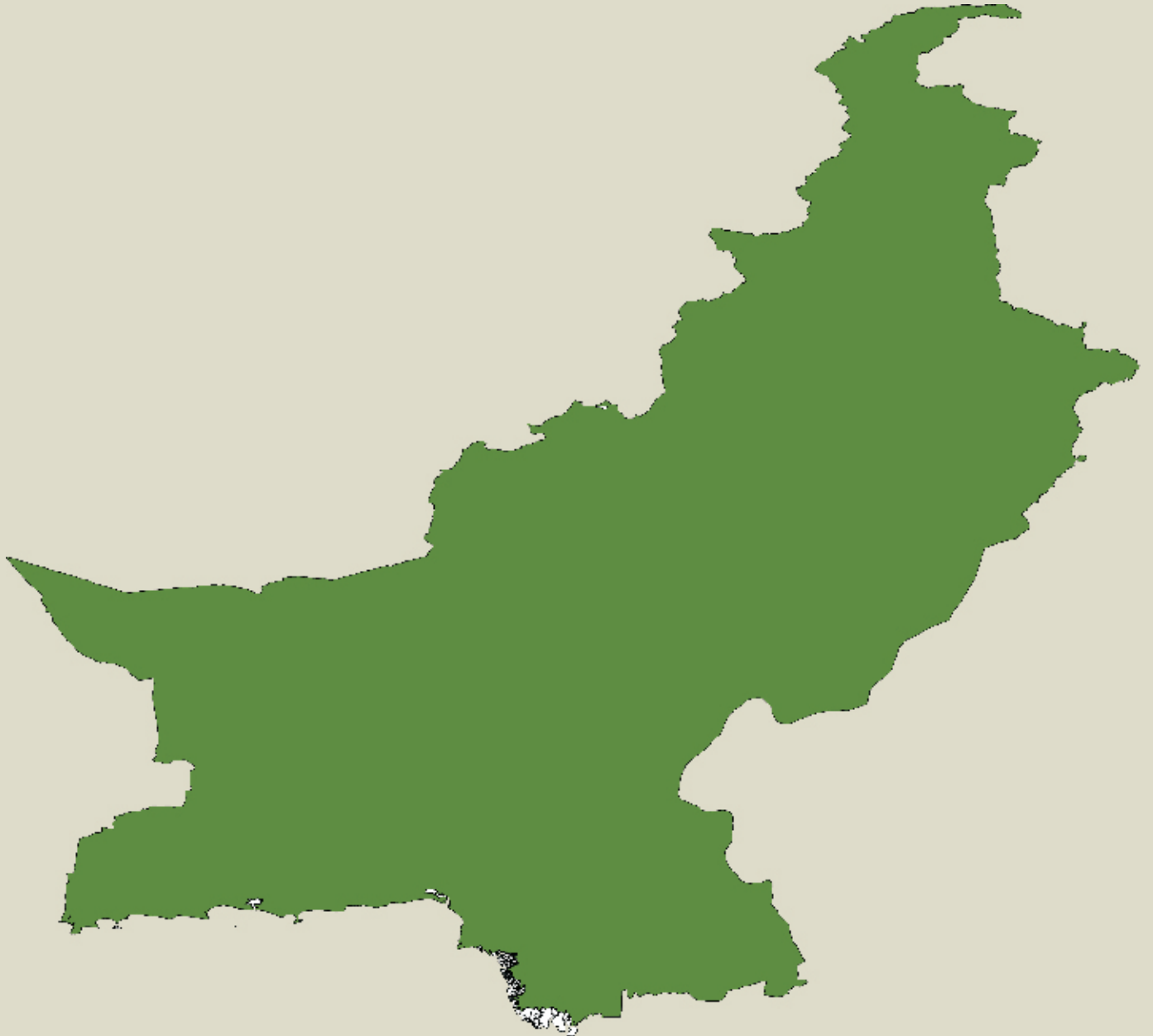


AUGUST 2017

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



Prepared by
Dr. Zainab Akhter
Nazir Ahmad Mir
Dr. Mohammad Eisa
Dr. Ashok Behuria

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, August 2017

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Editorial

The worst collateral damage of the announcement of the new Afghan Policy by the US was Pakistan. For the first time, An American President publicly accused Pakistan for sheltering terrorists. The statement triggered a wave of anti-America anger and protests across Pakistan. President Donald Trump's invitation to India to play a greater role in Afghanistan further enraged Pakistan. Most writings in both English and vernacular media rejected Trump's policy and blamed him of bullying Pakistan. But in the same realm he also acknowledged Pakistan's sacrifices against terrorism. Contrary to the media leaks about the exact surge of the US troops, Trump did not offer any specific number of troops to be deployed in Afghanistan. US reaching out to India for increased cooperation in Afghanistan were looked upon by majority in Pakistan as a tactical move to put pressure on Pakistan. However, many commentators and editorials, particularly in vernacular and electronic media, were of the view that the US wanted to see Indian hegemony in the region. In reaction to the President Trump's new policy, the government in Pakistan postponed all political meetings and engagements with the American delegation supposed to led by the US undersecretary, Alice Wells.

The tribal regions bordering Afghanistan witnessed anti-America protests with people burning banners of President Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A review of the newspapers in Pakistan indicate that Trump extending hands to India to play a greater role in Afghanistan angered Pakistani's more than his actual threat to cut aid. Besides Pakistan, China criticized the policy and called for recognition of Pakistan's role in fighting terrorism. Some newspapers have also highlighted the growing level of power and influence China now has in Pakistan that US never had in the past. Some analysts were of the view that Pakistan can now play a China card more strongly that it did ever. They also said that China's influence as well as relationship with Pakistan has grown tremendously that Islamabad can ward off the US pressure.

In an interesting turn of events at the terrorism front, the banned outfit Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) launched an exclusive English language magazine, named *Sunnat-i-Khauila*, targeting women. It advised them to wage war through the might of the pen. The editorial urges women to unite like-minded sisters in secret gatherings and to lean to use weapons and grenades in the name of religion. The magazine makes a desperate appeal to the educated women to preach and publish militant literature. With anti-terrorism operations picking momentum, most of the English dailies attribute this step by TTP as an attempt to secure its secret hideouts and protect the male militants against intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The 45-page

magazine is looked upon as an attempt by TTP to attract female fighters on the lines of Islamic States (IS) and other extremist groups who have used such tactics to bolster their rank amid women and secondly to spread their jihadi propaganda.

At the political front, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) tried to take a leap into mainstream politics by projecting its political wing as a full-fledged political party called the Milli Muslim League (MML). Some political analysts term this move as a master stroke by JuD amid political crisis and especially in view of the next year's general elections. A few others looked at this as an attempt by certain quarters particular intelligence agencies to re-unite and launch a far-right political alliance to cash on the growing anti-establishment sentiment among the public as well as mainstream politics post Panama. By attempting to register MML as a political party, JuD is making an effort to legitimize its actions and avert international sanctions.

Deadly explosions continued throughout this month with the killing of fifteen people, twenty-five others wounded when a motorcycle borne suicide bomber struck the city of Quetta targeting a military truck. The attack, claimed by the Islamic States, is looked as an attempt by the terrorist group to foil the pre-independence celebrations and to spread terror among the Shia population of Balochistan. The month ended with the announcement of the result of the provisional population (excluding GB & occupied Kashmir) census which puts Pakistan's population a staggering 208 million. Analysts point out to nearly 57% boom in population as compared to the last census in 1998. With this Pakistan have become the fifth most populous nation and analysts believe that this population explosion presents a serious challenge to the socioeconomic stability and security of the country.

Zainab Akhter

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The real impact of Nawaz Sharif's disqualification, Ravi Singh, *The Express Tribune*, 01 August¹

Most of the reactions on social media on the disqualification of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif by the Supreme Court seemed to only focus on politics. ... *While news and social media was busy, the markets started showing jitters. In fact, ever since the investigation on Panama Papers scandal began the market took a dip of 17 per cent.* The KSE-100 had already seen a lot of volatility this year, partly due to the listing of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index. *What no one was talking about in the media was the long-term economic impact of political instability.* The incident reiterated once again that, rather than the voters removing the Pakistani PM, judges, bureaucrats, the military establishment and even assassinations have done that job. To say that the international credit rating agencies, the IMF and the MSCI are not watching this event closely is being too naïve. ... Pakistani economy for now is being propped up by a lot of debt. ...

How little has changed, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 01 August²

With the opposition parties failing to agree on a joint candidate to nominate for the post of prime minister, it is becoming ever clearer that very little has changed in the political landscape notwithstanding the ouster of Nawaz Sharif. ... *Political dreams aside there are some rock-hard realities for any challenger to the rule of the PML-N, both federally and provincially. Firstly, possession is nine points of the law – and the PML-N has a substantial majority in parliament that no opposition coalition is able to overpower, and a similar stronghold in Punjab.* He who holds Punjab holds Pakistan. Secondly, and *despite the best efforts of the PTI it has yet to emerge as a truly national party and its leader faces challenges not dissimilar to that faced by Nawaz Sharif, with potentially similar outcomes.* The PTI may not be dynastic but its leadership has never been by anyone other than a single man, and the cult that surrounds him may not survive a fall....

Descent into chaos, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 02 August³

Indeed, the application of Article 62 of the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act, 1976, by the Supreme Court to remove the

¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1470941/real-impact-nawaz-sharifs-disqualification/>

² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1470940/how-little-has-changed/>

³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1349016/descent-into-chaos>

former prime minister has led to questions of how many public office holders and members of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies can come up to the standards enunciated in Articles 62 and 63 if strictly applied. Surely, there will be very few. *So, the opposition political leaders who are rejoicing in Sharif's unceremonious ouster must see whether their own accounts are in order before they too come under the axe.* Corruption is deeply rooted in our society and one cannot blame only the politicians for it. The security establishment that has ruled the country for so much of its existence is responsible for most of its ills. Eyebrows are rightly raised if the generals remain untouched.

Restore Constitution to pre-Zia form, Wajih Abbasi, *Daily Times*, 02 August⁴

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's disqualification has once again highlighted the possible dangers posed to the democratic health of the polity by amendments made by military dictator, General Zia-ul-Haq, in constitutional articles concerning qualifications and disqualifications of members of the Parliament. Irrespective of the details of accusations against Nawaz Sharif and his family, which have now been referred to relevant courts, his disqualification — like that of former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani in 2012 — has proved that Articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution are a Damocles Sword hanging over the heads of parliamentarians in the same way as the notorious Article 58 2-B once used to. We don't just require Articles 62 and 63 to be restored to their original form but also Article 2-A, besides amendments related to the Federal Shariat Court that needs to be revisited. There had been nothing so sacrosanct about the Objective Resolution when it was passed, and that should be the way it's looked at today as well. The Council of Islamic Ideology and the country's judiciary were already performing the role envisioned for the Federal Shariat Court. The sharia court is just an extra burden on public exchequer and should be done away with.

China, the new world leader? Dr. Kamal Monno, *The Nation*, 02 August⁵

The roles have reversed: The United States (US) and the West from being champions of openness, *lasses faire*, free trade and responsible economic behaviour are suddenly looking inwards cum turning protectionist, and *China – once regarded to be a closed kingdom – takes over as the new global economic leader by choosing to look outwards. Today, it promotes increased global trade, cross-invests its surplus in poor and developing economies, bids to connect the world through its one belt-one road vision, and from being a violator of greenhouses gases it, more than any other industrial nation of the world, champions the cause of environmental protection.* Anyone accusing

⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/02-Aug-17/restore-constitution-to-its-pre-zia-form#>

⁵ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/02-Aug-2017/china-the-new-global-leader>

Chinese motives to be driven by greed will have a hard time explaining its rationale, as Chinese investment goes to regions that are high risk, poor or developing and may not necessarily yield high returns; at least in the short-term. ...

The new premier, Editorial, *The Nation*, 02 August⁶

The new Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi voted in to power with an overwhelming majority – 221 votes. ... *The interim Prime Minister will have his hands full from the first day of coming into power – there are still questions of who his cabinet members will be, and the statements from Mr Abbasi so far imply that he will leave this decision to the party leadership i.e Mr Nawaz Sharif. ... However, certain important changes are to be expected, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar chief among them.* It is important to remember that this is only a stop-gap measure at the end of the day – Shehbaz Sharif has been announced as the Prime Minister for the remainder of this term, provided he gets voted into the National Assembly on his brother's vacant seat. The younger Sharif brother has his own unique style of leadership. ... *This might even mean that Mr Sharif holds on to even more ministry portfolios than his brother, alongside giving more than one responsibility to a few trusted individuals.* However, before any of this, the next forty-five days need to pass without further incidents.

Carrot and stick, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 03 August⁷

As the US administration under President Donald Trump is all set to announce its much-awaited strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia, what is noticeable is the anti-Pakistan narrative getting traction in the Capitol Hill. ... *While the review is still underway, developments of the last few weeks suggest consensus is emerging in Washington that Pakistan is the main obstacle in the way of turning the tide against the Afghan Taliban.* Last Friday, an amendment has been proposed to the US National Defense Authorisation Act 2018, seeking 'carrot and stick' policy to persuade Pakistan to break its alleged nexus with the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network. ... Fact remains that the US and its allies have failed to win the battle against the Taliban. The White House, Pentagon and Congress need to listen to Pakistan's grievances on bilateral misgivings and its strategic anxieties, as history shows us that the US's 'coercive approach' seldom achieved the desired results in Pakistan's case.

⁶ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/02-Aug-2017/the-new-premier>

⁷ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1472706/carrot-stick-approach/>

A challenge for the new premier, Emanuel Sarfraz, *The Nation*, 03 August⁸

... For four years, Pakistan had to take a back seat on the diplomatic front. Nawaz Sharif failed to pick up one person from his party to work as foreign minister. ... *The most unfortunate part is that allies and old friends like Saudi Arabia, Iran, the UK and European Union states almost backed out from supporting us on Kashmir and other issues related to our sovereignty.* ... Instead of going to countries where we do not have any economic interests the new foreign minister needs to consolidate on building relations with our old friends like China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UK, Europe and the USA. It is high time we link economic interests with our foreign policy. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has a chance to prove his mettle.

Shehbaz Sharif's 'dynastic' nomination, Zulfikar Rao, *Daily Times*, 03 August⁹

In Pakistan, where its turbulent political experience and history have hardly allowed the growth of political parties and democratic institutions, dynasties were natural to have arisen. *Where the military has acquired incomparably greater influence and power, no ordinary civilian Prime Minister can stand the pressure and challenges of competing civil-military relations.* Therefore people at grassroots have continued voting for those who were historically identified as having means to cultivate relations and proximity with central powers. If the democratic process is allowed to evolve and continue uninterrupted, the influence of political dynasties will minimize. But it never disappears. Political dynasties generally draw disdain from the public globally yet people keep voting into office members of these dynasties

Future of the Sharifs, M Ziauddin, *Daily Times*, 04 August¹⁰

With the Article 58(2) B out of the Constitution, military takeovers out of international favour and the 18th Constitutional amendment having drastically weakened the establishment's ability to completely halt the democratic process at will the only option that it seems to have been left with now for keeping an elected government on a tight leash is to hold the head of the government to ransom in the superior courts. *Finally when Nawaz was disqualified for not being found Sadiq (honest) and Ameen (righteous) one felt that on the face of it neither the establishment on its own and nor in the company of a 'plaint' Judiciary had hatched a conspiracy to get rid of an elected Prime Minister.* It appeared to be a purely judicial job pulled off by an independent judiciary. The matter of bringing in a so-called permanent PM in

⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/03-Aug-2017/a-challenge-for-the-new-premier>

⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/03-Aug-17/shehbaz-sharifs-dynastic-nomination>

¹⁰ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/04-Aug-17/future-of-the-sharifs>

the person of younger brother Shahbaz to replace the 'interim' PM Abbasi looks rather dicey. And the biggest danger that the Sharifs face besides the NAB cases is the perceived discord within the family. A fight for the crown at this juncture would only lead to losing the kingdom itself for good.

In no state to comment, Syeda Mamoona Rubab, *The Friday Times*, 04 August¹¹

The party's inner echelons are abuzz with chatter of the military orchestrating Nawaz Sharif's ouster. The charge has been vehemently denied in the past by the military. The Army's official position, as stated by ISPR Director-General Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor at a presser, has been that it has no direct involvement in the issue and the nominees of the ISI and MI participated in the JIT proceedings on the direction of the Supreme Court and contributed to their probe "diligently and honestly". The Army has been rightfully silent since the Supreme Court announced the verdict disqualifying the prime minister. With deeply entrenched positions on both sides, the civil-military outlook for the near future is not very promising. *The very thought of conspiracy poisons the relationship and restricts opportunities to normalize the equation. More worryingly, the ruling PML-N has no clear plan to mend fences.*

At last a foreign minister, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 06 August¹²

There has been considerable criticism of the government of Nawaz Sharif because it failed since being elected to appoint a foreign minister. Now, it is Khawaja Asif that is to take up the reins and his appointment raises a number of interesting questions. *Firstly, this is not flagged as a temporary appointment which it presumably would have been was it only to be of duration equal to that of an 'interim' prime minister. ... Secondly there is the matter of just what are likely to be the tenor of relations between Khawaja Asif and the military, particularly as he has been critical of its role regarding political interventions in the past. ...* With Indian and Afghan relations at a steady rolling boil, the foreign minister has to hit the ground running, and we wish him well at a time when nuanced decision-making is going to be vital.

Military exceptionalism, Editorial, *The Nation*, 07 August¹³

Nawaz Sharif is a politician who has avoided open-ended interviews and press conferences in favor of closely controlled unilateral statements and speeches during his four year term. Despite this, on Saturday he sat down with senior journalists in what can only be described as a brainstorming session. ... *While Nawaz Sharif reiterated old points without going on the*

¹¹ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/in-no-state-to-comment/>

¹² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1475034/last-foreign-minister/>

¹³ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/07-Aug-2017/military-exceptionalism>

offensive, he seemed particularly critical of how the courts have handled the fate of past military dictators. His ire was directed at one military dictator in particular – Pervez Musharraf, who is currently a declared absconder from the law, having left the country to seek medical treatment but not returning to face charges. “Can any court give a verdict against a military dictator like this?” he asked the gathered journalists rhetorically. ...

Democracy (Pvt) Ltd, Saad Rasool, *The Nation*, 07 August¹⁴

... The initial few days of Mr. Abbasi’s premiership were spent in Changla Gali, at the feet of the emperor (and the emperor’s daughter). *The photographic and video footage of Mr. Abbasi, from his days in Changla Gali, show a timid party worker, looking up towards a disqualified parliamentarian, for permission to speak or exercise powers that have been granted to him as a “sacred trust” by the Constitution and people of Pakistan.* For supporters of PML-N, that moment demonstrated how Nawaz Sharif is still the ‘Prime Minister of hearts’. For a dispassionate observer, however, the image depicted a complete betrayal of the spirit and ethos of democracy as well as constitutionalism. ...

Born to fail, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 09 August¹⁵

There is a well-worn adage taught in business schools ‘If you want to avoid doing something – form a working party or a committee. ... The trigger for the latest piece of political theatricals has been the allegations made by MNA Ayesha Gulalai’s of harassment by Imran Khan, leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Within the last week National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has approved the formation of a special committee to investigate the allegations. ... *Unsurprisingly those that have campaigned against harassment are calling foul. They argue that the committee is too large and that House members are not trained to handle or adjudicate on sensitive matters such as workplace harassment - both arguments being sustainable.* ...

Constitutional primacy, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 10 August¹⁶

With the ‘homecoming’ road trip of disqualified Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif making its slow way along the GT Road, the fallout from the Panama Papers affair continues unabated. *Of particular interest to those doing the investigating are the tax records of Mr Sharif and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, both of whom have been dodging and weaving in attempts to maintain the secrecy of their tax records.* ... Whatever the gymnastics of the

¹⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/07-Aug-2017/democracy-pvt-ltd>

¹⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1476800/born-to-fail/>

¹⁶ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1477585/constitutional-primacy/>

legal teams defending Mr Sharif and Mr Dar, the Constitution has to be supreme and not just in this matter and special pleading is — or should be — no barrier to investigation whether it is into taxation or any other matter. ... *The nation is, courtesy of the Panama Papers leak, in a period of unparalleled examination of the affairs of those that rule and it is making them distinctly uncomfortable.* We hope that discomfort continues far into the future.

Why not call a snap election?, Editorial, Dawn, 11 August¹⁷

Given the controversial circumstances in which Mr. Sharif has been judicially ousted from the Prime Minister-ship, it is inevitable that the PML-N will seek to demonstrate support for its leader and his continuing popularity with the party's electoral base. *What is unnecessary, undesirable and faintly undemocratic is for the party in government at the centre and in Punjab to seemingly abandon all governance priorities to cheer on Mr. Sharif.* The former prime minister is also wrong in how he has cast his journey to Lahore. Roadside gatherings, speeches in city centres and slow-moving convoys are not the people's court or the people's verdict. The only people's court is a general election. That option is within easy reach of Mr. Sharif and the PML-N.

The real plan? Editorial, The Nation, 12 August¹⁸

The Foreign policy of a country is anything but concrete, but usually there seems to be a plan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses these words, *"Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations... Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world, and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter,"* attributed to Quaid-e-Azam, as the guiding principles of our foreign policy. While these words are pacifist enough, they are very so vague that they lead to no policy impact. *What is the real plan? What if anything can be done to look favourable to the US so that we can avoid situations like the Syrians and Libyans are in? What is to be done about India – about the spy Yadav and the Indus Water Treaty and border violations?* ... The only real decision in our foreign policy in the last four years has been the decision not to interfere in Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, and that was taken by the parliament rather than be introduced to legislators by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. What is the real plan?

¹⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350848/why-not-call-a-snap-election>

¹⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/12-Aug-2017/the-real-plan>

Pakistan's 70 years and its minorities, Nasir Saeed, Daily Times, 14 August¹⁹

We are a nation that is teaching and promoting hatred and intolerance against non-Muslims (our own citizens) in our school and colleges. *The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) published a detailed research report on this issue. Apart from Pakistani minorities, several international organisations have expressed their concerns.* But it is all falling on deaf ears. Politicians who enter the Parliament on reserved seats for religious minorities are widely considered subservient to their national political party leadership. The blasphemy law is considered a root cause of minorities' persecution, and its misuse is widespread in the country. Christians consider themselves targets of this law, demonstrated by several churches being attacked and several Christian towns and villages, like Sanglahill, Gojra, and Joseph Colony, being burnt. The world has changed but we are still trying to live in medieval times. Religious minorities see no future in Pakistan.

Seventy - and surviving, Kamal Siddiqi, The Express Tribune, 14 August²⁰

As we celebrate our 70th independence anniversary, possibly the biggest achievement for the country has been that it has survived. Well, at least half of it has. When Pakistan was created, there were many who predicted that the country would not be able to last for long – given the lack of infrastructure, resources and skilled human resources needed to run the country. Over the years, we have seen time and again there have been challenges to the state of Pakistan which have been overcome with fortitude and resilience. *Our detractors, who once predicted the country would internally disintegrate, have satisfied themselves by labelling us a “failed state.” But for all practical purposes, Pakistan, like its cricket team, has continued to surprise everyone by struggling along, with a comeback once in a while.* A failed state we are not. ...

Long litany, no cure, Editorial, The Nation, 16 August²¹

Senior Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Senator Sherry Rehman on Monday, decried Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) handling of the nation's foreign policy; calling it a “flopped” policy. *While the government's performance in this term certainly hasn't been stellar, calling it a complete flop might be going a bit too far; the PML-N has had some success in its endeavours – the CPEC project being the highlight.* However, she did present an accurate and justified litany of the arenas where diplomatic relations have

¹⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/14-Aug-17/pakistans-70-years-and-its-minorities>

²⁰ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1480864/seventy-and-surviving/>

²¹ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/16-Aug-2017/long-litany-no-cure>

worsened under PML-N. ... *PML-N has certainly struggled to impose its foreign policy – both domestically and internationally – and Nawaz Sharif, who held the portfolio of Foreign Minister himself, is certainly not an accomplished diplomat and or a charismatic statesman.* ... The PPP may have handled some issues better, but it is certainly hyperbole to claim that the party would definitely fix these complex problems.

From caretaker to change-agent, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 22 August²²

The accidental prime minister has his hands full, and is quickly transitioning from being a short-term safe pair of hands to something of more substance. In his earliest days he has got on with essential housekeeping - creating a ministry of energy with a merger of petroleum and power, bringing textiles and commerce together and perhaps most importantly creating a ministry for water resources. ... *Where any threat - to the Sharif dynasty - could lie is in PM Abbasi demonstrating the competencies that may see him gain both popularity and traction, despite Nawaz Sharif's nomination of Shahbaz as the party's president in future. He has less than a year to prove that change in these four key areas is not only possible but capably achieved.* It will be neither painless nor bloodless and there will be resistance on a range of fronts but it is an unparalleled opportunity. Have at it.

Darkest before dawn: steering Pakistan's foreign policy, *Daily Times*, Salman Bashir, 23 August²³

For Islamabad, China is a safe anchor that will hold through the gathering storm. Along with China, Russia, Turkey and Iran, Pakistan can reverse the tide of spreading anarchy in this part of the world. Despite its self-inflicted policy disasters, Pakistan could help shore up the United States from its difficulties in our region. A new vision of progress, prosperity and stability must become the starting point for working of the policies at home and abroad. The Foreign Office will once again be tested. Our leadership and the nation must continue to repose their trust in the sincerity, competence and resilience of the men and women of the Foreign Service of Pakistan.

²² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1487495/caretaker-change-agent/>

²³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/23-Aug-17/darkest-before-dawn-steering-pakistans-foreign-policy>

SC asked to disallow use of Islamic terms to describe politicians, Nasir Iqbal, Dawn, 24 August²⁴

After *sadiq* and *ameen* became buzzwords in the political discourse of the country following the disqualification of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif under *Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution*, a lawyer requested the Supreme Court not to employ these virtues as a benchmark for electoral and judicial purposes. Moved by Shahid Orakzai, a local advocate, the petition asks the apex court to order that no word or title used in the Holy Quran for the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) be used for any living person. The petitioner has requested the court to note that the word *sadiq*, meaning honest, was a unique title reserved for the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked whether a Muslim could ever compare himself to God's Messenger merely by filling out a nomination form during elections.

Undiplomatic letter, Editorial, The Nation, 30 August²⁵

Abdul Basit, former Pakistani High Commissioner to India is making headlines – mostly due to Indian media houses – with his scathing, and uncalled-for criticism of recently appointed Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry in a letter addressed to him. ... *Everything from the language of the letter, to the lack of any substantial argument as to why he has such a low opinion of Mr Aizaz Chaudhry – apart from listing two foreign policy situations – screams of an inherent bias and dubious motives.* ... However, completely going off the rails and accusing other diplomats of not doing their jobs well is completely out of line, and reflects that Mr Basit is a poor sport, without the ability to handle defeat with grace or tact. ...

NEW US AFGHAN POLICY

US desire to win Afghan war increases pressure on Pakistan, Anwar Iqbal, Dawn, 07 August²⁶

The new emphasis in Washington on the need for Pakistan to do more against militants is linked to the Trump administration's desire to win the Afghan war. *The argument is that the militants flee to Pakistan whenever they come under attack in Afghanistan, recuperate, rearm and then return to Afghanistan to fight US and Afghan forces.* They also argue that the war can be won if Pakistan stops the militants from doing so. On this issue, there appears a rare consensus within the Trump team and between the

²⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1353571/sc-asked-to-disallow-use-of-islamic-terms-to-describe-politicians>

²⁵ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/30-Aug-2017/undiplomatic-letter>

²⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350075/us-desire-to-win-afghan-war-increases-pressure-on-pakistan>

administration and Congress: Pakistan must stop the alleged cross-border attacks into Afghanistan or face the consequences.

New US strategy for Afghanistan, Syed Mohammad Ali, *The Express Tribune*, 18 August²⁷

As the new US administration mulls over how to best deal with the Afghan imbroglio, the Taliban have sent an open letter to Trump advising him to completely pull US troops out of the country. *The chances of US withdrawal from this unfortunate country, however, seem slim. ... Frustrated with US President Trump's failure to come up with an Afghan war strategy, this past week, Senator John McCain, who chairs the Senate Arms Services Committee, presented his own plan for the US to 'win' the Afghan war.* The plan endorses the need for more US troops in Afghanistan, and makes allowances for use of increased air power to break a stalemate in the war against the Taliban. *McCain's strategy in terms of dealing with Pakistan is not very encouraging. He has proposed graduated diplomatic and military costs, if Pakistan continues to provide support and sanctuary to terrorist and insurgent groups.* The Pakistani state and intelligentsia may consider that the current administration is making Pakistan a scapegoat for its own failure in Afghanistan. ...

America's flawed plan, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 23 August²⁸

The toughening stance on Pakistan may have serious repercussions for an already troubled relationship between Islamabad and Washington. Not surprisingly, Trump reserved his strongest criticism for Pakistan. While acknowledging Pakistan's sacrifices and its efforts in fighting terrorism, he declared this country a part of the problem too. It is perhaps for the first time that a US president has, publicly, warned Pakistan of severe consequences if the country does not take effective action against the alleged terrorist sanctuaries along its borders. It is not clear what kind of military and economic actions the US administration has been considering. *But such threats would not help win Pakistan's support unless Islamabad's own national security concerns are addressed. Like the previous administrations, the Trump administration too believes in unquestioned cooperation, ignoring Islamabad's interests completely.*

²⁷ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1484128/new-us-strategy-afghanistan/>

²⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1353296/americas-flawed-plan>

Trump's enigmatic Afghan stratagem, Naveed Ahmad, *The Express Tribune*, 23 August²⁹

US President Donald Trump stood true to his reputation. *His Afghanistan policy is vague, devoid of deadlines and other details. He was addressing his critics at home on Monday while spelling out American anguish to a complex problem, Washington's toolbox has failed to fix in 16 years. ...* A notion of state building involving institutional capacity building for efficient self-governance has been dropped. The same goes for the timeframe. *The trigger-happy Republican president has shelved the political option of dialogue while declaring "to change the approach in how to deal with Pakistan". His spokesperson stated that the president has put Islamabad on notice.* No words of warning for Iran and Russia though, both of which happen to most ambitious disruptors in the country. ...

The Trump threat, Senator Rehman Malik, *The Nation*, 24 August³⁰

Pakistan has always been unlucky as far as friendship with the US is concerned. *Each time, the US uses Pakistan and later abandons it without any guilt or remorse. The history of President Donald Trump's statements is a clear indication of his upsetting attitude towards Pakistan.* Long before the presidency race, Trump had worrisome sentiments about Pakistan, suggesting to pull-back on aid stating, "They are not friends of ours, (There are) plenty of other terrorists in Pakistan, we know that." ... *Ironically, even now as the President of the United States, he is fed the same lies by the Pentagon. The ground reality is very different than the rhetoric which the Trump administration is selling to its public and the world.* These allegations do not prove the support of terrorists by Pakistan and we must not give in to any pressure and accept something we are not guilty of. ...

Washington bad cop, Nadia Naviwala, *Dawn*, 24 August³¹

The problem for America is this: Pakistan can afford to walk away. A few hundred million dollars isn't much of a stick anymore. The China-Pakistan relationship is now worth \$110bn, with around \$4bn expected this year. And those billions come easy. *For \$900m, Pakistan endures a volatile, loveless affair with the US while China offers billions without drama, as long as it promises that some government in the future will pay them back later.* The smart thing for Trump to do would have been to warm up to China and manage the relationship through them. China has a level of power and influence in Pakistan now that the US never had. If America is re-committing

²⁹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1489096/trumps-enigmatic-afghanistan-stratagem/>

³⁰ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/24-Aug-2017/the-trump-threat>

³¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1353481/washington-bad-cop>

to Afghanistan, it can't afford to have an alienated Pakistan next door and join hands with India in Afghanistan at the same time.

On the wrong side, Editorial, *The Nation*, 25 August³²

President Donald Trump addressed his country on August 21 2017, as he presented his policy on Afghanistan and South Asia, and since then, the humiliation he meted out to Pakistan, a country that has lost so much to the American War on Terror, has become a burning wound. *Pakistan was blamed for providing support to militants and no concrete policy was presented. It felt like Indian PM Modi himself had written Mr Trump's harangue.* ... Whereas the Trump Administration criticised Pakistan's role in the fight against militancy, Saudi Arabia, and China praised Pakistan's role in the fight against terrorism. Just as it has left the Middle East in tatters from bad policy and a worse assessment of the situation on ground, America's attitude in South Asia will do the same... Vietnam, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan and now Pakistan. The two countries, India and Pakistan, need not be as afraid of each other, as they should be from American policies in the area. ...

Pakistan: Afghan Problem or Solution? Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 25 August³³

The most shocking dimension of the new US Afghan policy is the focus on Pakistan as being part of the main problem rather than part of the solution. If Pakistan were to become part of the solution, the US would need to address its core security concerns regarding India (that have unfortunately been strengthened by the belligerence of the Modi regime) so that peace and stability along our Eastern border can become a platform upon which to stabilize and cement our Western border. But Pakistan is part of the problem for the US because India is part of its solution against China while China is part of the solution for Pakistan because India is part of the problem for it. But it is Trump's threatening attitude toward Pakistan that is worrying. Trump's Afghan policy is likely to worsen Washington's relations with Pakistan. *But Pakistan's relations with India and Afghanistan will also worsen because both will become more self-righteous and more belligerent on the back of Trump's assurances and leanings.* India and China are already sparring in the high north while Russia and Iran will do their bit to enmesh the Americans further in this quagmire.

³² <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/25-Aug-2017/on-the-wrong-side>

³³ <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/pakistan-afghan-problem-or-solution/>

Minus-Pakistan formula?, Editorial, Dawn, 25 August³⁴

From the National Security Committee (NSC) response, two key concerns of Pakistan can be gleaned. First, the Trump strategy appears to be an endorsement of perpetual war in Afghanistan, when it has long been clear that only “a politically negotiated outcome”, in the NSC’s words, can work. *Second, the so-called South Asia strategy puts the onus on Pakistan to act without offering to address any of this country’s regional security concerns.* Specifically, the Trump administration’s silence on anti-Pakistan militant sanctuaries in eastern Afghanistan and its encouragement of India to play a greater role in Afghanistan amount to a puzzling disregard of Pakistan’s concerns. Why is Pakistan expected to act first to advance other powers’ interests and only then its own?

Donald Trump’s flawed foreign policy, Munir Ahmed, Daily Times, 29 August³⁵

Pakistan is still fighting the monster of Taliban and jihadis that the US created against the USSR. The wounds of US attacks on Iraq and other countries, and the US’s active engagement in the Arab Spring for their strategic vested interest are still fresh. *Despite the fact that Pakistan is clearly aware of the hegemonic behaviour of the US and out of proportion support to India, the apologetic and soft response to the new US foreign policy in the region is not understandable.* Perhaps, we lack the courage to respond in the same tone despite clear messages from China, Russia and Iran in favour of Pakistan. It is about time Pakistan took a bold step to be trustworthy partner of the newly emerging bloc comprising the regional partners including China, Russia, Turkey, and Iran. This bloc certainly would help reduce the undue American and hegemonic influence in the region, and unbelievably boost the economic growth.

Why US sanctions will not work this time, Qamar Cheema, Daily Times, 29 August³⁶

The US may try to use sanctions against Pakistan however there is no guarantee of their success. China and Russia have already slammed Trump’s South Asia policy and declared that the world needs to recognize Pakistan’s efforts and sacrifices in the war against terror.... *the US may use institutional power against Pakistan like IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and WTO so that Pakistan may lose financial incentives and could be sanctioned.* However, Pakistan can approach more reliable forms of support such as the

³⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1353810/minus-pakistan-formula>

³⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/29-Aug-17/donald-trumps-flawed-foreign-policy>

³⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/29-Aug-17/why-us-sanctions-will-not-work-this-time>

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank which has a huge potential to accommodate Pakistan if this callous attitude lingers in the US. Sanctions are not an option and could be counterproductive for both Pakistan and the US.

Anti-US atmosphere, Editorial, *Dawn*, 30 August³⁷

Faced with American pressure or unreasonableness, the temptation in security circles in Pakistan is often to respond more unreasonably. Perhaps most damaging is the mobilising of Pakistani public opinion against America; casting the US as a bully that wants nothing more than to damage, undermine and humiliate Pakistan. That may have short-term benefits an angry civil society, media and public can act as a legitimate buffer against *American demands but it is to the long-term detriment of the true national interest*. Most obviously, it limits the state's ability to have a frank and open dialogue with the US, and makes necessary.

The Afghan war and Pakistan, Rasul Bakhsh Rais, *The express Tribune*, 30 August³⁸

There is much debate and controversy about the much awaited and now quite public, 'new' American Afghan policy in political, intellectual and diplomatic circles in Pakistan and abroad. *The central presumption of this policy is that the US and its allies can win the Afghan war by military means. ... The American and Afghan military strategy rests on holding on to the cities and towns, as they have done very successfully over the past 16 years, and expand control from there to the countryside. ...* Incidentally, the Afghan Taliban has a similar assumption of their war against the 'puppet' government in Kabul and its foreign backers, chiefly the US. Being part of local populations, overwhelmingly from the Pashtun ethnic groups, they believe stalemate will weaken the resolve of foreign powers fighting war in Afghanistan, forcing them to consider withdrawing from the country. ...

CENSUS

Doubting the census, Editorial, *The Nation*, 28 August³⁹

It seems like no poll, big or small, goes uncontested in Pakistan; from election results to census results, someone or the other will alleged irregularities and reject the poll altogether. *After the release of the 6th census' preliminary report – which saw Pakistan's population climb to 208 million – opposition parties have come out claiming that the process was flawed and the final*

³⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1354795/anti-us-atmosphere>

³⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1494223/afghan-war-pakistan/>

³⁹ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/28-Aug-2017/doubting-the-census>

numbers a result of a conspiracy which aims to give more power to the province of Punjab while ignoring the rest. These are sufficiently serious accusations, which begs the question; if the opposition knew about this supposed ‘conspiracy’ and was aware of the flawed census process why no objections were raised when the process was underway? ...

Exploding population bomb, Zahid Hussain , Dawn, 30 August⁴⁰

The latest population census has shown that Pakistan has moved up the ladder becoming the fifth most populous nation only behind India, China, the United States and Indonesia. It is an alarming situation, especially considering the extent of poverty in the country. With a staggering growth rate of 2.4 per cent per annum, the country’s population is around 208 million. *That marks an increase of more than 57pc since the last population census in 1998, and is higher than what had been projected. With abysmal human development indicators, this population explosion presents a most serious challenge to the socioeconomic stability and security of this country.* There are some questions regarding the methodology used and how the urban and rural divide is defined. It is Sindh that is up in arms over what is described by its government as a deliberate attempt to understate the population of the province. The fact that Karachi’s population is less than what estimates showed gives some credence to Sindh’s objections.

Millions of women still missing, M Taimur Ali Ahmad, Daily Times, 30 August⁴¹

A common generalisation that is casually thrown around is that women outnumber men in the world. Although true in many parts of the world, this region has had an extremely low sex ratio in the past few decades, reaching even 90 women for every 100 men. *The 1998 census in Pakistan gave a figure of 91.9 while the 2017 results put the number at 95.2.* Although there is a marked improvement in the gender skewness of our population, the figure is still substantially lower than what is found in Western countries but also in sub-Saharan countries. The preference to have a boy is a well-documented phenomenon in the region. Female infanticide, sex-selective abortions, honour killings and a disregard for female wellbeing is rampant, and not confined to any religion, class or ethnicity.

⁴⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1354793/exploding-population-bomb>

⁴¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/30-Aug-17/millions-of-women-still-missing>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Fears for the economy, Editorial, Dawn, Editorial, 03 August⁴²

The problem for Pakistan is that the government continues to cling to a story of economic success and macro stability, while the consensus among economy watchers outside government is that Pakistan is on the verge of a familiar unravelling if urgent corrections are not made. *The list of challenges is by now well known: pressure on the fiscal and external accounts; a build-up of circular debt in the power sector; an over-valued rupee; and CPEC projects creating potentially unsustainable debt liabilities. Mr. Sharif, with his keen interest in road-building and electricity projects, had virtually turned over the handling of the economy* to his finance minister, Ishaq Dar. Mr. Dar used his carte blanche to gut financial institutions and regulators in a misguided quest to force unquestioned obedience to his economic prescriptions. The approach has only succeeded in leaving the country with weakened financial institutions at a time when the finance ministry needs some frank advice and genuine assistance in managing the tricky period ahead.

CPEC security costs, Editorial, Dawn, 07 August⁴³

The inevitable is now slowly coming to pass. Costs that were not originally part of the tariffs granted to CPEC power projects are being passed to consumers, starting with the added cost of security. When Nepra, the power regulator, first took suo motu notice of a summary approved by the Economic Coordination Committee, which approved the “issuance of a policy directive to Nepra to allow 1pc of the capital cost” of all CPEC projects to pay for security expenses, it appeared that the idea was to examine the legality of such a “policy directive”, as well as the merits of bundling security costs into the tariff. But in the decision released turns out Nepra was only going through the motions with the intention of bowing to the demands of the ECC.

CPEC and Gwadar, Zahra Niazi, The Express Tribune, 11 August⁴⁴

The city of Gwadar that we proudly own today did not belong to us. Our government bought it from the Sultanate of Oman in 1958. ... *A somewhat riveting fact is that Pakistan wasn't the only country to which this land was offered. It was originally offered to India. It was India's hard luck that it refused and Pakistan's fortune that Gwadar was geographically contiguous to it. Today, the consequences are much harsher for India.* Their angst is quite clear from the recent terrorist activities being carried out in Balochistan in order to undermine the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

⁴² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1349257/fears-for-the-economy>

⁴³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350089/cpec-security-costs>

⁴⁴ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1478472/cpec-and-gwadar/>

Building an economy for the future, Akbar, *Daily Times*, 22 August⁴⁵

Far greater stability and better relations with Pakistan's neighbours, has also to be on the agenda, even of the military. *Without greater regional economic integration, Pakistan will continue to remain to be outlier, continuing to be dependent on aid and politically motivated economic projects.* Greater and more substantive democracy is also bound to hold elected representatives more accountable, and with increasing political and democratic competition, perhaps make elected representatives more eager to demonstrate an inclusive development paradigm. Still, compared to other countries in South Asia, particularly Bangladesh and India, Pakistan continues to trail. Pakistan seems to be caught in a low equilibrium trap, both economically and socially, compared to many other countries which are fast progressing and in the process of development.

All that glitters, Editorial, *The Nation*, 26 August⁴⁶

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a project that both neighbouring countries hail as a game changer for this entire region. *However, there are voices that we do not hear often, and these voices are sceptical of the official narrative. Should the state brush their concerns aside and label them as anti-national? ... In a report published in Dawn yesterday, the locals of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) have expressed fears that the CPEC project has little to offer to the people of the region.* The concerns that local small businesspeople express carry weight, as they feel uneasy with the arrival of big Chinese and Pakistani companies in the area. ...

CPEC and the Chinese interests in Pakistan, Abdur Rehman Cheema and Muhammad Haris, *Daily Times*, 28 August⁴⁷

China's limited space for farming has been a problem throughout its history, leading to chronic food shortage and famine. While the production efficiency of farmland has grown over time due to modern agricultural technologies and genetically engineered crops, it is still insufficient to meet the demands of burgeoning Chinese population. *China's aspirations of fulfilling its food needs utilizing Pakistani land should prompt Pakistani authorities to do their homework, so they can also benefit from this opportunity. Some of the basic steps include registration and preservation of top Pakistani produce varieties of cereals and fruits such as rice, mangoes and dates at international forums.* China's aspirations of fulfilling its food needs utilizing

⁴⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/22-Aug-17/building-an-economy-for-the-future>

⁴⁶ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/26-Aug-2017/all-that-glitters>

⁴⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/28-Aug-17/cpec-and-the-chinese-interests-in-pakistan>

Pakistani land should prompt Pakistani authorities to do their homework, so they can also benefit from this opportunity.

Growing deficit, Editorial, Dawn, 26 August⁴⁸

This has been a regrettable trend in Pakistan's economy for the past quarter century at least, regardless of which government is in power. The current account is crucial to monitor because it measures the country's trade numbers and remittances, and once it goes into deficit for a lengthy period of time, the foreign exchange reserves run out and the country is forced to go to the IMF to borrow more, and undergo a long period of stabilization during which growth is restrained, inflation rises and the exchange rate has to be devalued. *Borrowing from abroad is going to be more complicated because the growing current account deficit means a diminished debt service capacity, something foreign lenders will price into the risk premium they will demand*, as well as the increasingly strained relations with the US, which has crucial leverage over the health of Pakistan's debt profile.

Business with China, Editorial, Dawn, 29 August⁴⁹

The rhetoric coming from the Pakistani government had made the relationship sound like it was some sort of family affair. But those sections of the business community who have tried to build commercial ties with their counterparts in China are finding out that, over there, profits come first and sentiment second. One thing the business community has noticed is that their Chinese counterparts prefer dealing with the government rather than building private-sector partnerships. They have noticed that the Chinese do not negotiate very much. They lay down their terms, and expect them to be fully met. This realization is only the beginning of what the rest of the country needs to learn about the growing economic relationship with China. *The Chinese government has provided some diplomatic support to Pakistan at crucial junctures, even now as relations with post 9/11 US take yet another nosedive. But business is business, and when it comes to economic cooperation and partnering, all countries look out first and foremost for their own interests.*

⁴⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1353879>

⁴⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1354633/business-with-china>

SECURITY SITUATION

Militants in prison, Editorial, Dawn, 01 August⁵⁰

Sindh's prison department is currently going through an 'action' phase, triggered by the escape of two militants belonging to the banned Lashkar-i-Jhangvi from Karachi's Central Prison in June. The development is not surprising. *A CTD inquiry into June's audacious escape at the Central Prison revealed shocking details of how militants including some of those convicted of multiple heinous crimes were practically running the facility, having intimidated or bribed the prison staff into submission.* Sindh's Rs1.5bn projects for a high-security jail are still on paper. Indeed, in Pakistan at present there is only one high-security prison, which is in Sahiwal. Aside from infrastructure, jail reforms, both in terms of security protocols and the selection, training and pay scales of personnel, are sorely needed to institute long-term change.

Women in jihad, Naimat Khan, Daily Times, 03 August⁵¹

Counter-terrorism experts interpret the recently launched women's magazine of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as an attempt by the banned outfit to tap into women's familial and social networks in a bid to facilitate operations of its male members. They say that the recent success in military operations have made it difficult for TTP to operate freely. *Like, Al-Qaeda, the TTP is trying to expand its appeal among educated urban women. Alongside urging women to raise funds for militancy, the TTP magazine has asks them to publish and distribute jihadi literature and do what it terms as 'jihad by pen'.* It calls upon women to write essays supporting the cause of jihad and organise religious gatherings at home. It also urges women to learn how to operate weapons like grenades. The magazine urges women to preach militant outfit's literature to their family members. It also encourages women to support TTP fighters in their secret hideouts away from cities by providing them intelligence on attacks by law enforcement and security agencies. It seeks women's help with planning of suicide attacks as well as gathering of information on security agencies' installations and on possible new targets for militants.

Thus spoke the commando, Editorial, The Nation, 04 August⁵²

Former President Pervez Musharraf in a recent interview has said that Pakistan had seen development and progress only in a dictatorship. He held civilian governments responsible for the perpetual crisis that Pakistan is

⁵⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1348851/militants-in-prison>

⁵¹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/03-Aug-17/women-in-jihad>

⁵² <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/04-Aug-2017/thus-spoke-the-commando>

facing since day one. ... *One wonders what development and progress he is talking about? ... How stable were dictatorships when people were out on the streets protesting and demanding their constitutional rights? ...* "It makes no difference to the population of Pakistan whether the country is being governed by an elected government or by an autocrat, as long as there is progress and prosperity," were his words. This is a lie. *It makes a huge difference. Most Pakistanis would choose their constitutional rights over martial law, and many would like to see democracy prosper, uninterrupted.*

JuD founds party to contest next polls, Kalbe Ali, Dawn, 08 August⁵³

In an interesting shift, the Jamaatud Dawa (JuD) decided to enter mainstream politics from the platform of a new 'Milli Muslim League (MML)' party and vowed to implement the ideology of Pakistan in accordance with the 1973 Constitution and the vision of Quaid-i-Azam and Allama Iqbal. *The announcement by the representatives of the MML and JuD, a group which has been kept on a government list of organisations for their suspected militant activities, was made at a news conference held at the National Press Club.* MML president Saifullah Khalid said "Pakistan was established as an ideological state and as per the vision of Quaid-i-Azam and Allama Iqbal, which was based on the Quran and Sunnah," Mr Khalid said, adding "even the 1973 Constitution is based on the rule of the Almighty." The Constitution, he emphasised, called upon those in power to be 'sadiq and ameen' but instead of mending their ways these people were vying to repeal Articles 62 and 63.

Nawaz's military dilemma, Mohsin Raza Malik, The Nation, 09 August⁵⁴

Nawaz Sharif (NS) is the only politician in Pakistan who has been prime minister three times. However, he isn't the only prime minister who has been prematurely ousted. ... *PML-N leaders have started pointing their fingers at the military establishment for orchestrating the 'Panama drama' in the apex court to oust their leader NS.* Similarly, NS is also now alluding to a conspiracy hatched by 'the power that be' to dislodge him.... *Notwithstanding the repeated assertions made in the country that the civil and military leaderships are 'on the same page', the civil military relations have not been perfectly ideal and harmonious during the last four years.* There has been a considerable trust deficit between the two. Thus both resorted to a cold war. These relations started deteriorating as soon as NS came into power in 2013. In fact, this sort of Civ-Mil confrontation is essentially a characteristic feature of NS's tenures in the country. ...

⁵³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350248/jud-founds-party-to-contest-next-polls>

⁵⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/09-Aug-2017/nawaz-s-military-dilemma>

Wanted: female Taliban, Rafia Zakaria , Dawn, 09 August⁵⁵

The TTP's new direction in recruiting women is one that requires the urgent and pressing attention of counterterrorism agencies in Pakistan. It is undoubted that the TTP is taking a page out of the Daesh playbook with the launch of this new magazine. Long uninterested in resurrecting the legacies of female warriors from early Islamic history, they seem to have suddenly realised the value of even small numbers of women coming into their ranks, operating social media accounts, spreading propaganda and of course learning how to actually fight using simple weapons and grenades. *Now it seems that it is the Pakistani women's turn to be targeted and they may well be sitting ducks, even more vulnerable to terrorist propaganda than their male counterparts.* Not only are they more isolated, subject to strictures on their movement and activity, but the inflexible demands of marriage and motherhood impose a sense of doom on the futures of many among them.

The JuD's new clothes, Editorial, Dawn, 09 August⁵⁶

Sometimes, however, a new iteration of an old entity emerges on the electoral landscape. *Enter the Milli Muslim League, a vehicle whereby the Jamaatud Dawa plans to venture into mainstream politics. A political party launched by the JuD comes with a considerable degree of baggage, a questionable pedigree of sorts. For the JuD is on the government watch list under Schedule II of the Anti-Terrorism Act, and its own predecessor, the Lashkar-e-Taiba now banned is associated with jihadist adventurism across the border, including operations such as the Mumbai attacks in 2008. It should also be noted that the LeT was an obdurate opponent of democracy, deeming it incompatible with Islam, and Monday's meeting with the press also indicated MML's ambivalence about the Constitution.*

The political face of JuD, Muhammad Amir Rana, Dawn, 13 August⁵⁷

Notwithstanding how analysts interpret the arrival of the MML, hardly anyone sees its establishment as part of Pakistan's reintegration or de-radicalization efforts. There is no sign that the government has evolved a de-radicalization policy framework or that it is interested in bringing banned groups into the mainstream. *The MML's establishment thus appears to be an attempt by a militant group to legitimize its actions and avert international sanctions.* Some political analysts also believe the establishment is dry-cleaning its assets to launch them as part of that larger electoral alliance, which could include groups and parties that were part of the Difa-i-Pakistan Council. This was formed to campaign for the severing of ties with the US and

⁵⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350438/wanted-female-taliban>

⁵⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350434/the-juds-new-clothes>

⁵⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1351281/the-political-face-of-jud>

to reject the government's decision to grant India the status of Most Favored Nation. Participation in the democratic process may provide an opportunity for JuD leaders to further review their narrow social views and ideology. As far as mainstream politics is concerned, the MML will act as a far-right party and follow a pro-establishment agenda.

Pervasive gun culture, Editorial, Dawn, 17 August⁵⁸

A disturbing and unseemly gun culture has built up, particularly in political and feudal circles, where the number of guards accompanying a VIP and the size of the weapons these men wield often right in the citizen's face is taken as a measure of their importance. *Apart from this being a dangerous trend, it is also reminiscent of the crassest banana-republic traditions something that one wishes would have been beneath the dignity of our political and other elites to emulate.* IT is telling that several members of the federal cabinet have opposed Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's proposal that a ban be placed on the issuance of licenses for prohibited and automatic weapons. The objections came primarily from cabinet members who hail either from Balochistan or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; both have a provincial-tribal culture of valuing guns. The larger task is to nurture conditions that lead to a significant drop in crime and acts of terrorism.

Unjustified US action against Hizb, Editorial, Dawn, 18 August⁵⁹

In a move seemingly designed to coincide with India's Independence Day, the US State Department declared the Hizbul Mujahideen a Foreign Terrorist Organisation and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. Given that the Hizb is a separatist organisation focused on India-held Kashmir, it is not clear how disruptive the US actions will be in practice. So why has the US taken this extravagant new step? *The US is trying to help India defeat Pakistan's rightful stance on the Kashmir dispute and divert the eyes of the world from the atrocities being committed by the Indian security forces against the Kashmiris.* That is wrong, disturbing and dangerous. Once again, an inexperienced Trump administration appears to be choosing a path abroad that is destabilizing and rooted in ignorance. The myopia of the new US approach on IHK poses a significant diplomatic challenge for Pakistan. The country's year-long efforts to win sympathy for the plight of the people of IHK, who continue to bravely protest in the face of violent repression by India, and emphasize the need for dialogue on the Kashmir dispute, have not gained much support internationally.

⁵⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1352026/pervasive-gun-culture>

⁵⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1352193/unjustified-us-action-against-hizb>

Cricket-terrorism coexistence, KK Shahid, *The Nation*, 22 August⁶⁰

Lahore has witnessed five attacks this year. ... Yesterday, PCB Chairman Najam Sethi confirmed that the much touted ICC World XI would be touring Pakistan next month, which would be followed by Sri Lanka “playing at least one T20 in Lahore” in October, and then a three-match series against the West Indies in November. *If five attacks in seven months is how the ICC security team defines “safe”, one wonders why Pakistan hasn’t been hosting international cricket all along? While the current regime, especially at the PCB, would, deservedly, peddle this an achievement despite the continued turmoil, it’s hard to imagine what Pakistan would achieve by successfully hosting international cricketers inside these artificial fortresses.* Just like the PSL final, and the Zimbabwe tour – which still managed to squeeze in a terror attack outside the stadium – the cricket events coming up later this year are synthesised under unnatural conditions. ...

Absence of anti-terrorism narrative, Mawish Moulvi, *The Express Tribune*, 24 August⁶¹

Terrorism is not simply an act. Behind a willingness to embrace and offer death is the psychological clockwork of martyrdom in motion, one which is confined neither to the body nor the mind. *Terrorism is an ideology that unifies and thus it cannot be defeated with a bullet to the bomber; for every one terrorist killed 10 others arise. Despite multiple successful army operations, Pakistan is still plagued with terrorism today because the government’s National Action Plan (NAP) has failed to develop an anti-terrorism narrative capable of safeguarding those susceptible to the psychological tactics used by terrorists.* ...

PROVINCES & REGIONS

AFGHANISTAN

The need for Pak-Afghan cooperation, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 17 August⁶²

The National Security Committee (NSC)’s decision to cooperate with the Afghan government on the elimination of terror support networks in Afghanistan and prevention of cross-border attacks is a welcome move. *Pakistan’s support to the Afghan-led peace process is critical and it goes without saying that peace in Afghanistan is in Pakistan’s own interest.* Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are victims of terror and this menace cannot be completely uprooted until there is meaningful coordination and collaboration

⁶⁰ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/22-Aug-2017/cricket-terrorism-coexistence>

⁶¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1489441/absence-anti-terrorism-narrative/>

⁶² <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/17-Aug-17/the-need-for-pak-afghan-cooperation>

between the two countries. Sadly, the track record of Pak-Afghan cooperation has been poor. Leaders of both countries have been accusing each other of carrying out selective action against militants and playing double games. It is about time we addressed the issue at hand rather than indulge in more rhetoric. While Pakistan's pledge to collaborate with Afghanistan is laudable, we should also come clean on allegations of differentiating between the good and bad Taliban.

How Afghanistan could affect its neighbourhood, Shahid Javed Burki, *The Express Tribune*, 21 August⁶³

As the new prime minister in Pakistan extends the federal government's efforts to areas that did not fully involve the previous administration, it would be appropriate to bring Afghanistan into focus. *Afghanistan's present and its future cannot - in fact, should not - be considered in isolation. The country has already deeply affected its many neighbours, Pakistan and Iran in particular. But it is not only the neighbours that have felt the impact of the happenings in Afghanistan.* ... How to deal with this situation was one of the questions some of us asked and tried to answer in a book, *Afghanistan: The Next Phase*. ... *We suggested in the book that since the resolution of the Afghan problem would affect a number of states in the geographical space the country occupies, it might be appropriate to let a group of nations get involved in moving forward this troubled nation.* The group should ideally include all the countries that border Afghanistan (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China, Pakistan and Iran) as well as those that have been involved in one way or the other in the country's affairs. The latter group should include India, Russia, Turkey and the United States. ...

Trump's Afghanistan strategy, Khan Zaman Kakar, *Daily Times*, 21 August⁶⁴

Pakistan's flawed Afghan policy has played a big destructive role. Truth be told, Pakistan's security establishment has never disconnected itself from its 40 years old coercive policy of controlling Afghanistan with proxies. In the post 9/11 context, the United States have time and again threatened Pakistan with enormous pressure tactics including cutting-off aids and imposing sanctions but they have so far failed in changing the minds of Pakistani policymakers regarding Afghanistan. A policy shift towards bringing a regional political and diplomatic consensus on protecting Afghanistan's sovereignty and guaranteeing it internationally against the violations is the only answer to the world's Afghan question. *A policy shift towards bringing*

⁶³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1486821/afghanistan-affect-neighbourhood/>

⁶⁴ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/21-Aug-17/trumps-afghanistan-strategy>

a regional political and diplomatic consensus on protecting Afghanistan's sovereignty is the only durable solution to the country's many problems

Bring Afghan Taliban on the negotiation table, Babar Ayaz, Daily Times, 28 August⁶⁵

Afghanistan policy of the United States, which was announced by President Trump, was tough on Pakistan. That was not unexpected: keeping in view the fact that the US has neither been able to win in Afghanistan, nor has it restored peace with the help of the existing government, and therefore required a scapegoat. *For the last 16 years, the US has tried everything and spent almost US\$800 billion to suppress the Taliban insurgency, but to no avail. For the failing to crush the insurgency, despite creating and funding a large Afghan army, Pakistan cannot and should not be held solely responsible.* There is no doubt that Pakistan's armed forces are fighting a heroic war against terrorists who challenge the writ of the government — and they are winning. But by giving importance to India in the same policy speech on Afghanistan, President Trump has given no credence to Pakistan's sovereign concerns that India is encircling Pakistan by entrenching itself in Afghanistan. This fear drives the Pakistani establishment to consider the Afghan Taliban as their insurance policy. Supporting the Afghan Taliban also counters Indian influence on the Afghanistan government and intelligence apparatus.

Pakistan's strategic mess, Obed Pasha, Daily Times, 29 August⁶⁶

The Pakistani establishment must have its reasons for appearing soft on extremist organisations. It might fear a violent backlash from these groups, forcing the deep-state to take a long-term approach by slowly integrating them into the mainstream society. *The establishment might also be concerned about dealing with Afghanistan after the US leaves the region, trying to ensure a friendly government in Kabul which prevents its arch-nemesis India from establishing a strong foot-hold in the country.* This would be a strategic nightmare for the Pakistan's security apparatus and the US is playing on this fear to force Pakistan to either fall in line with its policies or expect a larger Indian role in Afghanistan. We should admit that our policy of harbouring religious extremists has now backfired. This policy has in fact become the cause of the crisis that it was supposed to prevent.

⁶⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/28-Aug-17/bring-afghan-taliban-on-the-negotiation-table>

⁶⁶ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/29-Aug-17/pakistans-strategic-mess>

GILGIT-BALTISTAN

Footprints: northern areas' dilemma, Nasir Jamal, Dawn, 25 August⁶⁷

CPEC project has little to offer to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. “What is in this ‘corridor’ initiative for the people of the region?” asks Azhar Hussain, a trader in the border town of Sost. “Small, local businessmen like us will be chucked out of the competition once the large Chinese and Pakistani companies and traders take full control of the surface trade with China and the customs facility is shifted from Sost to Havelian as planned under the initiative. “I understand it is a very significant project for both Pakistan and China but what about us? Are we good only for repairing truck tyres and waiting on tourists? Or do we deserve to be engaged as a stakeholder?” Ali asks. “It is because of us that Pakistan is China’s neighbour and friend; we connect the two countries, and yet we are being kept in the dark. *Anyone who raises his voice for the rights of Gilgit-Baltistan and its share in the CPEC initiative is picked on and subjected to torture. Why?*”

BALUCHISTAN

Missing in Sindh, Editorial, Dawn, 08 August⁶⁸

Balochistan has long been a theatre for abductions by state-affiliated elements. While the security situation in the province makes verification of such cases extremely difficult, it can be said with some certainty that enforced disappearance has been used as a tool of state repression to counter nationalist sentiment in the area. *More recently, the war against terrorism has provided a pretext for carrying out enforced disappearances in the rest of the country as well, with the highest incidence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.* Inexplicably enough, there exists legislation some recently enacted that enables law enforcement to arrest, investigate and prosecute those suspected of being engaged in seditious acts. Why then do such self-destructive tactics remain in practice? Is the state blinded by its own power?

Solving the Baloch riddle, Raashid Wali Janjua, Daily Times, 10 August⁶⁹

Balochistan is on the boil again while the paeans to the glory of a new dawn continue to be sung with metronomic regularity by official quarters. *The recrudescence of the violence and sectarian killings is a harbinger of a new phase of militancy that somehow refuses to die down despite best efforts of state. Balochistan remains a restive province testing the limits of federal and*

⁶⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1353714/footprints-northern-areas-dilemma>

⁶⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350207/missing-in-sindh>

⁶⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/10-Aug-17/solving-the-baloch-riddle>

provincial governance in an environment vitiated by internal paradoxes and the external meddling. It has become a veritable wicked problem. Balochistan is a veritable 'witches brew' that is not amenable to simple solutions or authoritative approaches of problem solving. There are internal and external factors that complicate the situation and upon which especially the external ones there is no control by the state. Despite the sincere efforts of the present and the previous Army commander minding the restive pot in Balochistan, terrorism stalks the land externally inspired and internally abetted. There are multiple cleavages and conflicts that wrack the disturbed province.

Fata reform on the back burner, Editorial, Dawn, August⁷⁰

The differences between the government and its political allies have continued IN Pakistan. After the immediate merger of Fata and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was opposed for parochial political reasons by the PML-N's allies, *a period of so-called mainstreaming was agreed upon with the eventual goal of considering a merger.* But the mainstreaming plan, which the special committee that has not convened in eight months was meant to help steer, has also stalled, and the vast, new financial commitments that will have to be made to the region have yet to be delineated. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's disinterest in the process was almost inexplicable; until it is considered that he consistently showed very little appetite for a long fight against extremism, terrorism and militancy.

KASHMIR

Failing Kashmir, Editorial, The Nation, 18 August⁷¹

To please the Indian Government, the United States has declared Hizb ul Mujahideen a terrorist organisation. We have seen in the recent past that resistant organisations in Kashmir are getting banned one after another, labelled as terrorist organisations. Though the Foreign Office of Pakistan has criticised the US decision sharply, it will not change the attitude of US towards the region. ... *However, it is also important to bear in mind that our governments have failed to highlight the Kashmiri cause on any international forum, especially, after Pakistan chose the American camp under General Musharraf.* ... The recent uprising in Kashmir Valley had set the perfect field for Pakistan's Foreign Office to highlight their sufferings. *Whenever a Kashmiri organisation is banned, the tone of our Foreign Office becomes more and more apologetic. Enough is enough. Talking to news correspondents in a weekly media briefing on Kashmir will bring nothing to Kashmiri people.* The

⁷⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1352824/fata-reform-on-the-back-burner>

⁷¹ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/18-Aug-2017/failing-kashmir>

Pakistani Foreign Office needs to convince the world, that like any other group of people, Kashmiri people also hold the right of self-determination.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

India's joint doctrine and its grand strategy, Sarmad Zia and Maryam Zubair, *The Express Tribune*, 17 August⁷²

In April 2017, the Indian defence ministry released a hefty document detailing the consolidation of its army, navy, air force and strategic forces into a comprehensive joint doctrine for attaining its national goals. ... *India's joint doctrine gives a picture of its grand strategy.* It is important here to understand the connection between doctrines and grand strategy. Hal Brands defines grand strategy as "the intellectual architecture that gives form and structure to foreign policy." Doctrines are formed in line with a state's long-term military and political goals. *Thus, a doctrine can be considered the principles guiding a state's grand strategy. India's joint doctrine, in the same way, reflects its long-term political and military ambitions.* This is demonstrated in the way that the doctrine is worded, i. e. in strong language outlining an ambitious political outlook. ...

The idea of India, Javaid Bhat, *Daily Times*, 25 August⁷³

The new Moditva nationalism is challenging every public intellectual and institution to its litmus test of nationalism and the very idea of India. *This Moditva nationalism has a different set of heroes and villains. Golwalkar's Bunch of Thoughts is perhaps more important than what has been put in the constitution. The sanctity of the national flag is now in question.* The current wave of nationalism- which bears the visible threat of violence- has exposed the underbelly of India where even the judiciary appears tainted. The old concept of India is being lynched in favour of a new one which has created sharp boundaries of different hues. Worse, many of those in the secular camp are meekly crossing the border into the saffron camp, claiming that they were actually the "pseudo-secular's" which Moditva followers accusing their opponents of being.

⁷² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1483185/indias-joint-doctrine-grand-strategy/>

⁷³ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/25-Aug-17/the-idea-of-india>

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Karachi				
Azizabad ⁷⁴	11/08/2017	DSP traffic, police constable shot dead in Karachi's Azizabad	02	0
Karachi ⁷⁵	22/08/2017	Militant group kills three to 'avenge besmirching' of its name	03	0
FATA				
Landi Kotal ⁷⁶	16/08/2017	Two injured by shell fired from across Afghan border	0	02
Waziristan ⁷⁷	28/08/2017	Two soldiers martyred in SWA blast	02	03
Punjab				
Lahore ⁷⁸	08/08/2017	Blast on Lahore's Outfall Road leaves 46 injured	0	46
Lahore ⁷⁹	18/08/2017	Clash of PML-N and PTI workers leaves teenager Amir dead	01	02
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Lower Dir ⁸⁰	09/08/2017	Major among 4 Pakistan Army personnel martyred during operation in Lower Dir	04	0

⁷⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1350943/dsp-traffic-police-constable-shot-dead-in-karachis-azizabad>

⁷⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1487651/militant-group-kills-three-avenge-besmirching-name/>

⁷⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1351860>

⁷⁷ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/28-Aug-17/two-soldiers-martyred-in-swa-blast>

⁷⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350328>

⁷⁹<http://dailytimes.com.pk/features/18-Aug-17/clash-between-pml-n-pti-workers-leaves-teenager-dead>

⁸⁰<https://www.dawn.com/news/1350539/4-pakistan-army-personnel-including-major-martyred-during-operation-in-lower-dir>

Sindh				
Quetta ⁸¹	13/08/2017	8 soldiers among 15 martyred in Quetta blast	08	15
Quetta ⁸²	21/08/2017	Two militants killed in shootout in Kech: security officials	02	01

⁸¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1351289/8-soldiers-among-15-martyred-in-quetta-blast>

⁸² <http://dailytimes.com.pk/balochistan/21-Aug-17/two-militants-killed-in-shootout-in-kech-security-officials>