largely buoyant week at the stock market. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has, in an essay written for The Economist, called the IMF programme the "path to safety". But political turmoil continues to cast a shadow over the economy. The nexus between economic recovery and political uncertainty is not to be underestimated. ... *The finance minister continues to face criticism from his party colleagues. But he has been straightforward about the austerity measures the government has had to take to prevent a meltdown of a precarious economy. The political situation, however, is not proving to be an ally of the government's goal to stabilise the economy. The confrontation between the coalition government and opposition leader Imran Khan has assumed an ominous shape after PTI secured control of Punjab. The centre and the provincial government are now locked in a stand-off and tit-for-tat actions that are creating more political disarray.* The tussle between the two over the custody of Shahbaz Gill is a case in point. As are the arrest orders issued by the Punjab government and police raids on the homes of PML-N leaders, who then fled the province. ... *This means tempestuous politics will continue to heighten economic risk, keep markets edgy and investors in a hesitant state. Moreover, rifts within the PML-N and divisions on economic policy among coalition partners have raised doubts about whether the government will stay the policy course agreed with the IMF. ...*

The Doha connect, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 25 August 2022⁵

Pakistan-Qatar relations are promising in essence. Their bilateral trade is on the surge as the latter supplies the lifeline of energy in the form of LNG. *Their quest to further climb the ladder of cooperation is highly appreciated, and it is a foregone conclusion that Islamabad relies on Doha's largesse in times of adversity. The two-day visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as he met the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, was meant to further the envelope of a long-lasting understanding in all walks of life. Both the leaders, thus, reiterated their resolve to make new strides in renewable energy, industrial and infrastructure development, as well as in tourism and hospitality.* ... While Qatar is playing host to the FIFA World Cup, Pakistan has a proud cap to wear as its armed forces have been designated with the protocol of

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1706191/economic-cost-of-uncertainty>

⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2372966/the-doha-connect>

providing security. The cabinet has formally approved a draft agreement to deploy troops in this regard on the festive sports occasion. This is a new leaf of cooperation and comes as a tribute to the valour and professionalism of the Pakistan Army. Similarly, growing maritime relations and an upward margin of exports to Doha make it a viable destination for people-to-people cooperation. Doha has been generous in its visa regime, and Pakistan finds it a second home in the Middle East similar to the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Jhagra-Miftah Meeting, Editorial, *The Nation*, 29 August 2022⁶

In order to ensure that the final stages of talks leading to the release of the IMF tranche are not derailed, *federal Finance Minister Miftah Ismail will meet with KP's Finance Minister Taimur Khan Jhagra today (Monday) to resolve differences between the Centre and the province over outstanding issues. This meeting comes following a series of events over the past couple of days, with Mr. Jhagra sending a letter on Friday to his federal counterpart stating that his KP administration might find it difficult to run a provincial surplus this year in view of flood-related damages. ...* Perhaps the timing and the manner of the letter shared by Mr. Jhagra was not ideal given the crisis situation in the country and the imminent talks with the IMF on August 29, but there are some legitimate issues that have been raised and apparently a meeting had been requested on multiple occasions over the past two months. At the same time, *FM Miftah Ismail is right in pointing out that the politics surrounding the IMF deal is unfortunate and statements from certain PTI leaders that the Punjab and KP governments would not cooperate with the federal government over the IMF programme are condemnable. The good thing is that IMF sources have indicated that Mr. Jhagra's letter will not impact the deal Pakistan is negotiating with the lender.* Despite the circumstances that made this meeting possible, it is good to see the two sides agree to come to the table to resolve issues. We need more of this going forward for the greater interest of the country.

SECURITY SITUATION

Political Funding, Editorail, *The Nation*, 09 August 2022⁷

The Free and Fair Election Network's (Fafen) call to the parliament to make electoral reforms surrounding the issue of uncontrolled and unaccounted-for funding of electoral campaigns needs to be seriously considered by both the upper and lower houses. ... Currently, all major political parties benefit from this lack of oversight. All of them have financial heavyweights both within and outside the party that provide

⁶ <https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Aug-2022/jhagra-miftah-meeting>

⁷ <https://www.nation.com.pk/09-Au>

money, with the public at large having no understanding of what is expected in return. In case they are active political workers, this could result in an important position being granted. If these backers are outside the party, could this then imply that political parties have to grant favours to big businesses or stakeholders which might end up disadvantageous to other related actors? *To be clear, funding and the process of give and take and political funding is a crucial part of politics the world over; this is not to imply that any major political actor is engaging in any wrongdoing. However, there has to be some modicum of control and transparency in this process, as these political parties then form governments that have the future of Pakistan at stake.* Electoral funding is an important issue that requires discussion and debate among political actors. But there is no doubt that we need tighter regulation around the issue and the best place to start this discussion is in the parliament.

Veiled threat, Editorial, Dawn, 21 August 2022⁸

It is the nature of the beast: those wedded to a life of violence will continue to speak the language of violence if it brings them dividends. *The banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, with whom the state has been engaged in stop-start peace negotiations since last year, issued a statement on Thursday, warning ‘secular’ and nationalist groups to desist from levelling allegations against them. ... No reminder is necessary for progressive parties to recall those terrible years when the TTP targeted them ruthlessly; many of their leaders and supporters lost their lives in the attacks. Among those singled out was the Awami National Party, which had challenged the expanding influence in the Malakand Division of the TTP’s Swat chapter led by Mullah Fazlullah. ... That dark era has not been forgotten. The protests across KP, including in Swat and Lower Dir, against the apparent return of the fighters of the Swat chapter — armed to the teeth and threatening as ever — are evidence that times have changed. No longer are the people willing to acquiesce in the name of yet another ‘peace treaty’ with the militants that does nothing to defang the latter but allows them to regroup and crush the populace.* Some analysts believe the TTP may have been taken aback by the collective call to resistance, and its statement should be seen in that light. Nevertheless, the response also appears to show that the state’s parleys with the militant grouping have sufficiently emboldened it to once again act as judge and jury as to who is anti-state and anti-religion. How long before it once again reverts to its role as executioner?

⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1706002/veiled-threat>

Senior Clerics caught in the Crossfire of the Taliban's intensifying war with IS-K, Abubakar Siddique, Gandhara, 24 August 2022⁹

As the Taliban intensifies its war against Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), religious clerics associated with the rival militant groups are being caught in the crossfire. *IS-K militants have been blamed for the assassination of several pro-Taliban clerics in Afghanistan in recent weeks. The Taliban has also been accused of killing religious figures with alleged links to IS-K.* Many IS-K fighters are members of Afghanistan's small Salafist community, an ultraradical sect under Sunni Islam. Most Taliban fighters are followers of the Hanafi school of Islam, a rival Sunni denomination. The Salafists, also known as Wahhabis, see other branches of the faith as heretical. *Since seizing power in August 2021, the Taliban has waged a brutal crackdown on Salafists, who are believed to number several hundred thousand and are mainly concentrated in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, and Nuristan.* Salafists accuse the Taliban of detaining and killing members of the community, and raiding and closing their mosques and religious seminaries. The Taliban's clampdown has coincided with its intensifying war with IS-K militants. Observers say the rising number of killings of rival Hanafi and Salafist clerics has recently become the main feature of the Taliban's escalating war with IS-K militants. ...

URDU MEDIA

Popular support remains unassailable, Ayaz Amir, Daily Dunya, 03 August 2022¹⁰

The PTI's foreign funding case needs to be seen in the context of politics of Pakistan where all big decisions are political. Now it is upto the federal government whether to take the case to the Supreme Court. *At a juncture where everything is at stake, Imran Khan is not expecting any help from the 'aliens'. Bringing the no-confidence motion and making it a success was not that easy. But the 'aliens' could do it. It is a different issue though that despite all doing this, they could not erode the support for Imran Khan. Conditions on every front worsened only by overlooking public support for Imran. Since Imran is not showing any slowing his attacks, his opponents are trying everything against him. The EC was just one and not the last. It will be interesting to see what happens next? Will the opposition try to get Imran Khan disqualified? It does not seem so: one because the condition of the country is bad and second, PTI has become a people's movement. However, PTI has gone to a defensive position.* ... In the past leaders in Pakistan have been removed or marginalized on technical grounds. But now the situation has changed. The nature of people has also changed. If there is any technical issue, it seems there will be a strong reaction to that.

⁹<https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-islamic-state-khorasan-clerics/32003122.html>

¹⁰https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2022-08-03&edition=LHR&id=6253079_42250688

Also the higher judiciary is not entirely under control. The times have changed. ... When will the election be held, is it difficult to say. But they cannot be postponed for too long now. And when the bell for elections is rung, the earth will shake. However, *till the elections are held the people sitting at the top will try everything to stop Imran Khan*. The foreign funding matter will peter out. The person who has become a people's movement and then the people are angry is at its own place. In fact a new history is being written: how long can they be stopped?

CIA followed Zawahiri for four months, Ahmed Najeeb Zadey, Ummat, 03 August 2022¹¹

According to some sources, before the killing of chief Ayman al-Zawahiri in a drone attack on Monday (01 August), *the Al-Qaeda chief was followed by CIA agents for four months in Kabul and was under watch. The CIA was confirming al-Zawahiri's identity. According to international news agencies, the American administration after receiving information that al-Zawahiri was staying in an apartment in Kabul made dozens of videos and pics with high resolution cameras*. They were shown to the US President Joe Biden. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has condemned the drone attack, saying it was a violation of the Emirate's sovereignty. ... According to a report by Reuters, the CIA had ordered the drone operator to launch two missiles at a time so that there was no chance of al-Zawahiri's survival. Though many kids al-Zawahiri were present at the time of attack, none of them was hurt. The Hellfire R9X missile was used in the attack. The missile is not laced with warheads and has sharp blades. It moves very fast and when the target is within one meter of the missile it attacks it. The missile does not blast or produce sparks which makes it difficult to find out what was used in the attack? *According to America Media Services, after the attack in Sherpoor, Kabul on Sunday, when the Taliban forces reached the spot, they could not understand what had attacked Ayman al-Zawahiri to kill him. Later some Taliban officers suggested that the attack was a drone attack done by the CIA*. ... Many American newspapers and magazines for a long time claimed that CIA and other intelligence communities were of the view that Ayman al-Zawahiri was staying in some tribal areas of Pakistan. In April 2022 they came to know that al-Zawahiri was not in Pakistan but was in Afghanistan for the last many years. Then the task to find al-Zawahiri was given to the US intelligence and counter terrorism department.

Cynical anti-army propaganda, Editorial, Jang, 7 August 2022¹²

Corps Commander Quetta and five of his colleagues, who were personally monitoring the ongoing activities to help the countrymen who suffered from the terrible disasters of rain in Balochistan, were martyred in a helicopter accident. *But supporters of a*

¹¹ <https://www.ummat.net/e-paper/2022/08/03/news.php?p=story3.gif>

¹² <https://e.jang.com.pk/karachi/07-08-2022/page7>

political party launched an online social media campaign against these martyrs and the Pakistani Army. Every conscious Pakistani rightfully felt deep-hearted anguish over this, while for the relatives and friends of the martyrs and the forces of Pakistan as a whole, this heartless and insensitive approach proved to be such a pain in the soul that may not be healed for years. According to media reports, the President expressed his desire that as the Supreme Commander of Armed forces and Head of State, he wants to attend the funerals of the martyred soldiers, but the agencies informed the President that due to the toxic, false and negative propaganda made by the PTI trolls against the martyrs, their families are deeply angry. The President was advised that it would be better if he do not attend the funerals of the martyrs. *Speaking in the Geo News program, Major General Babar Iftikhar, Head of the Public Relations Department of the Pakistan Army, has rightly expressed the need to discourage this nefarious behavior on behalf of the entire nation. It is particularly noteworthy that this series of baseless negative propaganda against the army by the supporters of Tehreek-e-Insaaf continued for four to five days after the helicopter tragedy without any interruption from the party leadership. ...* The spokesperson of the Pakistan Army has clearly denied this absurd accusation in his interview. What could be the purpose of this action of the social media wing of the political party other than to convince the world that the present government and military leadership have provided air bases to America inside Pakistan for attacks on Afghanistan? What name can be given to this attitude except for anti-nationalism? *The excuse that this nefarious campaign was carried out by some young and emotional supporters of Tehreek-e-Insaaf who did not realize its seriousness is not understandable because for five days the PTI leadership did not seem to make any effort to stop it not even disassociated them from it. Only when the President was prevented from attending the funeral prayers of the martyrs, probably then the leadership realized the seriousness of the matter and an apology was arranged by a young man associated with the PTI student wing, taking full responsibility for this campaign.* However, this explanation is not satisfactory because the leadership of Tehreek-e-Insaaf during the last several months has promoted attitudes that are clearly hostile to national interests. Therefore, it is important that they apologize to the entire nation and assure complete avoidance of such behavior in the future.

The battle will be decisive! Ayaz Amir, Daily Dunya, 17 August 2022¹³

The battle is on. Lines have been drawn. *On the one hand are the 'powers' of the past who did much for themselves but pushed the nation backwards. They are supported by those who are called 'the powerful' [read the Fauz or Army]. On the other hand, is the Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI), a party supported by the people. Every trick in the game is being tried to kick the PTI out of the battle. The 'powerful' are not able to*

¹³https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2022-08-17&edition=LHR&id=6285608_29965469

achieve this goal. In the past, it would have been easy to arrest a popular leader. [It is no longer that easy.] ... The tussle continues. It will increase, as the date of the next elections comes closer. During the reign of Gen. Zia-ul Haq, elections were rigged by one stroke of his pen. That is not possible now. Elections will be put on hold only when democracy will be rolled back. It is not easy now as social media is a tool in the hands of the common Pakistani: In seconds, news can spread like wildfire. One benefit that the PTI members have is that they are the masters of social media. They are everywhere on social media. Maryam Nawaz had also set up a social media team but that is nothing in front of the team of PTI. PML-N is at a loss to understand what happened to those times when people used to listen to them without any question. Today's youth is free and raises questions on every single issue. Same is the condition of PPP. The stories of PM-N and PPP leaders are old. But 'our powerful' guys are trying to tell us that the nation should forget old stories of these two parties and accept that the leadership is clean now. Why do not these 'people' understand that they are bound to fail in their efforts. They think that they can do anything because they are in power. However, this is a wrong premise to begin with. Elections cannot be stopped. If not this year, then next year, it will be held. By then, these parties will be exposed even more. In opposition to them, the popular leadership will become stronger. The jalsas will not weaken; they will grow stronger. What strategy does the 'powerful' would adapt to counter that? They do not understand that they cannot stop the events from unfolding. *This is a decisive moment for Pakistan. If the nation continues to live in the past, it will die. Already, the nation has lost too much. If the nation does not decide to move forward now, more damage will be done.* What can be expected from the old leaders? They are concerned about themselves. They are trying everything to remove the cases against them and get a clean chit. Their money is parked outside the country. Why would they be concerned about Pakistan? Why would they bother if the country is not on the right track? The youth can only bring them to justice.

China, USA, Afghanistan, Editorial, Roznama Jasarat, 19 August 2022¹⁴

China has called on the international community to negotiate with the Taliban government in Afghanistan and release the frozen funds of Afghanistan. *China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Zhang Jun, ... also criticized the US and said that the frozen Afghan funds should be handed over to the Central Bank of Afghanistan immediately. No country has any justification to freeze assets of Afghanistan.* On this occasion, the Chinese delegate also advised the former leaders of Afghanistan that they should also benefit the country with their experiences, their responsibilities do not end in the office. The US military withdrawal from Afghanistan is the most important event in modern world history. ... The 20-year war of occupation of Afghanistan is the longest and most expensive war in American history.

¹⁴ <https://www.jasarat.com/2022/08/19/220819-03-3/>

After spending trillions of dollars in this war, America's fate came to a humiliating defeat. America was forced to negotiate with the government that it had held responsible for global terrorism. ... It is an essential requirement of the Doha talks that they recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. But America has not only refused to recognise the Islamic Emirate as the legitimate government of Afghanistan but has also frozen its funds. *Because of the US, no country including China and Pakistan has recognized the government of the Afghan Taliban. Despite this, all the countries of the world are finally maintaining practical contact. Then came the killing of the Al-Qaeda Chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri. The U.S. has declared the presence of al-Zawahiri in Kabul a violation of the Doha Agreement; the drone attack has been declared a violation of the Doha Agreement by the Afghan government. So far, the Afghan Taliban have been successful in establishing peace in Afghanistan.* America has not learned anything from the 20-year-long war in Afghanistan. It is in its own interest and the necessity of world peace to recognize the government of Afghanistan. In this regard, the government of Pakistan has a greater responsibility to ask all world powers, including the United States, to recognize the government of Afghanistan.

Why not the Kalabagh Dam? Editorial, Ummat, 25 August 2022¹⁵

Pakistan has been facing floods in all the four provinces. Thousands of people have been made hopeless and have lost their property. Roads have been damaged and the system of providing essentials has been disrupted. *Most affected province is Balochistan where this is the fourth season of rain. The situation in Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa is worsening with every day. The damage has been so serious that it is almost impossible to deal with them with the government resources. It was in this context that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced a two days international conference in which international institutions will be briefed about the damages caused by the flood. The situation demands that the nation should unite to help the affected people.* Resources from the wealthy cities should be diverted towards the needy ones. The governed should spend these resources honestly and efficiently. *It is also a fact to be kept in mind that because of climate change floods during the monsoon season have become predictable. To deal with these challenges there needs to be a long lasting solution. One solution is a dam like the Mangla Dam and Tarbela Dam. The dam will not only store the water but can be used to generate electricity as well. Seeing in this context, there is no better solution than the construction of the Kalabagh dam. The Kalabagh Dam project was to store water and generate cheap electricity in the country. The project remained also controversial because of some political issues and political parties. Consequently the project was never completed.* ... Despite the fact that the construction of Kalabagh Dam is beneficial for the country

¹⁵ <https://www.ummat.net/2022/08/25/news.php?p=idr1.gif>

as it can generate cheap electricity which in return can help in increasing in foreign exchange as no fuel was needed to be imported for generating electricity. Pakistan would have never needed to go to the World Bank or the IMF for loans. Even the inflation would have gone up to the mark that the country is facing nowadays. ... Millions of the rupees have been wasted on the project already from the beginning. The money belongs to the taxpayers. *Every single government has said that the Kalabagh Dam is to be constructed because it is in the country's interest. However, it seems that perhaps the opponents of the dam are more powerful than all the governments had to succumb to their pressure.* If the project would have been completed, the country would have been getting cheap electricity and the water of the dam could have irrigated a large chunk of land. All the opposition to the construction of the Kalabagh Dam needs to be addressed. It needs good thinking and serious efforts.

PTI Minister's Letter to IMF, Editorial, Roznama Jasarat, 29 August 2022¹⁶

The people are tired of political parties and political leaders in Pakistan. *But when a leader speaks against the Pakistani Army, asking for help from the Indian intelligence agency RAW, he is called a traitor.* Rightly so. But what is the purpose of making the country discredited and unreliable by complaining about the Pakistani government to international institutions in national politics? If a government or political party considers going to the IMF as suicide but the first big step it takes as soon as it forms the government is attending the IMF meeting, still this government or party may object to the same step of the other party; but *the move to write letters to the IMF from its provincial ministers on this matter simply means that sanctioning any kind of loan to Pakistan means sinking the money.* It is another matter that the IMF or other international organizations take guarantees about how the payment will be made while giving money. But still, if Pakistan has to take a loan, which is a very bad thing, even if its approval is close, *writing letters to the IMF and raising doubts is not at all appropriate on such an occasion. Allies of the Shehbaz government do not agree with every action of the Shehbaz government and opposition, but no one wrote a letter to the IMF.* The IMF deals with the government of the country, not with the provincial government. But if a letter from Pakistan reaches the international organization, it means that there is no consensus on the issue of meeting the country's needs in this poor country and why those who used to call their visit to the IMF suicide writing to it?

¹⁶ <https://islamabad.jasarat.com/2022/08/29/islamabad/2>

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Sath, Geo News, 03 July 2022¹⁷

The host Shahzeb Khanzada raised the issue of the PDM's decision to proceed with the cases against Imran Khan in foreign funding case after the decision from the Election Commission. The government has decided to file a reference in the Supreme Court. The host asked Rana Sanaullah (Interior Minister) about the government's next course of action in the current scenario. *Rana Sanaullah said, whatever the government is doing is not for personal or political vendetta. The action will be taken on credible pieces of evidence. The involvement of Imran Khan and his party in financial irregularities and concealing of facts about the foreign funding is proven. The government will request the Supreme Court that the issue should be heard by a full bench. On the question of Imran Khan's call for protest in front of the EC office, he said that the EC office lies in the red zone and any kind of protest is not allowed within that area.* If they want they may protest at a designated place assigned by the administration with prior permission. The host asked another panellist, senior journalist Talat Hussain about the possibility of banning the PTI. Talat Hussain said that they both have their reasons to believe their version of the decision. On the one hand, Imran Khan knows that he may get relief from the courts because in the past courts have given judgements which were favourable to his position. On the other, the government believes that they have enough evidence to persecute the PTI. *Hamid Mir (Senior Journalist) said that the EC has not said directly that the PTI has aligned itself with some foreign powers and is working against the interests of the state. It is an issue of financial irregularities and concealing of facts about foreign funding. The government is directionless about the issue. They are unnecessarily making it an issue of nationalism.* The PML-N and the PPP are not on the same point on this issue and they both are doing a series of press conferences but on different lines. Miftah Ismail (Finance Minister) talked about the economic condition of Pakistan and possible growth or stability in the economy any time soon. He said that the Pakistani rupees have seen a massive recovery recently. The economy will get stable in the month of August. The trade deficit has also decreased in the last month. The inflow of dollars has increased and the outflow has decreased.

Off the Record with KashifAbbasi, ARY News, 09 August 2022¹⁸

The host KashifAbbasi discussed the recent arrest of the PTI leader Shahbaz Gill on the charges of sedition. He was accused of inciting people against the state institutions during a live TV debate on ARY News Channel. *The host categorically rejected this allegation of the government and said that the channel does not subscribe to the ideas*

¹⁷ <https://youtu.be/HOpizl-5rb8>

¹⁸ <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8cy54b>

of the panellists during the shows. They speak in their personal capacity. He asked the former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad about the details of the recent incident and also the possibility of the arrest of other leaders of the opposition as well. Sheikh Rasheed said that the accusation against the ARY News of being complicit in the agenda to defame state institutions is wrong and unfortunate. The arrest is also unfortunate. When the government fails to manage the country and the economy they are trying to intimidate people for speaking the truth. I have told you many times that they can go to any point to silence the opposition. By the 20th of August, things will further deteriorate. If they continue using the federal forces to silence the opposition we will also use provincial forces. This tussle between agencies will not give a good message to the outside world. Everyone should sit together and sort out differences.

Maria Memon refuted the accusation that Shahbaz Gill was reading a scripted note provided by the ARY News Channel. Senior journalist Arif Bhatti also condemned the accusations and said that the ARY will never attempt to malign the institutions of the state, especially the armed forces. The channel respects all the different and opposing opinions of groups and parties working under the constitutional framework. My only request is that the journalist should not be dragged into this petty politics.

Najam Sethi Show, 24News HD, 16 August 2022¹⁹

The host Ayesha Naaz discussed with Senior Journalist Najam Sethi about the recent rise in petrol prices and the conflict within the coalition over this issue. She also discussed the return of Nawaz Sharif, arrest of Shahbaz Gill. At the end, she discussed the issue of press freedom and the targeting of journalists in Pakistan. She asked Najam Sethi about the price rise of petrol at a time when the Pakistani economy is recovering and international crude oil prices are decreasing. Will this not put more burden on people and make this government unpopular? *To this Najam Sethi responded that the hike in petrol prices is part of the IMF deal. It is not Miftah Ismail's decision alone. The entire cabinet agreed on this. If Zardari Shahab has any doubts he should talk to Shehbaz Sharif. The decision to hike prices is done after the consultation of the cabinet in which the PPP is also a member.* It is not wise to start a blame game. The oil prices in Pakistan are comparatively lesser than in most of the neighbouring countries including India. On the issue of the return of Nawaz Sharif, he said that there is no exact date of time for his return. If the situation allows he will return as soon as possible. On the question of Imran Khan's decision to observe 18th August as 'Press Freedom Day', *Najam Sethi said that the most brutal crackdown against journalists was witnessed during Imran Khan's tenure. Many senior*

¹⁹ <https://youtu.be/0IQ5d765rWo>

journalists were removed from their posts and channels were banned for criticising Imran Khan. This channel was also banned twice for hosting me as a guest.

Face to Face, GNN TV, 21 August 2022²⁰

The host Akbar Javed discussed the arrest of the PTI leader Shahabaz Gill and the allegations of violence against him in police custody. A new video has surfaced on the internet which shows Shahabaz Gill completely healthy and fit. The PTI has claimed that the person in the video is not Shahbaz Gill and the video is fake. The host also discussed the recent rally of Imran Khan in Rawalpindi which was not allowed to be aired by the PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority). Rana Sanaullah said that the recent speech of Imran Khan is also instigating and proper action will be taken in this case as well. *PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry in response to this said that this government is desperate about banning Imran and disqualifying him from contesting elections. How is it possible to ban someone from politics who is the centre of all political activities? The current political narrative in Pakistan is about pro-Imran Khan and anti-Imran Khan.* Sana Bucha (senior analyst) said that banning anyone is not a healthy way of doing politics. Freedom of speech is non-negotiable but the leader should also refrain from insulting individuals and institutions. Criticism and insults are two different things. Another panellist *Mujahid Barelvi said that he has never seen news channels divided over political lines. The credibility of the media is at stake. This issue of Shahbaz Gill is not even an issue to discuss. There are far more important issues which should be discussed and brought to the attention of people than an individual who is no one in politics.* Akhtar Kasmi, another panellist said that not just media but state institutions are also being misused for political purposes. The Islamabad police handle reactions to the speeches of Imran Khan. It is surprising. He further said that he does not have credible information about the authenticity of the video but the government should form a committee consisting of the members of PTI and send them to meet Shahbaz Gill. There is nothing to hide in this case. The government should be clear on this.

²⁰ <https://youtu.be/nrvTSkGUI3Y>

BOMBING, SHOOTING AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Sindh				
Karachi ²¹	26/04/2022	4 people including 3 Chinese killed in a suicide bomb attack	04	4

²¹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1686920/3-chinese-nationals-among-4-dead-in-suicide-attack-at-karachi-university>

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Balochistan ²²	14/07/2022	Army Col. Killed/ 2 terrorists killed	03	00
Peshawar ²³ Kech district ²⁴	04/03/2022	At least 30 dead, dozens injured in Peshawar imambargah blast.	30	50
	26/01/2022	Ten Soldiers martyred, one militant killed	10	01
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
KP ²⁵	09/08/2022	4 soldiers killed in suicide attack	04	00
KP ²⁶	19/07/2022	3 policemen injured in an attack	00	03
KP ²⁷	07/07/2022	1 civilian killed in bomb attack	01	02

²²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1699589/pak-army-lt-col-abducted-martyred-by-terrorists-in-ziarat-district-ispr>

²³<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2346343/at-least-30-dead-dozens-injured-in-peshawar-imambargah-blast>

²⁴<https://defence.pk/pdf/threads/10-soldiers-martyred-1militant-killed-and-3-apprehended>

²⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1704039/4-soldiers-martyred-in-north-waziristan-suicide-attack-ispr>

²⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1700414/three-policemen-injured-in-kohat-checkpost-attack>

²⁷ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2365084/bomber-attacks-mardan-police-station>

KP ²⁸	06/07/2022	4 policemen killed	04	00
KP ²⁹	12/06/2022	1 security personnel killed in a terror attack	01	00
KP ³⁰	08/06/2022	4 terrorist killed during an operation in North Waziristan tribal district and Balochistan's Noshki district.	04	00
KP ³¹	03/06/2022	1 soldier killed in a terrorist attack	01	00
KP ³²	April	24 law-enforcement personnel killed	24	26
South Waziristan ³³	27/04/2022	SI killed	1	
Peshawar ³⁴	04/03/2022	57 dead, 200 injured in Peshawar's imambargah attack	57	200
North Waziristan ³⁵	29/03/2022	Four terrorists killed in North Waziristan operation	04	00

²⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1698415/four-policemen-martyred-in-dera-tank-attacks>

²⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1694423>

³⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1693697/four-terrorists-killed-in-north-waziristan-noshki-ispr>

³¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1692924/sepoy-martyred-in-gun-battle-after-terrorists-attack-military-post-in-north-waziristan-ispr>

³² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1687008/24-law-enforcement-officials-martyred-in-ttp-attacks-since-late-last-month-in-kp>

³³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1687110/police-official-martyred-in-south-waziristan-attack>

³⁴ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2346343/57-dead-200-injured-in-peshawars-imambargah-attack>

³⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2350051/four-terrorists-killed-in-north-waziristan-operation>