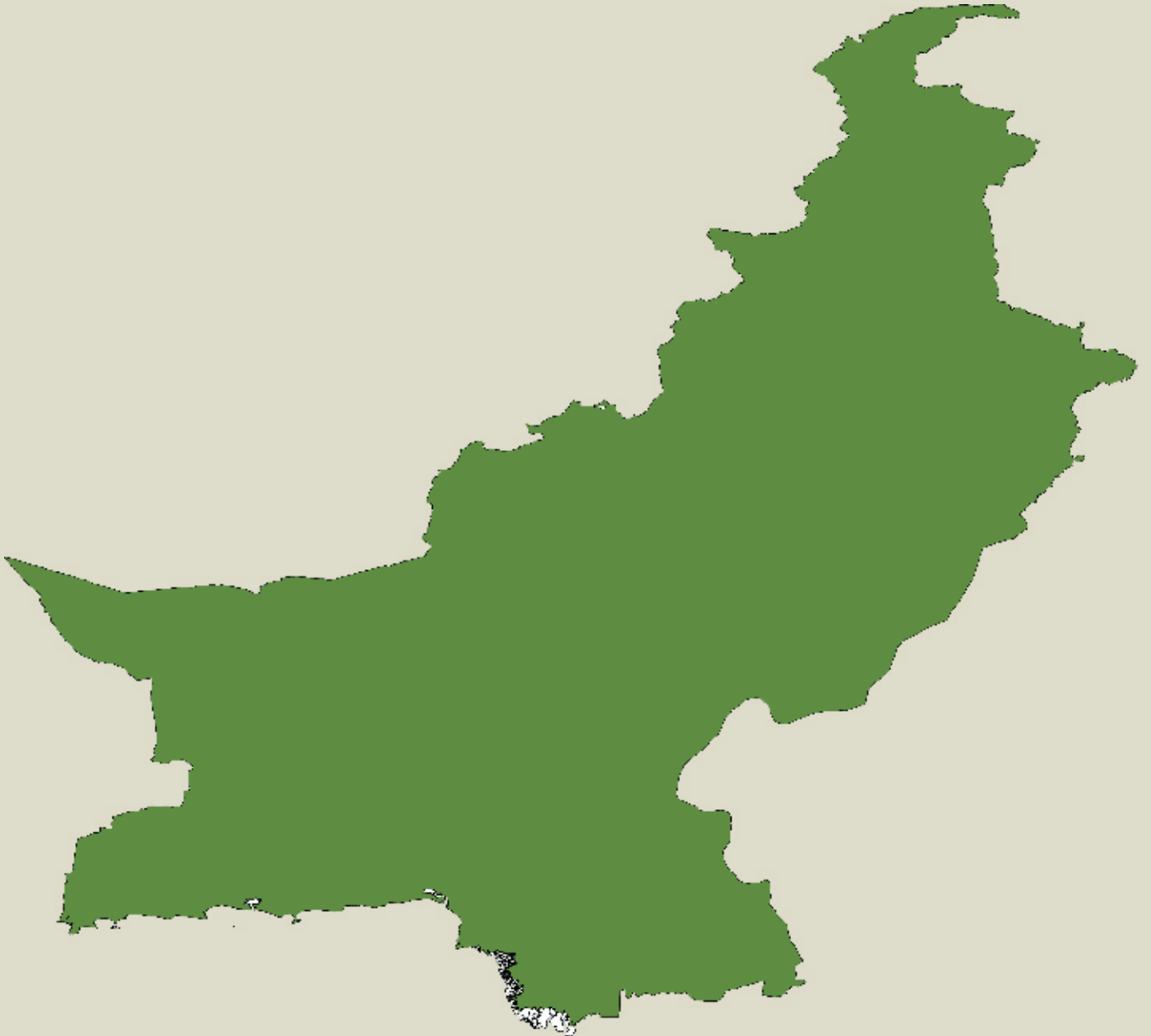


NOVEMBER 2017

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
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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, November 2017

CONTENTS

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS	04
RELIGIOUS POLITICS	09
SECURITY SITUATION	12
PROVINCES & REGIONS	
BALUCHISTAN	14
RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA	16
STATISTICS	
BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES	17

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

'Paradise Papers' expose ex-PM Shaukat Aziz's offshore holdings, Hassan Belal Zaidi, Dawn, 06 November¹

Nearly a year and a half after the Panama Papers leaks shook the world elites by revealing the offshore holdings of some of the most powerful political players; the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) released another treasure trove of data. Dubbed the Paradise Papers, the leaks consist of 13.4 million files from "a combination of offshore service providers and the company registries of some of the world's most secretive countries". The most prominent Pakistani name that emerged from the fresh leaks was that of Shaukat Aziz, the Musharraf-era finance minister who also remained prime minister from 2004 to 2007. Mr Aziz worked for Citibank before entering politics and was "one of the shareholders and directors of the Bahamas-registered Cititrust Limited from 1997 to 1999, along with other executives of the bank". "Shaukat Aziz set up the Antarctic Trust in the name of his wife, three children and granddaughter weeks before he came to Pakistan to lead the finance ministry," ICIJ representative Umar Cheema told Geo News, adding that these assets were never declared to any Pakistani institution in financial documents Mr Aziz submitted between 2003 and 2006.

US Congress authorises \$700 million for reimbursing Pakistan Anwar Iqbal, Dawn, 11 November²

The American Congress has authorised up to \$700 million in Coalition Support Fund (CSF) to reimburse Pakistan for activities carried out in support of US operations in Afghanistan. The authorisation is included in the reconciled text of the House and Senate versions of the 2018 National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA-2018), which was released on Thursday. The reconciled version makes \$350m of \$700m available to Pakistan under the CSF contingent upon certification from the secretary of defence that Pakistan is taking demonstrable steps against the Haqqani network. The NDAA urged the defence department to monitor Washington's security assistance to Pakistan and ensure that the country did not use it to support militant groups. It said the US administration would release the restricted amount of \$350m if the secretary of defence certified to the congressional committees that Pakistan continued to conduct military operations that were contributing to

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1368650>

² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1369749/us-congress-authorises-700-million-for-reimbursing-pakistan>

disrupting safe havens, fundraising and recruiting efforts, and freedom of movement of the Haqqani network and Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan

Eight districts account for over 3 million male-female voters gap, Iftikhar A. Khan, Dawn, 12 November³

With Lahore in the lead, eight districts in the country account for a gap of over three million between the numbers of male and female voters — more than one fourth of the difference of slightly over 12m in all 136 districts. An analysis of district-wise data regarding voters, recently uploaded onto the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) official website, reveals that two districts of Punjab — Lahore and Faisalabad — account for a gap of 1.15m voters. The 20 districts with the largest gender gap in registered voters include 17 districts of Punjab, two in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and one in Sindh. The total number of registered voters in Lahore is 4.90m — 2.77m male and 2.12m female — marking a gap of 648,421 voters. In Faisalabad, the gap is 507,920. The total number of registered voters in the district is around 4m — 2.29m male and 1.78m female voters.

Election laws endorse bigotry, Daily Times, 20 November⁴

The new Election Bill passed by National Assembly and Senate on Thursday has restored the Khatam-e-Nabuwwat clause in its original form. The controversial Section 7C of the Conduct of General Elections Order of 2002 — which has also been restored to its original form — was apparently the most problematic part of the new legislation. The Ahmadi community has been on the receiving end of violence at the hands of extremist groups and blasphemy-related violence has also claimed several lives over the years as state continued to play the role of silent spectator. Therefore, such laws will serve to further enable the persecution of the Ahmadi community and mob justice. In an ideal world, the political leaders would have tried to end this bigotry. But the Parliament has once again ended up normalizing bigotry. The new law will go down in history as one of the most unnecessary pieces of legislation

³<https://www.dawn.com/news/1369974/eight-districts-account-for-over-3-million-male-female-voters-gap>

⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/143390/election-laws-endorse-bigotry/>

RELIGIOUS POLITICS

Govt enlists help of religious scholars to end Islamabad sit-in, Munawer Azeem, Dawn, 21 November⁵

A meeting of the clerics and scholars, which was also attended by Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal and Religious Affairs Minister Sardar Mohammad Yousuf, resolved to end the protest in a peaceful manner. However, a meeting between representatives of the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah and government ministers held at Punjab House was unable to make any breakthrough, as the protesters would not budge from their demand for the law minister's resignation. The government is under mounting pressure to end the Faizabad protest, and the Islamabad High Court on Monday initiated contempt proceedings against top officials of the Islamabad administration by issuing them show cause notices.

Reclaiming Pakistan and Islam, Editorial, Daily Times, 27 November⁶

Reclaiming Pakistan as a modern and inclusive state is impossible without reclaiming Islam as a progressive theology, which is compatible with modernity and democracy. The powers that be in the country need to identify and promote Islamic modernists in the tradition of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Chiragh Ali who can guide the Muslim community in face of challenges of the 21st century. We need jurists of the calibre of Syed Ameer Ali to preside over *Ijtihad* and modernization of Islamic jurisprudence and bring it in conformity with modern standards vis-à-vis human rights and individual rights. This is the Islam Jinnah invoked during the Pakistan Movement i.e. Islam which was ontologically emptied and a veritable shell for reason and progress. The only way you can have a secular democratic state in a Muslim majority country is if you can convince the Muslims that such an idea is not alien to Islam and its doctrine but is in fact in perfect harmony with it.

Mayhem all around, Editorial, Daily Times, 27 November⁷

The government's inability to handle the situation has been evident from statements given by some members of the ruling party suggesting that the Law Minister's resignation is on the cards. Raja Zafarul Haq has stated that there is no harm in the minister's resignation if it can help improve law and order. Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif has also reportedly favoured this

⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1371869/govt-enlists-help-of-religious-scholars-to-end-islamabad-sit-in>

⁶ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/147938/reclaiming-pakistan-islam/>

⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/147941/mayhem-all-around/>

option. Meanwhile, the army's initial reluctance to intervene in the operation raises many questions. The Interior Ministry had sought the military's help in dealing with the unrest to which the latter responded that it is ready to fulfil its constitutional obligation but it requires 'some deliberations prior to the deployment'. It would have been appropriate for the army to convey its concerns privately and through proper institutional channels. By Sunday night, it was clear that the Army was not willing to face the protestors. The much-touted 'peaceful solution' remains an enigma and reminds us of the failed strategies to deal with Taliban in the past. In short, Pakistan has entered into a major crisis and the elected government will not come out unscathed from this mess.

Pakistan's hybrid theocracy, Editorial, Daily Times, 28 November⁸

The right-wing religious zealotry that we see today has remained the bane of this country's existence from day one. In recent decades, it got a boost when the previous government of Pakistan People's Party backtracked on its pledge to reform the country's man-made blasphemy laws. The fanaticism imploded when the then sitting Governor Punjab was gunned down by one of his own bodyguards. The extremists knew that they had won when the ruling party remained unable to take a clear stance on the issue. That was the day that the democratic dispensation should have admitted absolute failure in establishing its writ and retreated. Because to stay on means fighting to the bitter end. And that has never happened. To say that recent developments are disturbing would be a vast understatement. The PML-N government should gather the torn shreds of its dignity and pack up shop. For the mullahs have won. The political set-up is still standing, it is true, but what does that matter when it caved in so unceremoniously; giving the latter everything they wanted? Aside from presenting the Tehreek-e Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) with the Law minister's head on a stick — the Centre has also agreed to release within 30 days the findings of the probe into the saga that started all this: namely the amendment to the Finality of Prophethood declaration for electoral candidates in the Elections Act 2017.

Barelvis and the Pakistan movement, Ishtiaq Ahmed, Daily Times, 30 November⁹

Jinnah may not have anticipated that the organic relationship between Islam and the state would result in the rule of the ulema. However, he could not have been unaware of the fact that the religious establishment, including Barelvi clerics, saw the state he demanded and won as having been

⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/148437/pakistans-hybrid-theocracy/>

⁹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/149656/barelvis-pakistan-movement/>

established in the name of Islam. In my opinion, those who say that Pakistan, as it exists today, is not Jinnah's Pakistan are missing the point. Jinnah may not have anticipated that his two-nation theory would lay the foundation of a state in which the organic relationship between Islam and the state would result in the rule of the ulema. However, he could not have been unaware of the fact that the religious establishment, including Barelvi clerics, saw the state he demanded and won as having been established in the name of Islam. The truth is that from 1944 onwards the Ahmadia community too supported the demand for Pakistan. So, they too have a right to exist as a community and live in security and peace even if the Muslim majority considers them to be non-Muslims. Jinnah gave a free hand to the Barelvi clerics and mashaikh (heads of Sufi shrines) to mobilize Muslim support by promising the resuscitation of the ideal Islamic state founded in the 7th century.

COAS acknowledges ulema's role for peace, *Daily Times*, 30 November¹⁰

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa acknowledged clerics' "contributions towards peace and harmony" in the country. "[The] COAS met religious scholars of FATA and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa in Peshawar. He lauded their support in fight against terrorism and acknowledged their contributions for peace and harmony," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. Ulema, the ISPR statement claimed, unanimously condemned terrorism and pledged their continued support to efforts of security forces for bringing peace and stability. "Pakistan belongs to all Pakistanis without any religious, provincial, tribal, linguistic, ethnic, sectarian or any other identity," the army chief was quoted as saying. Separately, the army chief visited Pak-Afghan border in Bajaur Agency. He was given a detailed briefing regarding the state's ongoing efforts to effectively check terrorist infiltration routes from across the border, progress on fencing, construction of new forts/posts along the border and development of new tracks to facilitate local public.

SECURITY SITUATION

US bill delinks LeT from Haqqani network, Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 14 November¹¹

While the United States considers LeT a terrorist organisation, it also realizes that the group's main focus is Kashmir, not Afghanistan. Linking LeT to the

¹⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/149673/coas-acknowledges-ulemas-role-peace/>

¹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1370332/us-bill-delinks-let-from-haqqani-network>

Haqqani network, however, creates an impression that the US not only wants Pakistan to help it win the war against the Taliban but also wants it to change Islamabad's position on Kashmir. Since it already considers LeT a terrorist organisation, Washington will continue to ask Islamabad to stop the group from carrying out attacks inside India. But by delinking it from the Haqqani network, US policymakers are sending a message to Islamabad, that fighting the Haqqani network is their first priority. This distinction is clearly underlined in a congressional document, the 'conference' version of the National Defence Act 2018.

'Peace committee' slaps Taliban-style curbs on Wana, Dawn, 15, November¹²

A faction of the Taliban has apparently made a comeback to Wana, South Waziristan Agency, under the guise of a peace committee and placed a ban on cultural and social activities and put restrictions on movement of women outside their homes without male members of their family. The so-called peace committee has issued tough guidelines through pamphlets in Wana town and warned local people to abide by these rules otherwise violators would face repercussions, according to sources. The committee has banned music, athan, a traditional dance which is performed in wedding ceremonies or other festive occasions, and use of narcotics. According to the committee's guidelines, those activities which promote immorality or violate Islamic teachings would not be permitted on these occasions.

Political engineering of religious extremists, Munir Ahmed, Daily Times, 21 November¹³

Pakistan seems to be a fertile land for any type of religious manoeuvring. Just shout a religious slogan and many 'faithful' would start following you blindly, without going deep into accessing the motives you have in your mind. These religious manoeuvres in the politics know quite firmly that people here become sentimental when it comes to religion. Time has proven that the Islamic faith-based controversies has become an easy ladder for the less known clerics and like-minded to rise up for their political vested interests. *Chanting hateful slogans against the 'evil' non-Muslims seems to have become the easiest way to get acceptance and support in Pakistan where most people remain ignorant about the actual religious teachings.* What is even more disappointing is that such individuals have a following among the general public and people think of them as religious leaders. The faith-based fanatic

¹² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1370585/peace-committee-slaps-taliban-style-curbs-on-wana>

¹³ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/143982/political-engineering-religious-extremists/>

and foully protests and sit-ins also attract the national and international media and this coverage ends up strengthening them. The violent protests also disturb the public life and commuters in the capital have been facing difficulties for the last twelve days just because the government is not sure how to deal with a handful of extremists who have brought the city on a standstill.

JuD chief set to be released, Wajih Ahmad Sheikh, Dawn, 23 November¹⁴

During the in-camera proceedings, officers of the Finance Ministry and the Punjab Home Department presented before the board records highlighting the reasons for Mr Saeed's detention. However, they apparently failed to provide satisfactory answers to queries posed by members of the board regarding the alleged anti-state activities Mr Saeed was accused of being a part of. The judges asked the government officials to present evidence, if any, to prove the involvement of the JuD leader in any illegal or anti-state activity. Unsatisfied with the answers provided by the government, the board set aside Mr Saeed's detention and ordered his release. Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan and Justice Aalia Neelum were the other two members of the board.

Islamabad High Court declares Faizabad sit-in 'a terrorist act', Malik Asad, Dawn, 25 November¹⁵

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday declared the ongoing sit-in at the Faizabad interchange an "anti-state activity" and "an act of terrorism". Another show cause notice was issued to the interior minister for not implementing the court's orders to clear Faizabad, observing that Ahsan Iqbal had "stopped the [Islamabad] administration from acting upon the order passed by this court." IHC Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui further asked "why contempt of court proceedings may not be initiated against him. He is directed to appear in person on the next date". In his order, Justice Siddiqui noted that "calling the honourable judges of superior judiciary and other respectable persons with names is intolerable", adding that the "leadership of dharna, prima facie, [are] involved in an act of terrorism."

Army called in after botched operation, Aamir Yasin, Mohammad Asghar & Munawer Azeem, Dawn, 26 November¹⁶

¹⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1372329/jud-chief-set-to-be-released>

¹⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1372696/islamabad-high-court-declares-faizabad-sit-in-a-terrorist-act>

¹⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1372930/army-called-in-after-botched-operation>

The army was called in on Saturday to deal with the aftermath of a botched operation against protesters from religious parties that had all but paralyzed the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi for over a fortnight. As many as six people were killed and hundreds wounded as law enforcement agencies finally acted under court orders to disperse protesters who had amassed at Faizabad Interchange. But the ill-planned action only added fuel to the demonstrators' fire and not only failed to dislodge them, but also fanned smaller protests in other parts of the country. Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal told Dawn on Saturday night that a formal requisition for the deployment of troops in Rawalpindi and Islamabad had been sent to the army.

Pakistan's haphazard fight against extremism, Inamullah Marwat, Daily Times, 29 November¹⁷

To eradicate extremism, Pakistan needs to make sure that it nurtures an atmosphere that is conducive to diversity. There is a big disconnect between the state and society at large in understanding extremism and what approach should be taken in eradicating extremism which morphs into terrorism. In promoting an environment conducive to religious extremism, the Pakistani establishment has lost the country around 50,000 lives. Over the past two or three years, the state began to realize how badly it had botched things and attempted to fix things through a mixture of military operations and reforms. But the journey to attain a society and state free of extremism does not end with a few military operations and symbolic reforms. It needs an inclusive and consistent approach. To eradicate extremism, Pakistan needs

PROVINCES & REGIONS

BALUCHISTAN

Troubled Balochistan, Editorial, Daily Times, 10 November¹⁸

There seems to be no respite in sight for Quetta as the city continues to witness terrorist attacks despite claims by the security forces and law enforcers that the terrorists are 'on the run'. The provincial government should have taken preventive measures and increased security for high profile police officials especially those believed to be on the hit list of terrorists. A lack of action on the part of the provincial government has been termed by analysts as one of the reasons for consistent attacks in Quetta. But the ethnic militants cannot be dealt with force. There is a political battle that has to do with the

¹⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/149127/pakistans-haphazard-fight-extremism/>

¹⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/136523/troubled-balochistan/>

imbalance of powers between the center and provinces. These concerns can, and must, be resolved through negotiations. In this regard, a recent announcement by exiled Baloch leaders of a meeting in Geneva to devise a strategy for peaceful struggle must be observed carefully. So far, the authorities have dismissed the meeting on grounds that sardars have lost public support in the province to middle class leaders like Allah Nazar. Be that as it may, the point to bear in mind is that the province has been at the receiving end of violence all along this country's history.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

Pakistan offers spy Kulbhushan Jadhav's meeting with wife, Baqir Sajjad Syed, Dawn, 11 November¹⁹

In a surprise development, Pakistan on Friday offered a meeting between convicted Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav and his wife on "humanitarian grounds". "The Government of Pakistan has decided to arrange a meeting of Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav with his wife, in Pakistan, purely on humanitarian grounds," the Foreign Office said in a statement. The decision was communicated to the Indian government through a note verbal sent to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. Apparently in an effort to re-emphasize the government's position on the case, the FO statement mentioned the service status of Jadhav. "Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav alias, Hussain Mubarak Patel, a serving Commander of the Indian Navy, working with Indian Intelligence Agency/RAW was apprehended by Pakistan law enforcement agencies," the FO said and noted that he had confessed to have been "asked by RAW to plan, coordinate and organise espionage, terrorist and sabotage activities aimed at destabilizing and waging war against Pakistan".

The case of Hafiz Saeed, Editorial, Daily Times, 25 November²⁰

The verdict is in. Hafiz Saeed is a free man. This is what it has come to in today's democratic Pakistan. We are now a country that can no longer be bothered even with the trouble of sham trials. Our courts simply let a proscribed global terrorist walk. The significance of this cannot be overestimated. Not when it was the government that had requested the courts to extend the house arrest of the one-time front man for LeT and JuD, under the country's anti-terror laws. Yet this latest move simply strengthens the

¹⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1369748/pakistan-offers-spy-kulbhushan-jadhavs-meeting-with-wife>

²⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/146681/case-hafiz-saeed/>

ruling PMLN's claims that the most powerful in the land are pulling the judiciary's strings. While also underscoring how the so-called project of mainstreaming of former proxies is in full swing ahead of the elections. It may well be that Saeed leads the MML, the new political reincarnation of the JuD, to the polls next year. Pakistan is now hurtling along a very dangerous path. This has already been seen as direct provocation aimed at our eastern neighbour, India. Saeed, after all, has long been linked to the Mumbai terrorist attacks of 2008. Indeed, he has wasted no time in spewing hate. Soon after his release in Lahore, there he was leading a Friday sermon; where he was quick to engage in anti-India rhetoric.

Indian forces using chemical weapons in IOK, S M Hali, Daily Times, 25 November²¹

Security forces in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) are reported to be using chemical weapons against the Kashmiris. In their fresh reign of terror launched after the brutal assassination of 20-year-old popular Kashmiri youth leader Burhan Wani on 8 July 2016, thousands of Kashmiris came out and held protest demonstrations. The iconic and mercurial Burhan Wani had added fresh impetus to the Kashmiri movement through a bold use of the social media using his real name. The Indian security forces picked out a page from the book of Israeli tyranny against the subjugated Palestinians, the vicious use of pellet guns to fire volleys of pellets, directly aiming at the face and eyes. To add intensity to the scare being created, it was declared that twenty officers of Pakistan Army are currently undergoing training in the use of biological and chemical weapons in China. *It is evident that the Indian army has commenced a fresh wave of terror, using chemical weapons against innocent protesters in IOK while playing a blame game against Pakistan.*

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Peshawar ²²	25/11/2017	Peshawar police AIG, gunman martyred in suicide bombing	02	06

²¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/146653/indian-forces-using-chemical-weapons-iok/>

²² <https://dailytimes.com.pk/146865/peshawar-police-aig-gunman-martyred-suicide-bombing/>

Sindh				
Quetta ²³	16/11/2017	Police officer, three members of family shot dead in Quetta	15	0
Gwadar ²⁴	19/11/2017	Five more bullet-riddled bodies found near Turbat Suicide attack on FC convoy kills five in Quetta	05	0
Islamabad ²⁵	26/11/2017	Islamabad operation: 6 killed in clashes between LEAs, agitators on Saturday	06	100

²³

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1370752/police-officer-three-members-of-family-shot-dead-in-quetta>

²⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1371492/five-more-bullet-riddled-bodies-found-near-turbat>

²⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1372986>