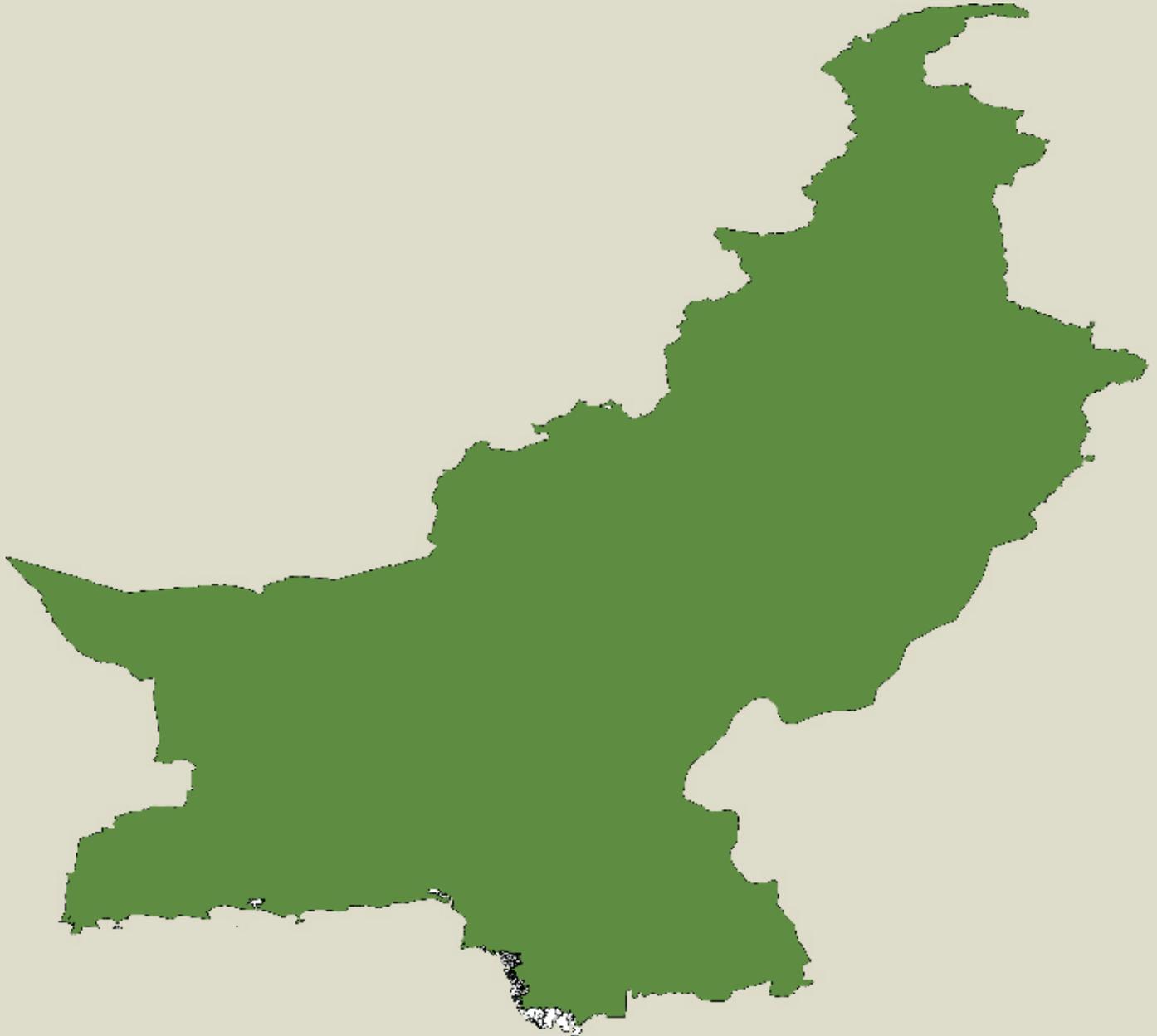


April 2019

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



Prepared by
Dr. Zainab Akhter
Dr. Nazir Ahmad Mir
Dr. Mohammad Eisa
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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, April 2019

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Bilawal's two-fold challenge, Arifa Noor, Dawn, 02 April¹

The PPP's main challenge at the moment is its growing irrelevance in Punjab. Once a party which forced the military establishment to put together an alliance to stop it from sweeping the province in 1988, today the PPP has been reduced to a force which cannot even ensure the third place for itself in many electoral contests in Punjab. *In other words, Bilawal faced two challenges – to emerge as a leader, but also one who was completely different from his father.* But the fake accounts case has shattered this hope of the two being two different brands. The case threatens not just Asif Ali Zardari, but also the government of Sindh. The trail from the accounts allegedly leads to government officials, right up to the chief minister of Sindh. And a jittery PPP has brought out its only blazing gun – BBZ. *Perhaps, he feels he has no choice left. The PPP has little in its basket apart from Sindh and the cases now pose a threat to this. Perhaps Bilawal now has no choice but to defend the party, its government and his father.*

Cracks in the ranks, Zahid Hussain, Dawn, 03 April²

Meanwhile, a mulish prime minister refuses to come out of his container mode and show some statesmanship to make the system work. *The politics of confrontation have paralyzed parliament and blocked the legislative process. The chaos and disarray have affected governance. More worrisome is that the drift could lead to an economic meltdown.* Yet there is no realization of the gravity of the situation. The great new hope is withering away fast. Although the turf war between Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Jahangir Tareen is not new, the latest war of words has far more serious connotations for the party that is now in power. It has laid bare the divide within the ranks. *Both political heavyweights belong to south Punjab, the PTI's main political stronghold in the province. Their rivalry intensified during the elections when they tried to undermine each other.* PTI infighting has worsened the predicament of a government facing serious challenges on every front. *Tareen's increasing involvement in Punjab seems to be the main reason for Qureshi's resentment. This infighting has worsened the predicament of the government which is facing serious challenges on every front.* The economy is in free fall and there is hardly any sign of the government's ability to stem the rot.

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1473377/bilawals-two-fold-challenge>

² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1473602/cracks-in-the-ranks>

A single spark, Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, 05 April³

The PTI government is becoming increasingly authoritarian in its quest to stifle dissent. This is in direct proportion to a rising tide of popular angst at its dismal performance in the last eight months in office. Unfortunately, some “pillars” of the state and society, including many sections of the media, are so in awe of the cult of Imran Khan that they cannot bring themselves to chastise some of his unacceptable behavioral traits. Some have a vested interest in propping him up for one reason or another. Much of what we predicted is already evident. But if the opposition, media and judiciary have not yet banded together to challenge Imran Khan, it is only a matter of time before they do. *The more the PTI government falters and takes one U-Turn after another, the more it will be discredited. Popular disenchantment with it is being rapidly converted into outrage.* The economic outlook is dismal. GDP growth is expected to fall to 3%; at least 4 million people will fall below the poverty line; inflation is forecast to rise to 15 per cent; out of the 1.8 million youngsters coming into the job market, at least 1 million will remain jobless. And so on.

PTI in la-la land, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 10 April⁴

Imran Khan is now doing everything that he had criticized the previous governments for. He is launching the same kind of tax amnesty schemes that he had vehemently opposed in the past. He had labelled such schemes as ‘legalized corruption’. Has it now been declared kosher? For him, taking U-turns is a sign of leadership. Nothing quite puts into perspective the la-la land in which the Khan government operates than the latest claim by the finance minister that the economy is out of “intensive care” and on the path to recovery. “The crisis is over,” Asad Umar declared before his departure to Washington for the final rounds of talks with the IMF for a bailout package. *The current account deficit will remain a major problem, despite the finance minister’s claim of plugging the gap. Pakistan’s external debt has crossed \$100bn and is predicted to grow further.* More worrisome is the worsening unemployment problem because of the sluggish economy and high population growth rate. The PTI’s promise to create five million new jobs seems far-fetched in this situation.

Increased cooperation with Iran, *Daily Times*, *Daily Times*, 22 April⁵

One positive development that emerged in yesterday’s talks between PM Khan and his counterpart was the agreement to set up a Joint Rapid Reaction Task

³ <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/a-single-spark/>

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1475122/pti-in-la-la-land>

⁵ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/380483/increased-cooperation-with-iran/>

Force to monitor the countries common borders. Such a task force could go a long way in terms of preventing attacks on either side of the border. Not only will this make civilians and security personnel on either side of the border safer, it will also prevent diplomatic misunderstandings that can lead to souring of bilateral relations. The Pakistan-Iran border is also a major transit route for narcotics. Tonnes of heroin have been smuggled across the border for decades, fueling addiction and crime, as well as funding terror outfits on both sides. In recent years, these borderlands have also been used to smuggle methamphetamine, which has emerged as a scourge for both Pakistani and Iranian society. *In the short-term, both Tehran and Islamabad must solidify progress made during PM Khan's visit by acting against militant groups that have conducted attacks in either country recently. Pakistan must act against Jaish al-Adl.*

Understanding Imran Khan, Yasser Latif Hamdani, Daily Times, 29 April⁶

Imran Khan's misogynist comments against Bilawal Bhutto were not surprising in the least. Indeed one was surprised at those who were surprised in the first place. They assume that just because Imran Khan played cricket in England and attended Oxford University, he would somehow be attuned to modern sensibilities. Do not be mistaken by the swag of the once handsome world champion cricketer (in my opinion the greatest ever to play the sport) to think that he had in anyway adopted those principles that made western civilization what it is. *Imran Khan's callous disregard for the facts should be self-evident. The Germany-Japan border controversy is a major slip for a world leader, especially in this day and age of information. It is a dangerous slip even if it was in fact a slip of the tongue.* Even more problematic is his cavalier nonchalant attitude towards gender. In this day and age when gender identities have become deeply contested, for a world leader to exhibit such an attitude is unforgivable. One can hardly wait for that earth-shaking moment when Imran Khan finally meets Donald Trump and they exchange notes on the issue of political correctness. Indeed they might find in each other true kinship and camaraderie. That might just help reset the troubled US-Pakistan ties. As for the rest, well that hardly matters in the post-truth world where doublespeak and doublethink are standard best practices for leaders and their followers.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

⁶ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/384433/understanding-imran-khan/>

Monetary policy, Editorial, Dawn, 01 April⁷

Meanwhile, the fiscal deficit has grown faster as revenue shortfalls multiply each month and expenditures — particularly those that are security related — grow at the fastest pace in many years. And the current account deficit has narrowed, while exports have “remained flat” in dollar terms, as per the central bank. *Businesses are now choking on the fumes of the aggravated slowdown in the economy that these vulnerabilities have brought about. They are borrowing more but investing less. As the slowdown ripples through the economy, nobody is left untouched by the spectre of inflation and unemployment.* If the economy had made some sort of a turnaround, such a rate hike would not have been necessary, nor would the tone of the State Bank’s monetary policy statement been as gloomy as it is. Serious maturity is needed at this time, and a completely unsentimental view of the economy must be taken. Slogans and rhetoric will not carry the country through; the tough choices that are looming ahead will require deft politics to manage. It is time to buck up.

CPEC, Gwadar and the road ahead, Hasaan Khawar, The Express Tribune, 02 April⁸

But connectivity alone cannot make this happen. There are two other pieces of this puzzle that must be addressed: building a safe and modern city with top-notch civic amenities and a robust commercial centre with investment-friendly regulations and institutions. *As of now, however, Gwadar is still known for speculative real estate investments and shady land records.* Water supply and municipal services remain a question mark. The local population, mostly reliant on fishing, seems to be skeptical about the upcoming investments that may disrupt their decades-old businesses, while most of the skilled jobs in the port area have gone to people from Karachi and other areas, owing to poor skill-base of the local population. *Leaving the Chinese investments aside, the rest of the city appears to be no different from any other small town of Pakistan.* It seems to be an unequal partnership between China and Pakistan, where the latter doesn’t seem prepared to play its part. *While the Chinese can bring in financing, technology and experience and build state-of-the-art infrastructure, they surely can’t fix the underlying economic and governance systems and that is something where Pakistan government is failing.*

⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1473196/monetary-policy>

⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1941685/6-cpec-gwadar-road-ahead/>

Currency crackdown, Editorial, Dawn, 08 April⁹

Since the open market is where all the volatility is, the problem is a combination of ingrained expectations of an impending devaluation among more retail clients and a genuine shortage in supply since the exchange company heads report that there are no sellers for the dollar these days, only buyers. *Clearly, sentiments are looking past the finance minister's assurances to rising inflation and the downward trajectory that the rupee has been on in past months. Dealing with such sentiments is a delicate task.* Putting out the message that the exchange rate is stable is only part of the signaling that is required. Preserving one's own credibility is also important, and refraining from publicly speaking about any crisis, or the enormous pressures the economy is facing, is also critical. The finance minister put out a message himself, in his live webcasted chat with his social media team, that the economy faces unprecedented pressures. He has even used the word 'bankruptcy' in his public comments. *Such messaging creates perceptions that contradict his assertion that the exchange rate is stable; people will inevitably ask themselves how they should secure themselves against further erosion of their purchasing power.*

The CPEC trick or treat, Syed Nasir Hassan, Daily Times, 25 April¹⁰

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a component of the Belt and Road Initiative. People on both sides of the China-Pakistan border have been promised prosperity as a direct result of its completion. Given the unprecedented size of foreign investment and loans, doubts have been created with regard to its intended and unintended consequences. It has been alleged, for instance, that the project has been conceived as part of China's hegemonic designs and is therefore a threat to Pakistan's independent identity and sovereignty. Parallels continue to be drawn to large investments in other regions that created dependencies. *Its detractors have compared CPEC to East India Company and continue to warn that it can harm the socio-economic fabric of the country. In June 2018, Economic Times, an Indian tabloid, reported that a Netherland-based think tank had criticized CPEC is an unfair deal that will make Pakistan a Chinese colony.* However, the allegations appear to be baseless. As a whole the project holds great potential for both Pakistan and China. It is up to Pakistani leadership to use it to the benefit of the country and its people.

Belt & Road Initiative, Editorial, Dawn, 29 April¹¹

⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1474661/currency-crackdown>

¹⁰ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/382086/the-cpec-trick-or-treat/>

¹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1479041/belt-road-initiative>

China now seeks to become a global player through its Belt and Road Initiative – an economic superhighway linking continents and cultures with China at the heart of the project. And as interest from a growing number of countries has shown, the BRI could play a key role in shaping the socioeconomic and sociopolitical future of Eurasia and beyond. The fact that 37 heads of state and government – including Prime Minister Imran Khan – attended the just concluded second Belt and Road Forum in Beijing proves that a growing number of states are seeking to jump on the BRI bandwagon and grab a slice of the pie. *However, while the BRI may hold immense potential for the regional, and indeed the global, economy, the projects under its umbrella must be transparent, and the benefits mutual to both China and the partner countries.* There have been accusations of Beijing practising ‘debt-trap diplomacy’ by ‘drowning’ partner states in debt. In Pakistan’s case, there has also been criticism that the benefits of CPEC are not trickling down to all parts of the country.

SECURITY SITUATION

Unpacking deradicalisation, Arifa Noor, Dawn, 09 April¹²

There has been criticism of this idea of integration, instead of punishment, as it is argued that militants should be punished for crimes, instead of being facilitated into society. But while this has its merits, punishment cannot be the only solution. At the moment, the problem in Pakistan is the absence of details available about the government’s deradicalisation plans. If the deradicalisation programmes in other Muslim countries are to provide any hints of what the stakeholders in Pakistan may be considering, then such projects tend to focus on inmates or convicted criminals. Raising these questions is not about questioning the government’s sincerity. Instead, it is to highlight the absence of a debate on the various aspects of a policy before it is given final shape and implemented. *Indeed, the government needs to hold a more open dialogue on the issue, which the opposition must also engage in, if the state is serious about putting an end to the militancy that plagues Pakistan and consequently also endangers its place in the international community.*

Banning militant groups, Editorial, Dawn, 15 April¹³

¹² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1474885/unpacking-deradicalisation>

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1475867/islamic-state-says-it-was-behind-quettas-hazarganji-market-bombing>

Loopholes in the law, and the apathy of the state, have allowed notorious hatemongers to become elected representatives of the people; in fact, both dictators and democrats have pandered to these elements for votes and support at different times. However, if Pakistan is to take effective and long-lasting action against jihadi, sectarian and other types of militants, stronger steps are needed to prevent the militant infrastructure from flourishing. But what has been happening so far is that outfits are proscribed on paper, yet they play a strange cat-and-mouse game with the state, merely changing names, while leaders of supposedly banned groups freely travel the country (and abroad at times) and keep spewing hate. If an organisation is banned, then its leaders and cadres must not be allowed to operate freely, its fundraising abilities need to be neutralized, while its organizational capabilities also need to be checked.

The roots of extremism, I.A. Rehman, Dawn, 18 April¹⁴

Women constitute the largest single group of people in Pakistan that are victims of extremists' violence. *Non-Muslim women and girls suffer greater violence than their Muslim counterparts, and those still identified by the state as the scheduled castes suffer much more than upper caste Hindus and other non-Muslim groups.* The Hazara Shias are mowed down for their beliefs. Many hate preachers openly instigate murder. The Ahmadis continue to be victims of target killing. The anti-minorities knights are not content with instituting cases under the blasphemy law; they try to exterminate their quarry in police custody or in the street. *Anyone acquitted of blasphemy charges cannot find a safe place to live in the country. And there is no doubt that the killing of non-Muslims in prayer houses and Muslims in mosques and schools is done in the name of religion.* As regards extremist violence in the name of religion, the state has been inviting censure for acts of both omission and commission. On the one hand, it has done practically nothing to save the people from what is described as wrong interpretation of their faith and, on the other hand, it continues to associate with the religious elements that openly denounce democracy, human rights and pluralism.

Security concerns, Editorial, Dawn, 24 April¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1476874/the-roots-of-extremism>

¹⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1478086/security-concerns>

Mr Khan on the occasion acknowledged that militants have indeed used Pakistan's soil in the past to carry out attacks in Iran, adding that his government would ban such outfits, including the Jaishul Adl and the Lashkar-i-Khorasan. Granted there are wider geopolitical issues involved, but his stance has publicly referenced the most immediate impediment to improved ties between Pakistan and Iran – the accusations on both sides that each country harbours militants who launch cross-border attacks against the other. However, by conceding that non-state actors based in Pakistan have staged cross-border violence in Iran, Pakistan has shown the way for others to acknowledge that similar violence within its own territory is not entirely homegrown. As the joint statement at the conclusion of the visit indicates, an improvement in ties could herald many trade and business opportunities, not to mention reinvigorate the long-pending Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline. This is the right time for the country's chief executive, clearly on the same page as the military leadership, to articulate a more realistic position vis-à-vis extremist outfits. *After all, law-enforcement agencies carried out an unprecedentedly sweeping crackdown only last month against Pakistan-based militant groups including those often named as being involved in cross-border attacks.*

PROVINCES & REGION

Balochistan

Hazaras and NAP, Editorial, Daily Times, 15 April¹⁶

The Hazara community's sit-in continues, and promises have been made by government officials, giving guarantees that the community will be given all manner of state protection and security. But how did things reach this impasse anyway? After all, even as some modicum of safety and security has returned to other parts of the country, the same cannot be said for Balochistan. The Hazara community has been badly hit in particular. Today there is hardly any Hazara household in Quetta that has not been hit by tragedy. Perhaps the answer lies in one of the demands being made by the Hazara's at their sit-in, and that is full implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP). First established in January 2019, neither the previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government nor the current Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

¹⁶ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/376826/hazaras-and-nap/>

government has been able to implement the plan in its entirety. *Despite reiterating numerous times that the PTI government would implement NAP across the board and no terrorists or terrorist organisations would be given space to operate in Pakistan, the truth is the government has not been able to live up to its word.*

Understanding the Hazara genocide, Makhdoom Shahab-ud-Din, *Daily Times*, 18 April¹⁷

One of the factors in the attacks may be racial discrimination. The community, not aboriginal, has been mostly aloof and can be easily told apart from other ethnic groups in their neighbourhood. There have been complaints of similar discrimination, even hostility in other parts of the country. *However, the case of the Hazara community is extreme in terms of the violence unleashed against them and in terms of the consistency with which such violence has gone on.* Some terrorists groups have been claiming responsibility for some of the attacks against the Hazara people. These militant groups appear to be trying to cause fear, alienation, hatred and anarchy. It has been argued that the anarchists want this to lead to changes in the political situation. However, it does not look like the violence is transforming the political landscape in a way it might help the extremists. *In countries like Pakistan where politics in some of the areas is dominated by tribal leaders they form the ultimate ruling elite. Democides are likely to happen on account of cross pressures and the associated political culture.* Places like Balochistan can become more and more lawless as result of such violence. *This may end up creating a situation where local politicians do not care about the minorities and cater only to the needs and interests of their client electorate.*

Hazara Genocide – A Sad story of fear and terror for lives, Edi, Ajmal Meer Mehdi, *Daily Times*, 25 April¹⁸

Every Hazara household has a story of agony and pain to express, one which it recalls each and every day. It has greatly exaggerated their life style and life standard. It has been witnessed that they themselves have become antagonistic in response to the violence imposed upon them. The turnout of Hazara children in schools is worryingly low. As schools and academia is almost absent in areas of Hazara community at Baluchistan. *Human rights watch has claimed that Sectarian violence is a long-lasting problem in Pakistan; attacks against ordinary Hazara have augmented melodramatically in contemporary decades.* Human rights watch has claimed that Sectarian violence is a long-lasting problem in Pakistan;

¹⁷ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/377903/understanding-the-hazara-genocide/>

¹⁸ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/381930/hazara-genocide-a-sad-story-of-fear-and-terror-for-lives/>

attacks against ordinary Hazara have augmented melodramatically in contemporary decades. The murder series of Hazara genocide is started since many decades, this community faces the brutal murders, killings and slaughters of their beloved ones since many years. A shocking fact is that there is no any proper arrangement of basic lively hood or basic infrastructure for this community which includes schools, hospitals etc. Hazara community is always observed with demand of “let us leave alive only”. They have never placed a sit-in for the demand of basic rights which are compulsory for a state to provide but they are always seemed bust to protest for securing their lives from target killings and ethnic massacre.

URDU & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Electronic

Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Geo News, 01 April¹⁹

Recently there was a showdown between PTI'S Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Veteran Jahangir Tareen over the issue of the latter's participation in a cabinet meeting of the government. Hamid Mir on the show Capital talk discusses this issue with his guests including politicians and lawyers. Hamid Mir opens the discussion by reminding the audience that Jahangir Tareen was disqualified by the Supreme Court and hence bared from taking any official assignment till the case is proved otherwise. Ali Ahmad Qurd, lawyer by profession informs that Mr Tareen was disqualified under 621F and was proved that he is not *Sadiq* and *Amin*. He underlines that cabinet is a very powerful structure and the PM Imran Khan should have taken precautions and could have avoided the situation by not inviting Jahangir Tareen. While on the other hand Nadeem Afzal Chan, translator to PM is of the view that this was an internal matter of the PTI and it should not have come out in the media. He believes that the issue was always there but till now it was resolved internally but this time it has gone out of hand by landing in the media. Murtaza Wahab, of the information department Sindh argues that there are two aspects of the issue, one legal and one disciplinary. Legally he says the PM can invite any one to the meetings but as a corrective thing he could have avoided doing so.

Aapas ki baat, Geo TV, 10 April²⁰

¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X30NXEywdy8>

²⁰ <https://www.geo.tv/shows/apas-ki-baat/233783-aapas-ki-baat-10-april-2019>

Anchor Muneeb Farooq started with mentioning the IMF report which says that growth rate of Pakistan's economy will be low in coming years. *Muneeb asked is it because this and other challenges that Prime Minister Imran Khan has opened new cases against the Sharif family?* He said that it was also being mentioned that only highpoint for Imran Khan Government was the India-Pakistan crisis time. The government is accused of keeping the tension high to divert attention from the challenges that it faces. Sheikh Rasheed has warned about a collective protest after the Eid. Rasheed said that corrupt would be behind the bars by the end of June. *Muneeb asked is the government playing up threat from India to divert attention from the challenges it confronts, advisor of Imran Khan Usman Dar said that the government has been saying from the first day that the economy was in crisis and it would require at least 2-3 years to stabilize.* Dar said that economy was run on ad hoc bases and has no foundation. On Imran Khan's statement that open all corrupt cases against the opposition, Usman Dar said it was meant to look into who are the people responsible for corruption. *Talal Chaudhry of PML-N said that the PTI was lying on everything on every day. They have become devilish.* The government has control on nothing. *Palwasha Khan of PPP viewed that if the NAB was in charge of accountability, why would Imran Khan said that open cases against the Sharif family and Zardari. And the Prime Minister has time to say that when the country has no medicine for poor and inflation is all time high, she wondered.*

Urdu

Consideration to give Gen. Bajwa second term starts, Report, Ummat, 01 April

²¹

Despite the fact that the current army Chief has still eight months to retire, debates over the next army chief have started. Whether Gen. Bajwa will seek extension or not? *Two weeks back, a journalist asked this question to Prime Minister Imran Khan, on which the Prime Minister said that it was too early to say something about the issue.* He has not thought about giving extension to Gen. Bajwa as yet. Prior to that Gen. Bajwa had said in a press conference that he did not want extension. ... Despite the fact that Gen. Bajwa has said he does not want extension, debate is going on in media whether he will get it or not. According to a source, it is too early to say something on the matter. *However, the source said that the idea whether the services of an army should be extended for four years, is under consideration. This debate has been going on for some time now, like when Gen. (R) Raheel Sharif were retiring or*

²¹ <http://ummat.net/2019/04/01/news.php?p=story1.gif>

when Gen. Pervez Kiyani was retiring. ... According to the source, there are three proposals for making the services of an army chief for four years. One, the current army chief will be given one year's extension. Since Gen. Bajwa has said that he does not want it, the idea does not have much prospects. Second, the term for the army chef should be made for four years. This will increase one year in the current army chief's term and does not require extension. However, it will require change in the form of a parliament act. Third, which is thought over more seriously, is the idea to re-structure the post of the army chief in four years. The first two years he will be the Chief of Army Staff and for next two years he will be a powerful Chairman Joint Chief of Staff. Presently, though the Chairman Joint Chief Staff Committee controls all nuclear set up but it acts just as a coordinator between the three armed wings. It has limited powers. ... It is difficult to say who will be next army chief, according to the source. Five three star senior generals are retiring in April. After their retirement, the senior most general will be Lt. Gen. Bilal Akbar who is the Chief of Staff, CGS. He has served at all important positions in the army. Therefore, he is qualified to be the next army chief.

Sardar Jahangir Tareen v. Sardar Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Saleem Safi, Jang, 03 April²²

Internal party structure of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is to a great extent similar to Baluchistan's sardar-system. In the Sardar system, the British had divided Baluchistan society into four categories: at the top were *nawab*, second *sardar*, third were many *mirs* and at the fourth were many small people/groups. *In PTI we can say that Imran Khan is nawab. There are two sardars under him, Sardar Jehangir Tareen and Sardar Sheh Mehmood Qureshi. Asad Umar, Shireen Mazari, Aleem Khan, Chaudhry Sarwar and Azam Swati are mirs.* While people like Pervez Khattak, Asad Qaiser, Sarwar Khan, Ali Muhammad Khan, Khusro Bakhtiar, Murad Saeed, Imran Ismail, Aijaz Chaudhry and Zartaj Gula are at the bottom. *Now the situation is Sardar Shah Mehmood Qureshi has won the political battle because of his shrewdness. Because of disqualification by the court, Jahangir is out of the battle.* But Imran Khan is close to Jahangir. Reason for that is Shah Mehmood Qureshi cannot spend money because he is minister. He is waiting rather when he gets something. Jahangir is artful in spending money. He makes money fast and spends it with the same speed. *And it is a fact that the nawab sahib likes to stay around such people. Jahangir works hard. That is why most of the mirs are with him. Only three mirs, Asad Umar, Shireen Mazari and Chaudhry Sarwar are with Shah Mehmood Qureshi. Asad Umar has a crucial and interesting role. Asad Umar is against both the sardars and wants to be himself a sardar. But because the sardars are working cleverly, Asad with the help from*

²² https://e.jang.com.pk/04-03-2019/lahore/pic.asp?picname=06_004.png

Shireen Mazari and Shafaqat Mehmood wants to kick out Jahangir Tareen first. The quality of Mir Asad is that he knows how to promote himself and has capability to flatter the *nawab* sahib. There is category of *mirs* which have direct access to the *nawab* and it includes Asad Umar, Shireen Mazari and Shafaqat Mehmood. This gives an edge to Shah Mehmood Qureshi faction. ... Like in Baluchistan, many foreign companies and national companies and people have invested in the election of *nawab* sahib and these actors also have a role. Because of these, Jahangir Tareen's side gets an edge because he was the means to bring them in. However, most to the contacts with foreign countries, America in particular were made possible by Shah Mehmood Qureshi. This makes it a tough battle between the two.

Something is cloaked, Nusrat Javeed, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 09 April²³

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi held a press conference in Multan and warned people in Pakistan and the international community that Pakistan has solid proof about India's possible attack on Pakistan from 16 April to 20 April. It is obvious that Pakistani would give a befitting reply to such an action. In such a situation there is a possibility of war in the region which might not come under control once sparked. *The significance of the dates is that these are the times for general elections in India. First phase of polling is on 11 April. Second phase is on 18 April when voting in 97 constituencies will take place. Keeping these two phases in mind, there is a possibility of Pulwama kind of false flag attack.* The Foreign Minister has facility of modern technology apart from information from the ground. Qureshi tried to pressurize the US to take notice of the Pakistan's apprehensions. *If the US cross checks these apprehensions and did not find them correct, Islamabad would cut a sorry figure and Qureshi is aware about that. I think that Qureshi has given it a serious thought and only then he went to public.* However, the divided, ignorant and full of hatred nation of Pakistan does not understand all this. Many allege on social media that Qureshi has made the statement to divert attention from the challenges that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led government is facing. Qureshi's press conference needs to be taken seriously. However, the opposition has some points to make. If the reports were true and strong, then why did not the foreign minister inform the opposition and took it in consideration? ... *It is also possible that when the information came to Qureshi and he informed the P5 countries, the US and France did not take him seriously and then he organized the press conference. It is also strange the Indian media ignored the press conference. It was not covered and given no significance..*

²³ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-04-09/page-2/detail-4>

A meeting with Army Chief, Maulana Muhammad Hanif Jalandhri, Daily Khabrain, 11 April²⁴

On 1st April the Army Chief met with religious leaders of different groups and madrassas in Pakistan. *It was a historical meeting. During the meeting many issues were discussed: banned groups and religious madrassas.* Army Chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa said, while expressing his views that he is aware about the role of religious madrassas in the country. The meeting was thus a coming together of the protectors of the borders of Pakistan and the protectors of ideology of Pakistan. It will have deep and significant implications in future. *The main take away of the meeting was the extremism and religious sectarianism have to be eliminated. Bajwa said he knows the religious madrassas and they need to be separated from jihadi groups. He does not religious madrassas to be weakened.* But he wants them to be updated and serve the country. Their curriculum needs to be cleared from extremist elements. I expressed my opinion by saying that religious madrassas need to be separated from jihadi groups. No religious madrassas in the five provinces is involved in spreading terrorism. If there is any evidence, first actions will be taken by the authorities of the religious madrassas. ... *I said that religious madrassas needs to be kept separate from Jihadi groups. However, the banned groups have two types: One that fight against the state and other that fight for the state. Everyone knows what the reason for their creation were and who was responsible. However, if there is change in the policy vis-à-vis these groups, three points need to be kept in mind. First, there should be equality and no discrimination against any group; second, no innocent should be punished; and third, a policy should be adopted for the members of the banned groups that would allow them to enter in the mainstream.* ... We also met the Prime Minister Imran Khan and the President of Pakistan later. ... These meetings are welcome step and hopefully help in adopting better policy. We pray that situation in the country improves!

New wave of terrorism in Balochistan, Assadullah Galib, Nawa-i-Waqt, 16 April²⁵

²⁴ <http://epaper.dailykhabrain.com.pk/popup.php?newssrc=issues/2019-04-11/83481/04.jpg>

²⁵ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-04-16/page-3/detail-20>

Twenty people were killed in a fruit-mandi in Quetta, Balochistan in a blast. To satisfy ourselves, we said that the Hazaras were targeted in the blast. We are the same people who hailed Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern when she said that attack on Muslims in the country was a terrorist attack on people of New Zealand. *Our Foreign Minister said on the Quetta tragedy that we would not blame anyone for the blast because sectarian forces may be behind the attack. It might have been carried out by external forces but since elections are going on in India, we do not want to create a new issue.* Foreign affairs department is very sensitive and needs caution when dealing with it. Same goes with the domestic politics. *We arrested Kulbhushan Jadhav with fake passport. He was in Pakistan to train terrorists and destabilize the country and sabotage the CPEC. But still he is treated as a guest. Ehsanullah Ehsanullah who used to kill our soldiers and play with their heads is treated well. We captured Indian pilot Abhinandan but handed over him to New Delhi as good will gesture.* Now we say that there might be some external force behind the Quetta blast. ... Once Gen. Pervez Musharraf had said that Pakistan has technology that can find Baloch militants and target them. He killed Akbar Bugti by using it. But since then the technology has just vanished. There is perception the Baloch extremists need to be brought in the mainstream so that they can live a happy life. *But this opportunity is not given to Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad or Jamat-ud-Dawa. Before adopting any soft policy on Balochistan it should be kept in mind that CPEC moves through the province and it is important for country's development. We cannot close our eyes here and do a deal. ... It is wrong perception that Balochistan is deprived of facilities.* People from the province are in the Senate, National Assembly, they are governor and chief minister of the province and they can become prime minister of Pakistan. ... If these leaders do not work for the province, what can Pakistan do in that? Gwadar will make the province well developed. *I do not think the Baloch do terrorism for themselves. Our neighbor wants to destabilize the province.* We need to be watchful. The attack on Hazaras is an attack on Pakistan.

Muslim countries can help each other by forming a block, Editorial, Nawa-i-Waqt, 24 April²⁶

²⁶ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-04-24/page-10/detail-0>

Pakistan and Iran have agreed to not let each other's land to be used against the other. *They have agreed to create a Joint Rapid Force for protecting the border. Prime Minister Imran Khan said that both the countries will further strengthen bilateral relations and no third country will be allowed to influence Tehran-Islamabad relations.* Imran said that Iran was ready to meet gas and oil requirement of Pakistan. In that front, steps have been taken to construct pipeline on the Pakistani border. ... While referring to recent terrorist attack in Baluchistan, Imran said that such attacks do affect the relations. His purpose of visiting Iran was to talk about terrorism so that it can be controlled. *Imran, unprecedentedly, said that Pakistani land has been used by terrorists to carry out attacks in Iran. He said that we will not let our land to be used against Iran. Similarly Iran should not allow terrorists to use its land against Pakistan.* President Hasan Rouhani said that Turkey, Iran and Pakistan share good relations which need to be developed further. Both the countries agreed to further develop and strengthen economic and defense relations. They have good economic cooperation. Iran had invited New Delhi to be part of gas pipeline. But because of its ill-intentions, New Delhi refused. Then Iran preferred Pakistan. But even Pakistan backtracked under the US pressure. It is also a fact that Pakistan has good relations with Saudi Arabia. Riyadh and Tehran are strong opponents. But Islamabad has maintained balance between two and has not led either to affects its relations with the other.... *Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had made some controversial statement about the 2008 Mumbai attack and he was targeted for that by all. Even by Imran Khan. While Imran Khan said in Tehran while addressing a joint press conference that Pakistan's land has been used for terrorism in Iran.* Executives should act responsibly when visiting foreign countries. Imran Khan's visit to Iran will improve the relations between the two countries and they will fight terrorism together. May be they may help in forming an Islamic block.

Fly, mosquito, and crocodile and tax-net, Hassan Nisar, Jang, 25 April²⁷

In Punjab an increase in Professional License fees and Professional taxes has been approved. *Also, all small businessmen have been included in tax-net. The increase will come in force from 1st July 2019.* The decision is well accepted. If you cannot influence bigwigs, small fishes are the target. It is not to taunt. Everyone will have to do something to improve economic situation as a river is made by drops of water. *Then the question is whether to target wolf or sheep and chicken. The latter seem an easy target.* It is unfortunate to see some

²⁷ https://e.jang.com.pk/pic.asp?npic=04-25-2019/Lahore/images/02_00.png

intellectuals making fun of the decision and saying that selling poor and poverty is a trade. *It is true that even the income of small businessmen is more than many white-collar jobs people. What is line for taxable money? Bakery seller, hotelier and kabab seller will fall in tax net. If one wants to check s/he should just see the rise in the process from a mandi to wholesale shops.* Similarly the rise in price from shim-kabab to shorma is noticeable. ... The kabab-seller is not a shop but a small industry. We do not need to confuse their outlook with their income. Bringing them in tax-net is never wrong. We make all issues matter of pride, then why not the issue of national debt? The decision of the Punjab government is appreciated. But it is also expected that a policy will be brought for bigwigs as well.

Has Pakistan been involved in terrorism-part-I, Assdullah Ghalib, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 25 April²⁸

It is strange that the United Nations (UN) has not praised terrorism as yet. *The Government of Pakistan has not only praised but accepted that in past its territory was used for terrorism against its neighbours.* Imran Khan gave the statement during a visit to Iran. Though he said that Iran's territory has been used against Pakistan but no Iranian leader said that. That means Pakistan accepted the use of terrorism against its neighbours unilaterally. *Imran had said at the GHQ that he was against such war. Prior to that he also said that all demands of Pashtun Tehfuz Movement (PTM) were genuine and same what he has been talking about.* I want to highlight the role of Pakistan on terrorism. Not only Imran but also Bilawal Bhutto also has his opinion about such groups. *Bilawal did not ask any senior member of his party or any member of his family that whether the son of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's son Murtaza Bhutto's group Al-Zulfikar was a terrorist group or not? He did not read history to find out that the first person who allowed an Afghan Jihadi, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar asylum in Pakistan was his grandfather Zulfikar Bhutto.* Bhutto's disciple Zia expanded it. Because Pakistan thought that the Soviets were trying to reach to the warm waters and they could have been able to fight them, they used guerrilla warfare. And America was part of this whole activity and had no issue to Pakistan's land being used against Afghanistan. *In 1947, Ali Muhammad Jinnah asked his supreme commander of the army to liberate Kashmir but he refused. Pakistan was left with no option but to use militias to expel Indian forces from Kashmir. The part of Kashmir that is free today is because of this policy.* Otherwise Indian borders would have been with the GT road. Similarly, in the 1960s Gen. Ayub Khan was advised by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto if Pakistan sends its commando in Kashmir India would not expand the war to the Pakistan's borders. It was because of this advice that Islamabad started the

²⁸ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2019-04-25/page-5/detail-1>

operation Gibraltar. ... Those who consider ours terrorism please tell what was the US nuclear bombing on Japan in 1945? What was the US's long war in Vietnam or interference in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Iraq or Libya?

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Mohmand ²⁹	09/04/2019	Polio worker gunned down in Pakistan trying to persuade family to vaccinate children	01	00
Karak ³⁰	14/04/2019	Child killed, four others injured as hand grenade goes off in Karak	01	04
Peshawar ³¹	15/04/2019	1 policeman martyred, 1 terrorist killed in intelligence-based operation in Peshawar	02	00
Balochistan				
Quetta ³²	12/04/2019	20 killed, 48 injured in attack targeting Hazara community in Quetta	20	48

²⁹<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/04/09/polio-worker-gunned-pakistan-trying-persuade-families-vaccinate/>

³⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1950492/1-child-killed-four-others-injured-hand-grenade-goes-off-karak/>

³¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1476301>

³²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1475621/20-killed-48-injured-in-attack-targeting-hazara-community-in-quetta>

Chaman ³³	12/04/2019	Two killed, 10 injured in Chaman blast targeting FC vehicle: police	02	10
Quetta ³⁴	18/04/2019	14 offloaded from passenger bus, shot dead on Makran Coastal Highway	14	00

³³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1475667>

³⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1476893/14-offloaded-from-passenger-bus-shot-dead-on-makran-coastal-highway>