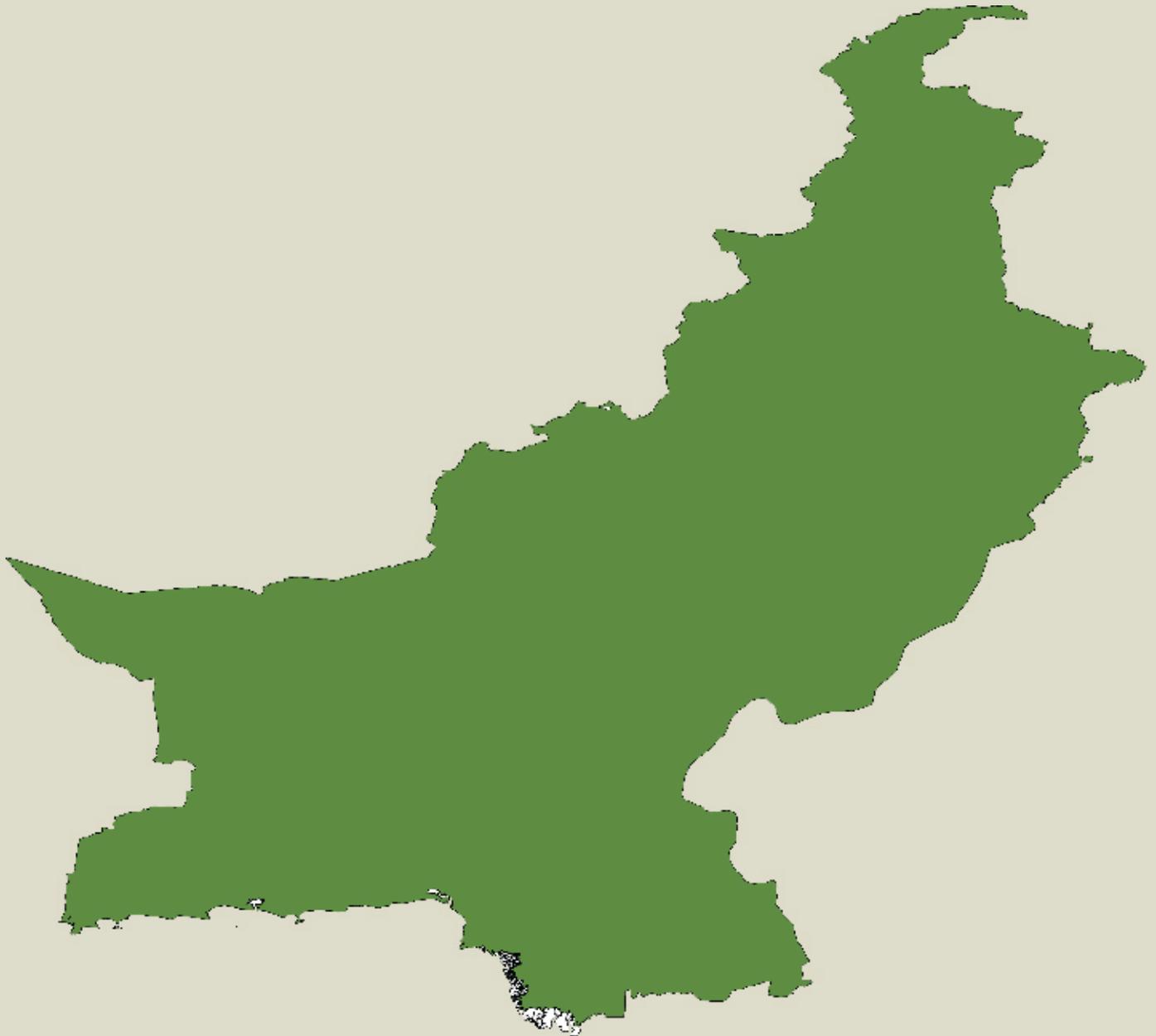


February 2014

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



*Prepared by
YaqoobulHassan
and Shreyas Deshmukh
(Interns, Pakistan Project, IDSA)*

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
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ABBRIATIONS

ASE: Arabian Sea Enterprise
ATF: Anti-Terrorist Force
BRP: Baloch Republican Party
BSA: Bilateral Security Agreement
CSDS: Center of the Study of Developing Science
DANIDA: Danish International Development Agency
EAD: Economic Affairs Division
ECNEC: Executive Committee of the National Economic Council
EIB: European Investment Bank
FBR: Federal Board of Revenue
FICCI: Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
FISME: Federation of Indian micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
FPCCI: Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GHQ: General Head Quarters
IDB: Islamic Development Bank
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ISPR: Inter-Services Public Relations
JI: Jamaat-i-Islaami
JSMM: Jeay Sindh MuttahidaMahaz
KP: Khyber Pakhthunkhwa
MQM: MuttahidaQaumi Movement
MWM: Majalis-i-Wahadat-Muslimeen
NAB: National Accountability Bureau
NDMA: Non Discriminatory Market Access
NISP: National Internal Security Policy
NSA: National Security Adviser
PAJCCI: Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industries
PC: Privatisation Commission
PILDATE: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency
PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PPP: Pakistan People's Party
PR: Pakistan Railways
PSM: Pakistan Steel Mills
PSW: Participatory Welfare Services
PTI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
SAFTA: South Asian Free Trade Agreement
SBP: State Bank of Pakistan
TTP: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
VBMP: Voice for Baloch Missing Persons

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

PROVINCIAL POLITICS

MQM Expresses outrage against extra-judicial killing of its workers. *Dawn*, February 13¹

MQM has announced to observe a day of mourning against the extra-judicial killings of its workers on February 8. This was announced by MQM leader Haider Abbas Rizvi while addressing a press conference at Nine Zero (90) on February 7. Rizvi appealed to traders and transporters to shut their business that day.² The MQM chief Altaf Hussain demanded the release of MQM workers arrested or illegally detained by different agencies. He called on the president, prime minister, army chief, DG ISI Zaheer-ul-Islam, interior minister Nisar Ali Khan and Sindh's chief minister to work together on the issue.

Crisis between Balochistan Ruling Party and PML-N, *Express Tribune*, February 11³

Legislators representing PML-N in Balochistan are likely to map out their future course of action during a meeting in Karachi on February 10 in the wake of the province's deepening political crisis. The party's Balochistan chapter has been threatening to part ways with the ruling National Party (NP) in protest against a host of issues, including meddling by Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch in ministries and departments run by PML-N ministers and advisers.

No rift in coalition says Baloch chief minister, *Dawn*, February 14⁴

Chief Minister Balochistan Dr Abdul Malik Baloch on 13 February said there was no rift among the members of the coalition government. Addressing a ceremony and later speaking to media representatives, Dr Malik said a conducive environment was being created to hold talks with disgruntled Baloch in order to amicably resolve the issue of Balochistan. He said

¹Enforced disappearance: Hundreds of MQM workers illegally detained, says Altaf, February 13, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/671124/enforced-disappearance-hundreds-of-mqm-workers-illegally-detained-says-alfat/>

²MQM observes day of mourning Saturday against extra-judicial killing of workers, The News, February 7 <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-137006-MQM-observes-day-of-mourning-Saturday-against-extra-judicial-killing-of-workers>

³<http://tribune.com.pk/story/669729/crisis-in-balochistan-pml-n-provincial-legislators-to-map-out-plan-in-karachi-today/>

⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086786/no-rift-in-coalition-govt-cm-balochistan>

difference of opinion was the beauty of democracy and dispelled the impression that there was any rift among the coalition partners in Balochistan. *"Holding talks with the disgruntled Baloch and resolution of the province's issue was not as easy as it was being deemed,"* the chief minister said, adding that an environment acceptable to all stakeholders was being created to settle the long-pending multi-pronged issue.

Education hit by Conflict in Balochistan, *Express Tribune*, February 12⁵

The continuous turmoil in Baluchistan has taken the lot of education sector. The Inter-provincial education ministers' (IPEM) meeting on February 11 turned out to be a forum for Balochistan to give vent to the issues they are facing. *"About 5,000 schools are shelterless and single-teacher schools,"* said Balochistan Education Minister Jan Mohammad Buledi. *"Not a single PhD or a competent officer is available to review the textbooks or carry out monitoring and evaluation hence we are compelled to teach Punjab [text] books."* The meeting was attended by provincial education ministers as well as secretaries, besides Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal and State Minister for Education Balighur Rehman.

Dissent within PTI, *Express Tribune*, February 13⁶

Hundreds of supporters of PTI's Swat chapter protested in Khawaza Khela against the possible induction of a former ANP provincial leader in the party, and awarding him with a ticket for PK-86. Led by district PTI General Secretary Mohammad Zeb Khan, former PTI candidate from PK-86, and local office bearers, protesters took out a rally carrying banners inscribed with slogans against the party's provincial leadership.

KP divided into 3,493 councils, *Dawn*, February 27⁷

The KP government has completed the delimitation process by dividing the province into 3,493 village and neighbourhood councils as the government intends to hold local government polls by the end of April, according to sources. Under the KP Local Government Act, 2013, creation of village and neighbourhood councils is mandatory for the local bodies' elections. Sources said that the province was divided into 2,989 village and 504 neighbourhood

⁵Education woes: Balochistan dominates ministerial meeting, *Express Tribune*, February 12 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/670490/education-woes-balochistan-dominates-ministerial-meeting/>

⁶Internal dissent: No room for former ANP member, *Express Tribune*, February 13 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/670968/internal-dissent-no-room-for-former-anp-member/>

⁷KP divided into 3,493 councils as delimitation completes, *Dawn*, February 27 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1089802/kp-divided-into-3493-councils-as-delimitation-completes>

councils. The village councils are created in the rural areas while neighbourhood councils consist of urban areas.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Sharif risks straining ties with military, US report, Dawn, February 2⁸

Nawaz Sharif may strain his relations with the new army chief if he continues to expand his policy-making powers, warns a US intelligence report. The report, presented before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on January 29, notes that *“His push for an increased role in foreign policy and national security will probably test his relationship with the new Chief of Army Staff, particularly if the Army believes that the civilian government’s position impinges on Army interests”*.

Thousands of Bugtis waiting to return home, Dawn, February 3⁹

Thousands of IDPs, women and children among them, who had migrated to Sindh and Punjab because of a military operation in DeraBugti nine years ago, are waiting at Dolichekpost and Kashmore for the government permission to return home. Having started their journey back home on Jan 17, they were stopped at Kashmore the next day. Security officials said they could move ahead only after getting themselves registered.

US adds Malik Ishaq's name to most wanted global terrorist list, Dawn, February 7¹⁰

A statement issued by the US State Department stated on February 6, *“The Department of State has designated Malik Ishaq as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224”*..

Pakistan's problems could have been avoided with better policies in past: Nawaz, Express Tribune, February 8¹¹

Speaking at the 37th Export Awards ceremony in Lahore, Nawaz said that if better policies had been made in the past by Musharraf and Zardari.

⁸<http://www.dawn.com/news/1084027/sharif-risks-straining-ties-with-military-warns-us-intelligence-report>

⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1084537/thousands-of-bugtis-waiting-to-return-home>

¹⁰<http://www.dawn.com/news/1085321/us-adds-malik-ishaqs-name-to-most-wanted-global-terrorist-list>

¹¹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/669186/pakistans-problems-could-have-been-avoided-with-better-policies-in-past-nawaz/>

US debating strike against its citizen in Pakistan, *Express Tribune*, February 11¹²

The Obama administration is considering authorizing the CIA or the military to kill an American citizen hiding in Pakistan who allegedly has helped Al Qaeda militants plan attacks against US troops in neighboring Afghanistan and is actively plotting future attacks, officials said on February 10. Several Americans have been linked to Al Qaeda in the tribal areas of Pakistan. They include Adam Gadahn, a spokesman for Al Qaeda who was born in Oregon and grew up in Santa Ana. He is seen as a propagandist, rather than an operational figure, and is under federal indictment in California. The others are Abu Ibrahim Amriki and Sayfullah al-Amriki, both of whom were reportedly on the CIA target list in 2010. Jude Kenan Mohammad, yet another American was killed in late 2011 in the tribal areas.

US opposes independent Balochistan, *Dawn*, February 13¹³

The US has made it clear that it does not support the idea of an independent Balochistan and respects Pakistan's territorial integrity. The question of the alleged US involvement was raised at the State Department briefing on February 11. Later the same, the State Department issued a statement, making it clear that *"the United States respects the territorial integrity of Pakistan. It is not the policy of the administration to support independence for Balochistan."*

Senate passes resolution to protect women rights in TTP talks, *Dawn*, February 14¹⁴

Pakistani Senate, the upper house of the Parliament on February 12 unanimously passed a resolution calling upon the government to not compromise the rights of women and minorities in the negotiations with Taliban. The resolution was moved by MQM Senator Nasreen Jalil. She also urged the government to constitute a commission for protection of women to resist illegal orders of jirgas.

Army should seize power if necessary: Altaf, *Dawn*, February 26¹⁵

MQM leader Altaf Hussain has asked the army to seize power if the government does not support it in the fight against Taliban. *"I will request the army chief and the prime minister to be on the same page on dealing with terrorists...If the elected government does not join hands with the army against terrorists then, I would suggest, the military should step forward and assume*

¹²<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-137402-US-debating-strike-against-its-citizen-in-Pakistan>

¹³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086620/us-opposes-independent-balochistan>

¹⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086569/senate-passes-resolution-to-protect-women-rights-in-ttp-talks>

¹⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1089488/country-more-important-than-democracy-altaf>

power," he said in a TV interview broadcast on 25 February. He said he did not care if people said that he was preferring dictatorship to democracy. "For us, the country is more important than democracy." He said that Pakistan and Taliban could not coexist. "It is un-Islamic to support Taliban."

Barelvi groups form alliance against Taliban, Dawn, February 27¹⁶

Forming a sort of anti-Taliban alliance, at least 50 groups belonging to the Barelvi school of thought have demanded that the government must declare extremists as well as their supporters, whether political or religious, as enemies of the state and traitors. The demand was made at a multi-party conference held under the banner of Tahaffuz Namoos-i-Risalat Mahaz on 25 February. MQM leader Abdul Haseeb, Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen leader Nasir Abbas Sherazi and a PML-Q delegation participated on special invitation.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Army Chief leaves for Saudi Arabia on official tour, The News, February 5¹⁷

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel has left for Saudi Arabia on a three-day official tour on February 5. Inter services public relation (ISPR) said that the Pak Army Chief during his three-day official visit would meet Saudi Arabia's senior government officials and military leaderships. This visit would go a long way in promoting bilateral ties and further strengthening the defence cooperation between the two brotherly countries, sources said.

Army Chief reiterates Pakistan's support to Saudi Arabia, Daily Times, February 6¹⁸

Army Chief General Raheel Sharif on February 5 reiterated Pakistan's support to Saudi Arabia, on the first day of his official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The COAS called on Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and was conferred upon King Abdul Aziz Medal of Excellence by the crown prince. General Sharif expressed his happiness to visit the kingdom and meet with the crown prince. The COAS held separate meetings with KSA Deputy Interior Minister Abdul Rahman bin Ali Al Rubaian, Chief of General Staff Royal Saudi Armed Forces General Hussain Bin Abdullah Al Qubayyal and Commander Royal Saudi Land Forces Lieutenant General Eid Bin Awadh Al Shalwi.

¹⁶<http://www.dawn.com/news/1089726/barelvi-groups-form-alliance-against-taliban>

¹⁷<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-136727-Army-Chief-leaves-for-Saudi-Arabia-on-official-tour>

¹⁸<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/06-Feb-2014/coas-reiterates-pakistan-s-support-to-saudi-arabia>

Pak-Saudi military drill on the cards, *The Nation*, February⁸¹⁹

Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif is said to have discussed with the Saudi authorities the generalities of a joint military exercise that may take place this year, during his maiden official visit to Saudi Arabia. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's joint military exercise SAMSAM-IV was last held in September-October 2011 whereas the joint naval exercise was held in January last year. "The selection of name, time and place for the military exercise is under consideration. As of now, both sides have agreed to conduct combined military manoeuvres in the ongoing year," said an intelligence insider requesting not to be named. He said the army chief discussed the issue during his meetings with the Saudi Armed Forces chief General Hussain Bin Abdullah Al Qubayyal and Saudi army chief Lieutenant General Eid Bin Awadh Al Shalwi on February 5.

Saudi-Pak defence ties discussed, *Express Tribune*, February⁹²⁰

Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif on February 8 called on Deputy Defence Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Salman Bin Sultan al Saud, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a communique. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and enhanced bilateral defence cooperation came under discussion. Earlier, COAS also performed Umrah and prayed for the peace, progress, and prosperity of Pakistan. During the meetings, matters related to defence cooperation and regional stability were discussed.

Army maintains its silence on peace process with Taliban, *Dawn*, February¹¹²¹

The corps commanders' meeting on February 10 was held against the backdrop of the government-initiated peace process with Taliban militants. All eyes have been...on the army because it virtually enjoys veto over most of the steps proposed by the TTP leadership for "improving the atmospheric", which largely seek more space for the militants in their territory – North Waziristan. It is an open secret that the army had not been comfortable with the structure of the talks but has been extra cautious not to publicly air its misgivings. The army is, moreover, in no mood to give the impression that it is challenging the civilian leaders' lead role in the process.

¹⁹<http://www.nation.com.pk/editors-picks/08-Feb-2014/pak-saudi-military-drill-on-the-cards>

²⁰<http://tribune.com.pk/story/669403/saudi-pak-defence-ties-discussed/>

²¹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086243/army-maintains-its-considered-silence>

Army chief, CJCS meets US CENTCOM chief, *The News*, February 19²²

COAS General Raheel Sharif and CJCS General Rashad Mahmood held meetings with General Llyod J Austin, Commander of the United States Central Command on February 19. During the meeting issues pertaining to US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the region were discussed.

Nuclear program occupies central place in national defence: COAS, *The News*, February 21²³

COAS General Raheel Sharif reiterated that Pakistan's nuclear programme occupied a central place in the defence of the country. During his visit to HQ of Army Strategic Force Command here, he was given detailed briefing by Lieutenant General Obaidullah, Commander Army Strategic Force Command on operational and security matters, according to an ISPR press release.

Army chief says military fully capable to counter threats, *Dawn*, February 24²⁴

Brushing aside the impression about capability of Pakistan's armed forces in countering terrorism and militancy, Army Chief General Raheel Sharif said the military was fully capable to protect integrity and sovereignty of the country. *"Let there be no doubt that Pakistan's armed forces are battle hardened and fully capable to counter any internal or external threat posed to the integrity and sovereignty of our beloved country,"* he said while interacting with the troops at FC headquarters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Army chief reiterates all threats to country will be defeated, *Dawn*, February 27²⁵

Pakistan's army chief General Raheel Sharif on February 26 reiterated the resolve of the armed forces of protecting integrity and sovereignty of the country and vowed to accomplish their mission of countering all threats faced by it. During his visit to Kotri Ranges to witness Field Firing and Battle Inoculation Exercise of Karachi Corps, he said in unequivocal terms that with the backing of the nation, they would accomplish their *"mission of defeating every threat to the motherland in accordance with the expectation of the people."*

²²[http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-138367-COAS,-CJCS-meets-US-Centcom-chief-](http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-138367-COAS,-CJCS-meets-US-Centcom-chief)

²³<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-138619-Pakistans-nuclear-program-occupies-central-place-in-national-defence:-COAS>

²⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1088558/army-chief-says-military-fully-capable-to-counter-threats>

²⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1089627/army-chief-reiterates-all-threats-to-country-will-be-defeated>

Chinese defence minister meets PM, Naval chief, *Dawn*, February 28²⁶

The Chinese Defence Minister Chang Wanquan, on February 28, held meetings with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Asif Sandila. The prime minister expressed his continuation of support for the one China policy and said that friendship with China was a significant element of our foreign policy. Moreover, Mr. Wanquan also assured of continuation of China's cooperation with Pakistan in the field of military and defence. Earlier during the day, the Chinese defence minister met with Admiral Asif Sandila and agreed on further enhancing defence cooperation.

OPINIONS AND EDITORIALS

Talks in Balochistan, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, February 7²⁷

Talking with the militants seems to be the only option, especially when we consider the fact that they have fairly deep roots amongst the people. A look back at history also reminds us that successive military operations in Balochistan, carried out since the 1950s, have only ended up making things much worse by contributing to the building up of anger and perceptions of injustice. Given this backdrop, it is important to proceed cautiously and with wisdom. The trust of the Baloch insurgents needs to be won if any progress is to be made. They have been alienated for a very long time and the persons selected to negotiate with them will need to win them over a step at a time.

Time tested Sino-Pak relations, S M Hali, *Daily Times*, February 11²⁸

The all-weather strategic partnership between Pakistan and China is sometimes viewed with envy and, at times, petty jealousy by some regional as well as international powers. [...] China has been unequivocal in its support of Pakistan's stand on Kashmir and the related UN resolutions on the subject. Both countries have complete unity of thought regarding each other's strategic thinking and policy framework. Wise leaders on both sides have framed superlatives to describe Sino-Pak relations but the depth and strength of the ties are beyond words since they are a manifestation of the feelings of two nations and not just their governments or leaders. [...] The US and other western powers, being economic rivals of China, are trying to create suspicions between China and Pakistan, who are planning to undertake mega economic projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) connecting the Pakistani port of Gwadar with Kashgar in Xinjiang region of China, construction of dams for Pakistan, which has been badly hit by the

²⁶<http://www.dawn.com/news/1090091/chinese-defence-minister-meets-pm-naval-chief>

²⁷<http://tribune.com.pk/story/668423/talks-in-balochistan/>

²⁸<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/11-Feb-2014/time-tested-sino-pak-relations>

energy deficit, and Chinese investment in the Pakistani textile, energy, banking, commerce, telecommunications and industry sectors, and numerous other development projects.

Aren't you exaggerating now, Azam Khalil, *The Nation*, February 14²⁹

The entire leadership of MQM has levelled serious charges on the Karachi police after the recent events involving MQM cadres. Amongst the charges is that the Karachi police collects Rs 22 crore per month and the targeted operation being carried out against criminal elements had a bias against one ethnic group. [...] MQM Chief Mr Altaf Hussain has appealed the Chief of army staff and the ISI Chief to — what he calls — play their role for national security. He has also appealed to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to take notice of what he calls extra judicial killings involving MQM workers. ...In a veiled threat he said that if the government failed to swiftly respond to the genuine demands of the MQM it will not be possible for him to control the emotions of his party workers and an ugly situation could easily erupt in Karachi. The government of Mr Nawaz Sharif already has its plate full with issues ranging from unemployment, rising prices and poor law and order situation.

Under the guise of religion, *The Nation*, February 15³⁰

A three-member bench of the SC, headed by Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani, is currently hearing a case regarding the hardships faced by the minorities living in Pakistan. One of the issues that have been highlighted by the representatives of the Hindu and Christian communities is the abduction, forcible conversion, and forced marriages of women. We're all familiar with several cases where a girl is abducted, converted to Islam against her will, forced into a marriage, and forever condemned to a life of subjugation and mistreatment. Very few cases manage to make headlines. Even fewer reach the courts, and those that never result in justice for the affected party. There are also cases where married women were abducted, forcibly converted and remarried. Now, one would think that what about her previous marriage? Well, if she goes to the court seeking justice, she would be asked whether her 'new marriage' has been consummated. If so, she is convicted of Zina under Sharia law, and sent to prison.

Bilawal's courage, Editorial, *Daily Times*, February 17³¹

[...] Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the young and emerging patron-in-chief of the PPP has shaken up the somnolent polity by launching and satisfactorily

²⁹<http://www.nation.com.pk/columns/14-Feb-2014/aren-t-you-exaggerating-now>

³⁰<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/15-Feb-2014/under-the-guise-of-religion>

³¹<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/17-Feb-2014/bilawal-s-courage>

seeing through the Sindh Festival to raise awareness and love for Sindh and Pakistan's ancient culture and Sufi bent, quibbling about the Festival's credibility vis-à-vis that culture notwithstanding. It needs to be understood that culture and the country's Sufi traditions are the direct antithesis of what the Taliban stand for.

ANP divided, "Birth of a party:", Editorial, *The News*, February 21³²

[...] After the debacle of Awami National Party's in the May 2013 general election, a new faction of that party has been launched. The announcement by Begum NasimWali Khan regarding the establishment of the ANP-Wali brings to a head her tussle with her stepson, AsfandyarWali, which had in fact brewed on and off for years. But more than family matters and Begum Wali Khan's feeling that she had been pushed away from a party she had led at some of its most difficult times, including after the ban placed on the group then known as the National Awami Party in the 1970s, with Wali Khan himself jailed, it is ideological concerns that will perhaps be of key significance.

"LG polls nowhere in sight", Editorial, *The Nation*, February 21³³

The prevalent politics of vested interests and pettiness has come in the way of yet another constitutional duty. 8 months after coming to power, provincial governments of Punjab, Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa have failed to conduct Local Government (LG) polls. Often criticized as the most incompetent and dysfunctional province, Balochistan remains the only one to have completed the exercise, and it has done it rather well. Elsewhere, it's the same old story: self-proclaimed guardians of democracy unwilling to follow constitutional obligations, and purposefully politicizing issues to delay further.

Kalash tribe needs protection, "Vulnerable communities", Editorial, *Dawn*, February 22³⁴

At its own peril does the state take lightly the threat that has been issued to the Kalash people and the Ismaili community in Chitral. The TTP has, in a video that surfaced recently, said that these people will face armed attacks unless they "convert to Islam". The Kalash are well known within and beyond this country because, over the decades, governments have projected their existence as proof of a multicultural, inclusive Pakistan. Yet on Thursday, KP's advocate-general shrugged off the threat as "more of an external than internal matter". The fact is that while TTP militants may move

³²<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-234074-Birth-of-a-party>

³³<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/21-Feb-2014/lg-polls-nowhere-in-sight>

³⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1088622/vulnerable-communities>

between Pakistan and Afghanistan with ease, they still constitute Pakistan's own problem and a formidable internal threat.

Bilawal's position on Taliban favoured, "Bringing back our narrative", Yasser Latif Hamdani, *Daily times*, February 24³⁵

Bilawal Bhutto's closing speech at the Sindh Festival in Thatta struck a note of defiance against the Taliban. The young PPP leader was also very clear in his narrative: Pakistan is ours, the Taliban and other self-styled the kedars of religion are no one to dictate to us how we should practice Islam and that the people who wish to impose their twisted and narrow interpretations of religion on us are the same people who had rallied against the founding father of this country, calling him Kafir-e-Azam and Pakistan.

Pakistani position on Syria should not be changed at Saudi behest, "Not again", Editorial, *Daily times*, February 25³⁶

[...] Without needing to take sides in an internal Syrian matter, a policy of non-intervention and diplomatic silence was the most prudent and responsible approach. Saudi involvement has changed that, with a visit by COAS General Raheel Sharif to Riyadh, and a return visit by the Saudi Crown Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz, culminating in the Pakistani government recently calling for Assad to step down and create a council for a transition to a democratic Syria. This is a worrying development for people who believe Pakistan should not involve itself in the internal politics of countries in turmoil. [...] Saudi Arabia is trying to convince Pakistan to sell it Pakistani-manufactured anti-aircraft missiles, known as Anza, and anti-tank rockets, to arm the Syrian rebels. [...] As far as anyone can see, the benefits are few maybe cheaper oil or financial assistance. The costs are vast Arab resentment at Pakistani involvement, Iranian anger at our taking sides, and global outrage at support for terrorist groups.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

FISCAL ISSUES

Ishaq Dar satisfied with economic growth, *The News*, February 10³⁷

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has said that Pakistan's economic growth was encouraging and that tax collection had risen 26pc in January. Addressing a

³⁵<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/24-Feb-2014/bringing-back-our-narrative>

³⁶<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/25-Feb-2014/not-again>

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1087981/ties-with-saudi-arabia>

³⁷<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-137201-Ishaq-Dar-satisfied-with-economic-growth->

press conference here on February 9, Ishaq Dar said the IMF was fully satisfied with the performance of Pakistan. Dar further said energy crisis persists in the country and that the load shedding was being carried out as per schedule. He said load shedding issues would improve with change in weather.

TRADE

Trade gap widens 19% on weak export growth, *Express Tribune*, February 13³⁸

Pakistan's trade deficit widened by almost a fifth to \$2.1 billion in January over a year ago, as the country recorded a sluggish export growth of less than 2% while imports grew about 10%, according to the national data agency. The trade deficit – gap between imports and exports of goods – in January was higher by 19.3% or \$336 million against the same month of previous year, showed the trade summary released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Wednesday. During the month, imports were \$4.2 billion, up 10% or \$374 million than purchases made in the corresponding month of previous year. Exports grew only 1.9% to \$2.1 billion.

ENERGY

Circular debt resurfaces: Provinces run up Rs500b power debt, *Express Tribune*, February 1³⁹

The Water and Power Ministry on January 31, informed the National Assembly that around Rs500 billion is outstanding against various organisations and provincial governments, which is the main reason for a ballooning circular debt. In a written reply to a question posed by MNA Shehryar Afridi, the ministry said the circular debt built mainly due to lack of funds to pay off the liabilities of power generation companies.

NAB stopped from chasing down electricity bill defaulters, *Express Tribune*, February 3⁴⁰

A move to enlist the corruption watchdog's help to recover electricity bills from top defaulters has backfired after some dignitaries were found involved in power theft. Subsequently, the government and power utilities have stripped the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) of its recovery powers. The Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) through a notification has withdrawn bill recovery powers from the NAB. Earlier, the water and power

³⁸<http://tribune.com.pk/story/671027/trade-gap-widens-19-on-weak-export-growth/>

³⁹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/666138/circular-debt-resurfaces-provinces-run-up-rs500b-power-debt/>

⁴⁰<http://tribune.com.pk/story/666835/sidelined-nab-stopped-from-chasing-down-electricity-bill-defaulters/>

ministry and some power utility companies had also barred NAB from recovery

IP pipeline: Govt cannot undertake project as sanctions loom, *Express Tribune*, February 5⁴¹

Pakistan has formally conveyed to Iran that *the gas pipeline project could not be pushed ahead because of the threat of US sanctions* and sought an extension in the project deadline in a last-ditch attempt to avoid penalty. However, it has received no immediate assurances. According to sources, the government does not want to shelve the project and want to wait for normalisation of relations between Iran and the US in the wake of a deal between Tehran and global powers over the former's nuclear programme. This could clear the way for pressing on with the gas pipeline.

Energy sector: Audit of debt under way on IMF's request, *Express Tribune*, February 8⁴²

A parliamentary panel was informed on February 7 that the government was conducting an audit of the stock of payables and receivables in the energy sector following a demand from the IMF. The Senate Standing Committee on Water and Power met here with Senator Zahid Khan in the chair. He was not happy with the explanation given by the officials and remarked that people were being robbed through levy of charges like fuel adjustment surcharge. The Ministry of Water and Power admitted that the power sector subsidy had gone up to Rs180 billion.

Pakistan hopes to sign cut-price gas deal with Qatar, *The News*, February 10⁴³

Pakistan will send officials to Qatar this month aiming to sign a LNG deal at a discount to help alleviate its power supply crisis, a Pakistani official said. There have been widespread public protests in Pakistan recent years over frequent power cuts due partly to a lack of fuel. Islamabad had hoped to address the problem with natural gas piped overland from Iran but that project remains stalled by U.S. sanctions against Tehran. It is now looking to much more expensive LNG to alleviate its power problems.

ADB to lend \$900m for power generation, *Express Tribune*, February 13⁴⁴

In the wake of immense power shortage, ADB has granted a loan of \$900 m to Pakistan for the generation of Electricity through Jamshoro Power project. The loan deal was signed on February 13 at the Prime Minister's Secretariat

⁴¹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/667682/ip-pipeline-govt-cannot-undertake-project-as-sanctions-loom/>

⁴²<http://tribune.com.pk/story/668952/energy-sectoraudit-of-debt-under-way-on-imfs-request/>

⁴³

⁴⁴<http://tribune.com.pk/story/670787/adb-to-lend-900m-for-power-generation/>

house between Economic Affairs Division Secretary Nargis Sethi and ADB country Director Werner Liepach in the presence of Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar thanked ADB for vigorous support to address power issue. He assured that Pakistan is committed to muster all its efforts to reduce power shortages. With the assistance of Jamshoro power generation project two new super-critical coal-fired power generation units will be constructed with a capacity of 600 Mega Watts (MW) each and will be executed by GENCO Holding Company Limited and implemented by Jamshoro Power Company Limited in Sindh.

EIB signs €100 million agreement with Pakistan, *Express Tribune*, February 18⁴⁵

The European Investment Bank (EIB) on February 17 signed an agreement to provide €100 million (Rs14.4 billion) loan for the 128MW Keyal Khwar hydropower project, helping the government achieve financial closure for a project that remained on paper even 10 years after its approval. Due to the delay, the project cost has already escalated five times to €240 million or Rs34.5 billion. In 2004, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council – the country's highest project sanctioning body – had approved the project at an estimated cost of Rs7.1 billion. The loan agreement was signed by Nargis Sethi, Secretary EAD, and Magdalena Alvarez Arza, Vice President of the EIB. Ambassador of the EU to Pakistan, Lars-Gunnar Wigemark, was also present on the occasion.

Solution to energy crisis: Pakistan sets sights on coal, *Express Tribune*, February 19⁴⁶

Regarded as the dirtiest of all fossil fuels, recent discoveries of untapped coal fields in the south of Pakistan have convinced the government they could be on the cusp of a solution to their energy woes. The government has also green-lighted the construction of a pilot 660 megawatt coal-fired plant in Gadani, a small, serene town on the Arabian Sea known as the country's ship-breaking hub. A 600 megawatt plant has also been given the go-ahead in the city of Jamshoro. The construction of these plants is one plank in an ambitious plan to convert many of the country's existing oil-based thermal plants and upgrade its ports as they begin swapping one black gold for another.

⁴⁵<http://tribune.com.pk/story/672982/energy-projects-eib-signs-e100-million-agreement-with-pakistan/>

⁴⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/673600/solution-to-energy-crisis-pakistan-sets-sights-on-coal/>

Pakistan signs CASA-1000 agreement to import electricity, *The News*, February 19⁴⁷

Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have signed an agreement named Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project or CASA-1000 which will enable Islamabad to import electricity to meet its energy needs. Federal Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif represented Pakistan in the meeting. Under the agreement Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will provide 700 megawatt electricity to Pakistan via Afghanistan.

Iran says it expects to complete gas pipeline, *The Nation*, February 27⁴⁸

Iran's oil ministry said on 26 February that Pakistan is contractually obliged to complete a major pipeline project which would allow Tehran to export gas to its southeastern neighbour. The warning came a day after Pakistan's oil minister, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, said work on the pipeline was not possible because of sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union on Tehran over its controversial nuclear drive. "Iran has carried out its commitments ... and expects the Pakistani side to honour its own," the deputy oil minister, Ali Majedi, said in a statement seen by AFP. "They should even pick up the pace of work and make up for falling behind schedule" in constructing Pakistan's 780-kilometre side of the pipeline, he said.

IMF LOAN

Foreign assistance: Govt receives only 26% of projected funds in first half, *Express Tribune*, February 7⁴⁹

Pakistan remains in fire fighting mode despite availing a \$6.7 billion loan from the IMF, as the country received about \$1.5 billion or one-fourth of the projected annual foreign funding in the first half of the current fiscal year, underscoring grave challenges for the government in balancing its books. Receipts for the July to December period of fiscal year 2013-14 stood at \$1.5 billion or just 26% of the annual estimate of \$5.8 billion, according to documents released by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD). Out of the \$1.5 billion, a sum of \$273 million was received in grants, while the remaining was in the form of loans.

⁴⁷<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-138324-Pakistan-signs-CASA-1000-agreement-to-import-electricity->

⁴⁸<http://www.nation.com.pk/national/27-Feb-2014/pakistan-obliged-to-complete-gas-pipeline-iran>

⁴⁹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/668622/foreign-assistance-govt-receives-only-26-of-projected-funds-in-first-half/>

INVESTMENT

FDI: Movenpick to invest \$30m in Pakistan, *Express Tribune*, February⁷⁵⁰

Undeterred by lawlessness, crime and terrorism in the city, Mövenpick Hotels and Resorts is going to invest up to \$30 million in the next few years to renovate its Karachi property. The 407-room building located in the city's pricey business district was known as Sheraton Hotel as recently as January 1. But Arabian Sea Enterprises (ASE), a Kuwait-based company that owns the building, decided not to renew its contract with Starwood Hotel and Resorts Worldwide, which is an American firm that manages Sheraton hotels globally. Subsequently, ASE signed a deal with Mövenpick Hotels and Resorts, an international hotel chain based in Switzerland, which is set to spend well over Rs3.1 billion in the next few years to renovate the structure.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Privatisation tsar embarks on quest to revive economy, *The Express Tribune*, February³⁵¹

Mohammad Zubair was on a cruise dinner with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Thailand when he was offered the hardest job of his life: privatising a huge chunk of the economy while fighting resistance from the opposition and trade unions. When the prime minister left the table, a colleague of former IBM executive Zubair rushed to his side. "Are you mad? Three privatisation ministers have gone to jail and most have corruption cases hanging over their heads... Don't take this job", he said.

NAB unearths Rs1.22bn corruption in PSM, PR, *Dawn*, February⁷⁵²

The NAB has found corruption cases of over Rs1.22 billion in PSM and PR. At a meeting held here on February 6, the NAB's executive board approved four new references involving Rs831 million worth of corruption in the PSM and Rs396m in the PR. The meeting also decided to initiate investigation into the police's weapons purchase case in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PM seeks provinces' support for privatisation, *Dawn*, February¹¹⁵³

The government received on February 10 approval from the four chief ministers to go ahead with privatisation of the power sector. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif chaired the 25th meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) which was attended by the chief ministers of all the provinces. The meeting commenced with Inter-Provincial Coordination Secretary

⁵⁰<http://tribune.com.pk/story/668617/fdi-movenpick-to-invest-30m-in-pakistan/>

⁵¹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/666894/privatisation-tsar-embarks-on-quest-to-revive-economy/>

⁵²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1085407/nab-unearths-rs122bn-corruption-in-psm-pr>

⁵³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086213/pm-seeks-provinces-support-for-privatisation>

EjazChaudhry presenting its agenda. The highlight of the CCI huddle was to continue with the policy of privatisation in the power sector initiated in 2011.

MCB to acquire Islamic Burj Bank, *TheExpress Tribune*, February13⁵⁴

MCB Bank said on Wednesday it intends to acquire Burj Bank, one of the five Islamic banks operating in the country. Subject to the SBP and other regulatory approvals, the most profitable conventional bank of Pakistan aims to acquire 55% shareholding in Burj Bank, according to a notice sent to the KSE. "MCB Bank has reached an understanding with majority shareholders of Burj Bank to invest in new and existing shares along with additional investment by Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector, the private-sector investment arm of the IDB," it said.

Pakistan to become CERN associate member by June, *Dawn*, February14⁵⁵

Pakistan will get the associate membership of CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, by June this year which will be beneficial for industrial sector, human resource development and technology transfer in key areas of radiofrequency technology. Head of CERN delegation Dr Sergio Bertolucci said this while addressing a press conference here on February14 along with Chairman PAEC Dr AnsarParvez.

Development projects: Japan offers \$328,619 to three NGOs, *Express Tribune*, February14⁵⁶

Japan has decided to extend financial support of \$328,619 to three Pakistani NGOs. Three agreements were signed between Hiroshi Inomata, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, and the representatives of the three organisations. OF these three, ASTAFADA would be given \$116,444, \$102,745 to Participatory Welfare Services (PWS) and \$109,430 to Sahara for Life Trust (SFLT). The grant to ASTAFADA will be used for the installation of a fresh water distribution system in three villages of Muzaffarabad (Azad Jammu and Kashmir), the grant to PWS will be utilised for the construction of a primary school in District Layyah (Punjab), whereas the grant to SFLT will be used for installing life-saving medical equipment at the SughraShafi Medical Complex in District Narowal (Punjab).

⁵⁴<http://tribune.com.pk/story/671024/islamic-banking-mcb-sets-sights-on-burj-bank/>

⁵⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086814/pakistan-to-become-cern-associate-member-by-june>

⁵⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/671449/development-projects-japan-offers-328619-to-three-ngos/>

OPINIONS AND EDITORIALS

What economic progress?, *Dawn*, February 11⁵⁷

It is time for the Nawaz Sharif government to celebrate. The International Monetary Fund has again voted in favour of its economic policies, ensuring the release next month of the third tranche of the \$6.7bn Extended Fund Facility. The IMF, on the conclusion of the second review under the EFF programme, is “encouraged” by the overall progress made by Islamabad in pushing ahead with policies to strengthen macroeconomic stability and reviving economic growth. It has revised its growth estimate for the present fiscal from 2.8pc to 3.1pc on the back of reduced electricity shortages and unscheduled power cuts. It has happily noted that Islamabad has met nearly every quantitative performance benchmark and its reform programme remains broadly on track. The IMF is pleased with progress made to cut the power subsidy bill and raise tax revenues to bridge the budget deficit from 8pc to 3.5pc. The privatisation agenda remains on track, even if the government has yet to put up a company for sale

Penny wise, pound foolish, *The Express Tribune*, February 15⁵⁸

...How much does Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal think a 4,600-megawatt hydroelectric power dam costs? Leaving aside the seemingly poor arithmetic skills of officials at the water and power ministry, Mr Iqbal refused to approve a necessary project like the Dasu Dam because he believes that it can be completed for cheaper. While accountability for the use of public funds is important, losing sight of the larger strategic picture is a far costlier blunder..... The water and power minister is estimating that the project to build the Dasu Dam will cost around Rs735 billion, or about \$6.9 billion. In other words, the installation cost of the hydroelectric power generation capacity at Dasu comes to about \$1.5 million per megawatt, which is very cheap by both global and local standards. For the sake of comparison, a run-of-the-river dam set up by Hub Power Company in Punjab cost about \$2.5 million a megawatt of installed capacity. Indeed, if anything, we believe the water and power ministry’s estimates are still too low...

LNG imports, Maha Kamal, *Dawn*, February 16⁵⁹

[...] Pakistan cannot bury its head in the Arabian sand and deny the changes in the global gas market. Putting all its eggs in the Qatar LNG basket is

⁵⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1086197/what-economic-progress>

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/669896/the-economy-beyond-the-numbers/>

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/11-Feb-2014/imf-and-the-reality>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-231823-All-that-glitters>

⁵⁸<http://tribune.com.pk/story/671790/penny-wise-pound-foolish/>

⁵⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1087279/lng-imports>

neither astute nor rational. When it comes to international price negotiations, we have a terrible record and a lack of transparency, a trend that must be changed. Firstly, if Pakistan is unswerving on LNG, it must seriously renegotiate the price. [...] Secondly, it is imperative for Pakistan to include a price review clause, especially when international gas prices are nose-diving at the biggest natural gas hub. [...] Thirdly, instead of just focusing on its LNG and pipeline contracts, Pakistan must foster a self-sustainable natural gas sector by unlocking shale gas, to generate employment, and heal an ailing domestic natural gas sector.

The tax-dodging hundred, *The News*, February 17⁶⁰

If there is one thing that unites all our parliamentarians across the party divide it is distaste for paying taxes. We have always known that lawmakers either refuse to file tax returns or significantly underreport their income. Now there is proof to back up that assertion. The FBR released, for the first time, a tax directory of parliamentarians and the details are far from shocking given our suspicions. Over 100 members of parliament didn't file any returns at all, a crime that is punishable by a fine. Another 449 paid less than a thousand rupees in income taxes, and it can safely be said that all of them are dodging taxes. Now that their misdeeds have been made public it will be up to the authorities to take further action.

The second review, Dr Ashfaq H Khan, *The News*, February 18⁶¹

The statement issued by the IMF after the conclusion of the review has surprised all those who have an interest in Pakistan's economy. Since this review was held in Dubai, the mission did not get the opportunity to meet various stakeholders. They viewed the economy of Pakistan through the data provided to them by the Pakistani authorities and as such have erred on the judgement. Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have declined to \$2.8 billion from \$5.1 billion when the programme was signed. Pakistan's external account position, instead of improving, has in fact worsened since then. Giving a certificate of good health has really badly damaged the credibility of the IMF and its staff as well as confirmed the views of those who have termed the present programme as 'self-serving programme' or 'defensive lending'.

⁶⁰<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-233095-The-tax-dodging-hundred>

<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/17-Feb-2014/naming-and-shaming>

⁶¹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-233377-The-second-review>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-232014-The-illusionists>

Trading the Pakistani farmer, *The Nation*, February 22⁶²

On one hand, FICCI and FPCCI do aspire to nurturing the normalization of trade relations while also promoting Indo-Pak economic growth. And they have a solid reason for this goal: Bilateral trade between both countries has witnessed an increase in growth from \$250 million in 2003 to \$2.6 billion in 2013, which is an annual growth rate of 25 per cent in the last 10 years. On the other hand, there is that disadvantage against Pakistani farmers who remain, for the most part, neglected by their government. Indian farmers receive subsidies from the government to the tune of \$50 billion while agrarian workers in Pakistan barely make ends meet. Agriculture in India is heavily protected through tariff, non-tariff and technical barriers.

Sino-Pak engagement favours China, "With or without", *The News*, February 23⁶³

Whether the \$20 billion agreement signed between Pakistan and China, mostly involving power generation projects, is a blessing or a curse will only be known once the fine print is made public. When talk of the agreement first cropped up a couple of months ago, the Chinese were saying that they would only invest in mega power projects like Bhasha Dam and Lakhra coal plants if Chinese companies were given complete control over the projects without being subjected to a competitive bidding process. With the agreement now signed, it looks like that is exactly what has happened. If indeed that is the case, the agreement would appear to be in violation of Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules although the government had earlier insisted that it found a loophole. There is every possibility that the Chinese will end up greatly profiting in these ventures at our expense. ...We may be hungry for Chinese investment but that is no reason to hand over every project to them without scrutinising how much they are worth. The government appears to have made a political calculation rather than an economic one and decided that maintaining Pakistan's alliance with China is worth losing some money over.

Network error, *The Nation*, February 23⁶⁴

Ishaq Dar has reiterated the government's commitment to follow through on auctioning 3G and 4G licenses to telecommunication companies, but has delayed it by another month. [...] The reasons for the delay are unclear since the auction will take away the burden of investing in technology for the government and will shift it to companies that buy the licenses. [...] The

⁶²<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/22-Feb-2014/trading-the-pakistani-farmer>

⁶³<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-234359-With-or-without>

⁶⁴<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/23-Feb-2014/network-error>

incentive of earning \$1.5 billion from the auction alone should be enough for the government, but including this figure into the budget is of no use until the licenses are sold.

Dam that river, *The Nation*, February 24⁶⁵

With the resurrection of the heated debate of Kalabagh dam in the National Assembly, the issue of water scarcity has been politicised once more and sidelined because of various interests of the parliamentarians and their respective parties. The representatives of the public have made a fuss over Kalabagh whenever water issues are brought up, and this time was no different. Accusations were hurled to and fro in the assembly, amid shouting matches and veiled threats.

The Bhasha dam is now being seen as a less-controversial alternative, with no care for the added issues that will be caused as a result of its construction. The Bhasha dam, once constructed, will flood areas that are currently home to over 35000 people. In addition to this, at least 100 kilometers of the Karakoram Highway will have to be rerouted because parts of it will be submerged. Tens of thousands of old rock carvings will vanish, a great blow to the area's historical remains. The massive price tag of \$ 8.5 billion is also a concern, and the help of the US is being sought to make funds available. Seismic activity in the region is also a risk that needs to be taken into account.

Rebuilding Pakistan's economy, Ishaq Dar, *The Express Tribune*, February 24⁶⁶

After eight months of the present government, and at a time when the second review of the IMF is completed, it is important to look back on what have we achieved over this period and see whether the economic course charted out by the PML-N has produced results.

Trade with Afghanistan, *Dawn*, February 25⁶⁷

Afghanistan's improving trade ties with Iran and India have begun to show, while the State Bank [of Pakistan] depicts a 15pc decline in Pakistan's trade with Afghanistan during the first quarter of the current fiscal year. The volume of trade witnessed a slight drop during the last fiscal too. Against this backdrop, the recent pledge made by the finance ministers of Pakistan and Afghanistan during the Joint Economic Cooperation meeting in Kabul has raised hopes of improved bilateral trade volume. The completion of

⁶⁵<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/24-Feb-2014/dam-that-river>

⁶⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/675634/rebuilding-pakistans-economy/>

<http://www.nation.com.pk/columns/12-Feb-2014/they-re-selling-our-country>

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1088420/taking-stock-of-the-economy>

<http://www.nation.com.pk/columns/25-Feb-2014/revitalizing-the-economy>

⁶⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1089299/trade-with-afghanistan>

dualisation of the 75km Torkham-Jalalabad road, work on which was inaugurated during the JEC meeting, will also go a long way in boosting commercial ties. The long-awaited project to connect the railways of the two countries should help improve infrastructure to support the increase in trade as well.

Avoid death wish, Dr Kamal Monnoo, *The Nation*, February 26⁶⁸

From what is being claimed by the Finance Minister, the economy is on the mend and recent indicators, especially the GDP's growth rate and investment, are seemingly positive. Now the critics may turn around and say that the present up-swing in investment is despite poor economic management and has more to do with the following twin factors: investors don't stay idle for long and reserves ultimately get converted into spending,. Still, the fact remains that Mr. Dar's claims on the revival of growth and investment (to an extent) hold true.

Pipe dream after all, *Dawn*, February 26⁶⁹

[...] Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources ShahidKhaqanAbbasi, has told lawmakers that the multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline project is off the table because "international sanctions against Iran are a serious issue". He reportedly said: "in the absence of sanctions the project can be completed within three years but the government cannot take it any further at the moment." [...] This changed official stance on the import of gas from Iran through a pipeline to overcome energy shortages in the country also does not match a previous Foreign Office view. The Foreign Office has on several occasions declared that the sanctions on Iran do not cover the gas pipeline.

SECURITY SITUATION

TERRORISM

⁶⁸<http://www.nation.com.pk/columns/26-Feb-2014/avoid-death-wish>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-234933-What-reforms-mean>

⁶⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1089582/pipe-dream-after-all>

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND FATA

TTP's Denial of Peshawar Blast, *The News*, February 5⁷⁰

The banned TTP has condemned the blast at the Peshawar's QissaKhawani Bazaar that killed at least eight people. TTP spokesman ShahidullahShahid while speaking to media from an undisclosed location said that the blast was aimed at sabotaging proposed peace talks between the government and the militant organization. He said that the Taliban had nothing to do with the Peshawar blast

However, Imran Khan who is being accused of Taliban sympathiser has come with the statement that if the Taliban refuse to announce an unconditional ceasefire. The announcement came at a peace procession organised by the students' wing of the party on February 23.⁷¹

BALUCHISTAN

Sufi poet's shrine set put ablaze, *Dawn*, February 10⁷²,

The shrine of a popular Sufi poet of Balochistan, Mast Twakali, has been set on fire. The shrine, located in Mawand area of Kohlu district, is visited by thousands of devotees each day and there are a good number of followers of the poet across the subcontinent. Sources in the Levies Force said that some people entered the shrine in the early hours on February 9 and set it on fire. Soon people of the area gathered at the shrine and tried to extinguish the flames. They brought the fire under control after hectic efforts.

Pipelines blown up *The Express Tribune*, February 10⁷³

Miscreants from Balochistan blew up three gas pipelines near Rahim Yar Khan, cutting supplies to Punjab, an official from the SNGPL said on February 10. Ayub Bajwa, the emergency manager on duty for SNGPL in Islamabad said that "This the first time they have blown all three simultaneously... They used to just blow up one here or there." The pipelines are large – 24, 18 and 16 inches in diameter. It will take at least two days to repair

⁷⁰Pakistani Taliban condemn Peshawar blast, *The News*, February 5 <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-136677-Pakistani-Taliban-condemn-Peshawar-blast->

⁷¹PTI ready to back army action, *Dawn*, February 24 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1089061/pti-ready-to-back-army-action>

⁷²Sufi poet's shrine set on fire in Kohlu, *Dawn*, February 10 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1085977/sufi-poets-shrine-set-on-fire-in-kohlu>

⁷³BRA insurgents blow up three gas pipelines near Rahim Yar Khan, *Express Tribune*, February 10 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/669777/bra-insurgents-blow-up-three-gas-pipelines-near-rahim-yar-khan/>

them, Bajwa said. Spokesperson for the banned BRA Sarbaz Baloch said his group had blown up the pipelines near Rahim Yar Khan, about 600 km south of Islamabad.

Balochistan rulers are grave-diggers, *Express Tribune*, February 26⁷⁴

Commenting on deteriorating situation in Balochistan, National Party-Mengal President Sardar Akhtar Mengal expressed grave concerns over the security situation in Balochistan as he called the province a 'graveyard'. *"Balochistan has become a graveyard as the situation has gone from bad to worst over the past few years. There are grave diggers and mourners as far as I can see. I do not see a single happy person in my province,"* Mengal said in a statement. *"I view the rulers in the province as grave diggers...they are not interested in political issues of the province. They are busy in digging more graves,"* the former chief minister added.

Iran threatens to send forces inside Pakistan to rescue its border guards, *Express Tribune*, February 18⁷⁵

Iran said on February 17 that it would send forces into Pakistan to free five border guards believed to have been kidnapped by militants if Islamabad did not take measures to secure their release. According to Iranian media reports, the guards were seized on Feb 6 in the Iranian province of Sistan-Baluchistan by militants who allegedly took them across the border to Pakistan. *"If Pakistan doesn't take the needed steps to fight against the terrorist groups, we will send our forces onto Pakistani soil. We will not wait for this country,"* Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli was quoted as telling the semi-official Mehr news agency. An Iranian insurgent group calling itself Jaish al Adl had claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, according to a Twitter account purporting to belong to the group. The account's authenticity could not be immediately verified.

Iran border guards fire mortar shells, *Express Tribune*, February 28⁷⁶

Iranian border guards again fired mortar shells into Balochistan on 26 February morning. No damages were reported as a result of the explosions. Explosions took place thousand yards from Peshuk Checkpost in Panjgur district. A Pakistani official on the condition of anonymity further revealed that Iranian border guards had fired five rockets in the same area on 24

⁷⁴Bitter words: Mengal says Balochistan 'turned into graveyard', *Express Tribune*, February 26 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/676175/bitter-words-mengal-says-balochistan-turned-into-graveyard/>

⁷⁵Kidnapped border guards: Iran threatens to send troops into Pakistan, *Express Tribune*, February 18 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/673152/kidnapped-border-guards-iran-threatens-to-send-troops-into-pakistan/>

⁷⁶Border violation: Iran fires mortar shells into Balochistan, *Express Tribune*, February 27 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/676348/border-violation-iran-fires-mortar-shells-into-balochistan/>

February but it wasn't reported given the sensitivity of the relationship with Iran and Pakistan.

SINDH

79 police officers killed in Karachi operation so far: Report, *Express Tribune*, February 8⁷⁷

According to a 5-month report on the Karachi targeted operation, 79 police officers have been killed so far since the start of the operation, Express News bureau chief Karachi Aslam Khan reported on February 8. The report was presented to the Inspector General of Sindh Police. The targeted operation started in Karachi after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited the metropolitan in September in a bid to devise a strategy to curb violence. With the provincial government on board, the prime minister had given a go-ahead to the paramilitary force to conduct raids and arrest criminals with the help of the police. Subsequently, the operation began on September 7.

TALIBAN TALKS

Optimism of Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, *Express Tribune*, February 3⁷⁸

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan has welcomed the nomination of intermediaries by the TTP but sought "clarity about the mandate of the five-member committee" named by the group. His statement came a day after the TTP named a five-member committee – comprising Jamaat-e-Islami leader Prof. Mohammad Ibrahim, JUI-S chief Maulana Samiul Haq, JUI-F politician Mufti Kifayatullah, Lal Masjid prayer leader Maulana Abdul Aziz and PTI Chairman Imran Khan – to act as intermediaries between them and the four-member committee formed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

PPP criticises talks with Taliban, *Dawn*, February 4⁷⁹

PPP leader Raza Rabbani on February 4 demanded that a deadline should be decided upon for results in relation to talks, adding that the government should also explain the terms and conditions involved in these negotiations. Speaking at a session of the Senate, Rabbani severely criticised the

⁷⁷<http://tribune.com.pk/story/669191/79-police-officers-killed-in-karachi-operation-so-far-report/>

⁷⁸Intermediaries for talks: Nisar hails TTP's move as 'positive', *Express Tribune*, February 3 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/666851/intermediaries-for-talks-nisar-hails-ttps-move-as-positive/>

⁷⁹Taliban talks: Rabbani calls for deadlines, transparency, *Dawn*, February 4 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1084897/taliban-talks-rabbani-calls-for-deadlines-transparency>

government's decision to approach the talks' route with the militants. Senator Rabbani said the government should not bring the state down to a level "where it may become helpless before terrorists".

Talk Commiteesmeet, chart Road Map, Dawn, February 6⁸⁰

Negotiators for the Pakistani government and the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) met February 6 for a first round of peace talks aimed at ending the militants' bloody seven-year insurgency. The two sides gathered at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad for a preliminary meeting to chart a "roadmap" for future discussions, amid deep scepticism over whether dialogue can yield a lasting peace deal. Following the meeting which lasted almost four hours, Maulana Samiul Haq read out a joint statement to the media.

But one of the members from the team of negotiators representing the TTP, Maulana Abdul Aziz expressed his reservations over the dialogue, saying he won't be part of further negotiations.⁸¹

Reports say TTP has given its negotiators the authority to agree on a ceasefire if the government agrees to halt troop deployment when they had contacted members of the group with Qari Shakeel, who is heading the nine-member monitoring committee of the TTP.⁸²

TTP's 15-point demand, Dawn, February 10⁸³

The Taliban Shura finalised a fifteen point draft for negotiations with the Pakistan government and the draft proposal is likely to be handed over to the peace facilitators and their representatives who are in Waziristan. The Taliban Shura had been meeting since Saturday under its deputy Ameer Sheikh Khalid Haqqani. Professor Ibrahim Khan and Maulana Yousuf Shah who are in Waziristan for a meeting with the Taliban Shura are likely to convey these points to the committee formed by the government for mediation.

Un-Islamic Constitution: TTP, Dawn, February 8⁸⁴

⁸⁰Govt, TTP negotiators chart roadmap for peace talks, Dawn, February 6 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1085278/govt-ttp-negotiators-chart-roadmap-for-peace-talks>

⁸¹TTP negotiator rejects peace talks under constitution, Dawn, February 7 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1085510/ttp-negotiator-rejects-peace-talks-under-constitution>

⁸²Taliban negotiators authorised to agree on ceasefire: sources, Dawn, February 7 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1085500/taliban-negotiators-authorized-to-agree-on-ceasefire-sources>

⁸³TTP finalises 15 point draft for talks, Dawn, February 10 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1085920/ttp-finalises-15-point-draft-for-talks>

Central spokesman of the TTP ShahidullahShahid on February 7 said that Taliban wouldn't be waging a war against the government if they followed a law or a constitution other than Islamic Sharia. According to a report on BBC Urdu website, he said the real purpose behind holding dialogue with Pakistani government was to enforce the Islamic Sharia in the country. "The war we are fighting is for enforcement of Sharia....and talks with the government we will be holding will be for the same objective," said Shahidullah.

TTP Shura agrees to meet government committee, Express Tribune, February 13⁸⁵

On the other hand, TTP 's political shura (advisory council) has agreed to directly meet the government talks committee. Sources said the government negotiators would meet the shura either at the end of this week or at the start of next week. The meeting will most likely be held in North Waziristan but the exact location is not known as yet.

TTP claims killing 23 FC personnel in custody, The News, February 17⁸⁶

Banned outfit TTP claimed to have executed 23 FC personnel in their custody. In a statement sent to media outlets, the Mohmand Agency Taliban chief Umar Khalid Khurasani said that they killed the FC soldiers on February 16 to avenge what he said was the custodial killing of Taliban fighter in various areas of Pakistan. It is pertinent to mention here that the soldiers were kidnapped in 2010 from Shongar checkpost in Mohmand Agency. The TTP statement lamented that on the one hand the government has initiated the process of talks while on the other it continues to target TTP members. "The killing of FC personnel is the revenge for the blood of our associates," it said.

TTP puts its weight behind gruesome act of Mohmand Agency faction, The News, February 17⁸⁷

TTP spokesman ShahidullahShahid said the killing of FC personnel by the Mohmand Agency Taliban was in reaction to the execution of Taliban members. The TTP spokesman alleged their under custody members were being killed in name of the operation. He added that 23 Taliban members had

⁸⁴If we followed Constitution war wouldn't have been waged', Dawn, February 8 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1085522/if-we-followed-constitution-war-wouldnt-have-been-waged>

⁸⁵Peace talks: TTP shura agrees to meet govt committee Express Tribune, February 13 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/671171/peace-talks-ttp-shura-agrees-to-meet-govt-committee/>

⁸⁶<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-138048-TTP-claims-killing-23-FC-personnel-in-custody>

⁸⁷<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-138104-TTP-puts-its-weight-behind-gruesome-act-of-Mohamand-Agency-faction>

been killed during the ongoing dialogue process. ShahidullahShahid said 15 Taliban members had been killed in Nowshera and 7 in Karachi. ShahidullahShahid said that such actions by the government during talks were unbearable and harming the dialogue process. He said the government was making the dialogue process cumbersome, while he claimed that TTP was serious and sincere in holding talks.

Killing of FC personnel a heinous crime: PM Nawaz, *The News*, February17⁸⁸

Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif on February 17 condemned the killing of Frontier Corps (FC) personnel and called it a grave crime. In a statement, the premier stated that Pakistan cannot afford more loss of lives and said that incidents like the one in Mohmand Agency would hinder the peaceful resolution of issues. *"Whenever we reach an encouraging point, the process is sabotaged."* PM Nawaz condemned the brutal killing of 23 FC personnel and called it a heinous crime that sabotaged the peace initiative at a crucial point. He said that the government had initiated the peace dialogue with fair intentions.

Army assails 'provocative act', *Dawn*, February18⁸⁹

The army denounced on February 17 the killing of 23 Frontier Corps (FC) soldiers by the outlawed TTP as a *"highly provocative act"*. The Mohmand agency chapter of the TTP had claimed to have killed FC soldiers, who were in its captivity since 2010. It said that the killings were in reaction to deaths of TTP militants in detention of law enforcement agencies. The army statement constituted official confirmation that some paramilitary troops were in custody of the TTP since 2010. It belatedly deplored February 13 attack on a police van in Karachi in which 13 policemen were killed. *"Killing of 13 policemen in Karachi and FC soldiers by terrorists in their captivity are blatant acts of terror,"* the statement said.

Despite the killing of FC-men TTP says it is taking talks seriously, *Express Tribune*, February18⁹⁰

The TTP spokesperson ShahidullahShahid said that various groups of the TTP have been contacted regarding a decision on ceasefire, on 18 February. Shahid also said that a decision will be made soon, adding that the TTP is taking the on going peace negotiations seriously. Regarding the killings of the 23 Frontier Corps (FC) men, the TTP spokesperson stated that an explanation

⁸⁸<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-138114-Killing-of-FC-personnel-a-heinous-crime:-PM-Nawaz->

⁸⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1087705/army-assails-provocative-act>

⁹⁰Various TTP groups contacted for decision on ceasefire: Taliban spokesperson, *Express Tribune*, February18<http://tribune.com.pk/story/673259/various-ttp-groups-contacted-for-decision-on-ceasefire-taliban-spokesperson/>

regarding the killings is necessary. Shahid also said that the issue will be discussed at a meeting of the TTP shura, adding that such incidents need to be avoided for the success of the peace talks.

TTP presents three demands, *The News*, February 19⁹¹

TTP has put forward three demands for a ceasefire with the government. TTP spokesman Shahidullah Shahid informed the media of the Taliban demands.

Taliban Demands

1. The dumping of bodies of Taliban members be stopped
2. Arrests of Taliban and their deaths in police encounters should stop
3. The government committee should provide assurance to the Taliban committee

Air strikes target foreign militants in N. Waziristan, *Dawn*, February 21⁹²

Dozens of militants, mostly Uzbek fighters, were killed as Air Force jets and army's helicopter gunships carried out punitive strikes against terrorist hideouts in North Waziristan and Khyber Agency. The strikes in North Waziristan's areas of Mirali and Datta Khel happened late on Wednesday night, while a militant compound in Khyber was targeted on Thursday.

The attacks followed the breakdown in government's talks with the TTP in the aftermath of TTP Mohmand chapter's claim of killing 23 Frontier Corps soldiers and the death of a major in an attack on an army vehicle near Peshawar. "Air strikes were carried out with precision against militant hideouts in Mirali and Datta Khel. There are reports of a large number of militants being killed in these strikes and a huge cache of arms and ammunition has also been destroyed," a military spokesman said.

Plan of action: Govt gives go-ahead for 'preemptive strikes', *Express Tribune*, February 26⁹³

The federal government appears to be inching closer to an all-out offensive against the TTP and its affiliates after it has given the go-ahead for 'preemptive strikes' against militant hideouts in the tribal areas, officials said on 25 February. Under the new plan that seeks to dismantle the TTP infrastructure, the army will not only conduct 'punitive strikes' but also act swiftly against militants if intelligence information confirms they are planning terrorist attacks, disclosed a top security official. The official, who requested not to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue, told *The Express*

⁹¹TTP present three demands for ceasefire, *The News*, February 19 <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-138381-Taliban-present-three-demands-for-ceasefire->

⁹²<http://www.dawn.com/news/1088430/air-strikes-target-foreign-militants-in-n-waziristan>

⁹³<http://tribune.com.pk/story/676207/plan-of-action-govt-gives-go-ahead-for-preemptive-strikes/>

Tribune that the civil and military leadership have now decided that the 'state will not tolerate' any more violence from the TTP or any other group.

NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

Quest for peace: National security policy wins cabinet nod, *Express Tribune*, February 26⁹⁴

The federal cabinet has unanimously approved the first-ever national security policy with special focus on eliminating all terrorist networks through a combination of measures, including counter-insurgency, intelligence-gathering, policing and prosecution. Officially, the new policy was not shared with the media — even after its approval on February 25 by cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The policy calls for a reassessment of governance, weaknesses and policy deficiencies that have resulted in the exploitation of vulnerable segments of society by militant groups. The draft of the policy was initially prepared by the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (Nacta) but it was re-crafted by the interior ministry following input from the armed forces, intelligence agencies and other stakeholders

OPIONS AND EDITORIALS

Attack on gas pipelines, *Dawn*, February 12⁹⁵

People in most parts of Punjab were forced to do without gas for almost 48 hours after three main transmission pipelines supplying the fuel to the province were blown up near Rahim Yar Khan on 9th Feb. While supply to domestic consumers was reinstated, to some areas partially and fully to others, by 12th Feb afternoon, the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd had told its commercial and industrial users to wait at least one more day before the ruptured lines were repaired to restore their limited supply. The duration and frequency of power cuts in many parts of Punjab — and in other parts of the country — have also increased because of interruption in gas supply to power producers. Consequently, factories are facing significant output losses or have switched to expensive alternatives to meet their production deadlines as gas vanishes from the system and power shortages rise. There is little the government has been able to do to mitigate the sufferings of domestic consumers or save commercial and industrial users from financial losses.

⁹⁴<http://tribune.com.pk/story/676200/quest-for-peace-national-security-policy-wins-cabinet-nod/>

⁹⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1086505/attack-on-gas-pipelines>

Convert, conform or be killed, *The Nation*, February 14⁹⁶

The state's consistent retreat against religious extremists has emboldened them to persecute anyone they so desire. Be it security personnel or polio workers, schools or mosques, the Shiite Hazara community or Christians, everything and everyone is a target. The latest additions to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's long list of enemies are the peaceful Kalash tribe and Ismaili Muslims of the scenic Chitral valley. The TTP's declaration of 'jihad' against these two minority groups comes as a surprise to only those who have still not understood the ideology that drives these militants. Both minority groups have been living in peace in the same region for decades. Their unique culture has been celebrated and even advertised by the country in order to attract tourists from all over the world. Unfortunately, the same uniqueness has now become a cause of concern for them, and the rest of us.

Regional concerns, *Dawn*, February 15⁹⁷

There was a time when a trilateral summit between Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan would spark much interest in various parts of the world and even create hope for some small or even large breakthrough in the intractable Pak-Afghan relationship. Those times are long gone. Here is a small sample of what is on the plate of each of the leaders who gathered at the eighth trilateral summit in Ankara on Thursday. For the Afghan leader: navigating a key presidential election in which there are no clear frontrunners and that can drag on till late summer possibly; securing President Karzai's legacy and post-election relevance; and finalising a post-2014 agreement with the US that will see some foreign troops stay on in Afghanistan. For the Pakistani leadership: tamping down a violent domestic Islamist insurgency that is twisting the arm of the state as the state flounders to find a solution, even in the short term, to the violence. For the Turkish leadership: dealing with the Syrian crisis on its doorstep; a Middle East that has seen the hopes of the Arab Spring fade into something more dangerous and malign; and potentially arranging a swap of power at the top, with a struggling prime minister still perhaps aspiring to become Turkey's first directly elected president with expanded powers.

Post-2014 Afghanistan and Pakistan, Javid Husain, *The Nation*, February 18⁹⁸

[...] The scourge of terrorism from which Pakistan has been suffering over the past decade is largely an offshoot of the armed conflict and instability in

⁹⁶<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/14-Feb-2014/convert-conform-or-be-killed>

⁹⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1087059/regional-concerns>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-232748-A-world-of-possibilities>

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/15-Feb-2014/talks-that-are-more-conducive>

⁹⁸<http://www.nation.com.pk/columns/18-Feb-2014/post-2014-afghanistan-and-pakistan>

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1084338/its-mostly-about-n-pakistan>

Afghanistan. Because of ethnic and tribal links across the Durand line and the porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border, our tribesmen in FATA inevitably got involved in the fighting in Afghanistan on the side of the Taliban after 9/11. The military operations launched by Pervez Musharraf and his successors at the behest of the Americans to stop our tribesmen from crossing the Afghan border redirected their fury against Pakistan leading to a spate of terrorist attacks all over the country. Though the two Taliban factions are entirely different from one another, perhaps part of the solution to TTP-related terrorism in Pakistan lies in national reconciliation and a political settlement in Afghanistan. [...] Under our changed policy, we should dissociate ourselves from the American war in Afghanistan while continuing to cooperate with Washington in fighting Al Qaeda. Our support to this war does not make any sense when the Americans themselves have decided to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan. Instead we should focus on encouraging and facilitating an intra-Afghan dialogue aimed at national reconciliation and a broad-based Afghan government in cooperation with Iran, Turkey and other regional countries. We must not launch military operations in FATA to oblige the Americans. Washington must be told in categorical terms that drone attacks carried out on Pakistan's territory without the approval of Pakistan must halt. It is a difficult balance to find. The timing and modalities of these policy changes have to be decided carefully by the government taking into account all the relevant political, security and economic factors.

More killings by Taliban, *Dawn*, February 18⁹⁹

Talks are deadlocked, but not dead. The only dead are the security personnel who continue to be killed and sundry other victims of the Taliban. With 23 Frontier Corps personnel abducted in 2010 now allegedly killed by the Mohmand branch of the TTP, the Taliban have once again underlined their agenda and approach to dialogue. For its part, the government has frowned and worn grim looks in response to the latest TTP outrage, but nowhere yet is there talk of deadlines or red lines. Today, the government and its negotiating committee is set to huddle to determine its approach going forwards, but the government is already way behind the curve. Every step of the way, it seems to have been the TTP that has put pressure on the state to bow to its demands instead of the state standing tall.

⁹⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1087731/more-killings-by-taliban>

<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/18-Feb-2014/a-counter-offer>

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/18-Feb-2014/peace-talks-deadlock>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-233372-A-terrible-atrocity>

Attacks on the media, *Dawn*, February 19¹⁰⁰

[...] On 17th Feb a bomb exploded near the gate of the building that houses the offices of Business Recorder and Aaj TV in Karachi; another that targeted the premises of Waqt TV and The Nation and NawaiWaqt newspapers was defused. [...] the attacks will no doubt aggravate existing fears, especially as the latest incident follows the killing of three employees of the Express Media Group last month. The responsibility for their deaths was claimed by the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan that reissued a 'fatwa' against the Pakistani media some weeks ago. Not only that, the group also prepared a hit list naming some journalists and publishers, from owners and anchors to field staff. The 29-page fatwa accused the media of siding with "disbelievers" and, to quote Khalid Haqqani, deputy TTP chief and one of the edict's main authors, of "continuously lying about us and our objectives".

The TTP split, M Saeed Khalid, *The News*, February 21¹⁰¹

[...] one particularly simple but intriguing statement by Imran in favour of talking to the Taliban was that only by starting the talks will we find out who among their numerous groups was for or against a dialogue with the government. Let us give Imran full marks because the indirect talks have led to a major split among the various groups under the umbrella of the TTP. It has become clear that by slaughtering 23 FC personnel, the Mohmand Agency leader of the jihadis has wrecked the talks – if not sunk them. A profile of Khorasani in *The News* of February 18 portrays him as a sworn enemy of the state of Pakistan, vowing to avenge the Lal Masjid operation of 2007. His extreme position on imposition of Shariah qualifies him to fall in the category of those who are against the talks. He is also said to be close to Mullah Fazlullah, who himself is nursing the ambition of returning to Swat one day as the commander of the faithful. The government-Taliban talks are suspended for now but Nawaz Sharif is not going to give up his plan of reaching a modus vivendi with the TTP. He must be aware of the need to bring down the level of violence by the jihadis and the security forces to try to reach a provisional agreement. The federation should take a cue from Imran's idea of separating the pro- and anti-talks factions.

'Enemy' of the state, *Dawn*, February 21¹⁰²

The interior ministry's report on the internal security threat have presented before the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Interior. The cities of Pakistan not just faraway Fata or obscure corners have thoroughly been

¹⁰⁰<https://www.dawn.com/news/1087980/attacks-on-the-media>

¹⁰¹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-234081-The-TTP-split>

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/20-Feb-2014/terror-talks-and-trepidation>

¹⁰²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1088405/enemy-of-the-state>

infiltrated by militants of every stripe, local and foreign. The names are as familiar as they are scary: Al Qaeda, Taliban, Lashkar-i-Jhangvi. So are the targets: ethnic, sectarian, provincial, sub-national. Equally telling, however, is what was left off the list: whereas Indian-sponsored militancy in AJK and arms being smuggled into the country across both the eastern and western borders were highlighted by the interior ministry official, nothing was said of the pro-state non-state actors who have also proliferated across the country. And therein lies the real tragedy of Pakistan today: not only has the state been negligent in securing the peace internally, it has actively colluded with elements along the very spectrum that is threatening the existence and moorings of the state as we know it today.

No simple choice, Muhammad Amir Rana, *Dawn*, February 23¹⁰³

[...] It appears that the security establishment of Pakistan is in a hurry to strike hard against the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) before 2015 so that no one can use the banned group as a strategic tool against Pakistan including the Afghan Taliban and Afghan security institutions. As time passes, the feeling of uncertainty and unease is growing vis-à-vis the Afghan Taliban behaviour after Nato troops withdraw from Afghanistan. The major reason is that the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network have not used their influence with the TTP leadership and other militants on both sides of the border to get them to stop launching attacks inside Pakistan. It is feared that after 2015, the Afghan Taliban will continue to use the TTP as a tactical tool against Pakistan to maintain what they view as a strategic balance.

Battlefield Hangu and beyond, *The Nation*, February 24¹⁰⁴

[...] On 23rd reports emerged of more terrorist hideouts being targeted in North Waziristan. This time in Hangu. [...] None will mourn the nine killed in Hangu, but there are questions that must be answered for observers to be reassured, that this is something beyond retaliatory attacks. For one, the location of hideouts has not been a secret; does the fact that they are being targeted now display a shift in policy from differentiating between good and bad Taliban, to having a zero tolerance approach? Is the Prime Minister's silence on the issue a refusal to pander to Taliban apologists, or an admission of letting the army lead the civilians on this one? Is the all-too-easy societal sympathy for the religious manipulation offered by the TTP to be countered through any strategy? No one really knows. What seems clear at the moment, is that these strikes are damage control, in the face of a devastating spate of

¹⁰³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1088922/no-simple-choice>

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1088921/dual-track-approach>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-234178-Dialogue-to-nowhere>

¹⁰⁴<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/24-Feb-2014/battlefield-hangu-and-beyond>

attacks and the beheading of 35 abducted FC personnel in the last few weeks. Have the scores of lives lost really convinced us that this is a battle worth fighting? Unfortunately that would be too easy.

Cross-border concerns, *Dawn*, February 24¹⁰⁵

[...] Pakistani and Iranian officials recently concluded a three-day meeting, need to be welcomed. The bilateral atmosphere has been vitiated of late by the kidnapping of five Iranian border guards, who were abducted inside their country and reportedly brought to Pakistan by JaishulAdl, a militant group. Things heated up when a senior Iranian official commented that Tehran could send troops inside Pakistan to recover the guards. Thankfully, cooler heads prevailed last week at the joint border commission meeting where officials from both countries announced that a joint panel would be formed to recover the Iranian soldiers. Joint border patrols were also proposed.

The Sharia debate, *The Nation*, February 25¹⁰⁶

The TTP's key demand is that Sharia be imposed throughout the country. The underlying assumption here is that there is a mutually agreed upon and codified version of Sharia. That is simply not the case. Different sects adhere to their own brand of Sharia law. The Sunnis alone have four different versions; one for each school of thought. The Shiites hold to another code entirely. The differences verge from minute details to outright contradictions that deal with both legal implications and actual punishments. So, whose Sharia exactly are we looking to implement? Throwing around the oldest Muslim buzzword for jurisprudence is becoming terribly uninspiring. All it does is add to the confusion. Even the Taliban-appointed committee is not privy to what the TTP really wants.

Hiding behind the army, Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, February 26¹⁰⁷

[...] there's no indication yet of the civilian leadership showing resolve to take the battle to its conclusion. It seems quite plausible that it was pressure from the military that forced the government to give its consent to the surgical strikes. [...] Instead of taking a firm position on the threat directed at the entire nation the Sharif government is hiding behind the army. Nothing could be more ridiculous than the remarks made by the interior minister describing the latest offensive in North Waziristan as action by the military in self-

¹⁰⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1089128/cross-border-concerns>

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/673845/tension-between-neighbours/>

¹⁰⁶<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/25-Feb-2014/the-sharia-debate>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-232481-Endangered>

¹⁰⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1089578/hiding-behind-the-army>

defence. "The armed forces have the right of self-defence which cannot be denied," he declared at a press conference.

Origins of militancy, Khurram Husain, *Dawn*, February 27¹⁰⁸

The strong demands for military action against the TTP have put one party and its position regarding militancy in a tight spot. The PTI of Mr Imran Khan, which made a large platform out of opposing action and promoting talks as the only way to deal with the terrorists, is now searching for a way to climb down, at least partially, from that position so as to not appear totally out of step with the mood prevailing in the country. For instance, the party's senior vice president, Asad Umar, argued recently that the fight against terrorism and extremism is not just a military battle, but "a battle for the soul of Pakistan". In this battle, he said, "[w]e have to go to the root causes of why and where such intolerant behaviour is taking shape and dry up the swamp". So what are the root causes of terrorist violence in Pakistan? "The state of Pakistan has been getting weaker as the years go by," he argues, before making a list of the areas where weakening state capacity is directly responsible for empowering the terrorists and their hate-filled narrative. The areas he lists are many, and they include intelligence and law enforcement capacity, growing "injustice and inequality" in society, "elite capture and abuse of state institutions".

Our foreign entanglements, Nadir Hassan, *The News*, February 27¹⁰⁹

The state's brutal subjugation of local nationalist movements usually uses the foreign meddler theory as one of its justifications. Taking punitive military action against, say, the Baloch nationalists demanding equitable treatment or separation becomes kosher because they are supposedly receiving financial and military backing from India. Accepting that assertion at face value, shouldn't we then, under the physician-heal-thyself principle, apply the same metric to ourselves when we consider intervening in a foreign land? Recent reports indicate that we are considering a Saudi Arabia request to send weapons to arm the anti-Assad rebels in Syria. The peace agreement hashed out by the major powers and Assad piqued the Saudis who, absent military intervention in Iran, would like nothing more than for an Iranian ally to be driven out of power. Let the two big Middle Eastern powers fight out their proxy war for domination in the region but we should stay as far away as

¹⁰⁸<https://www.dawn.com/news/1089754/origins-of-militancy>

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/675215/inequality-and-extremism/>

<http://www.nation.com.pk/columns/18-Feb-2014/taliban-surrender-to-imran-khan>

¹⁰⁹[http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-235190-Our-foreign-entanglements\](http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-235190-Our-foreign-entanglements)

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-234932-Bartering-sovereignty-for-money>

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/675635/deja-vu-2/>

possible from a civil war involvement in which brings us no conceivable benefit and plenty of opportunities for self-harm.

Peshawar High Court declaration, *Daily times*, February 27¹¹⁰

The PHC's declaration that blockading NATO supplies bound for Afghanistan from Pakistan is illegal presents an interesting debate about the constitutionality of protest. A petition was moved by a businessman arguing that PTI workers were blocking the highways to Afghanistan and inspecting the documents and cargo of trucks en route. The petitioner argued that blocking the roads and holding up trade violated his rights under Article 18 of the Constitution, guaranteeing freedom of trade and profession, since he is a legitimate, tax-paying exporter of goods.

Military intervention, *Dawn*, February 27¹¹¹

[...] It is saddening then that MQM chief Altaf Hussain should call for army intervention in the event of the government not backing the military's fight against the Pakistani Taliban. [...] it is the elected representatives of the people who should lead the way and make decisions which the army must obey. It is a fact that no strategy against the militants would be complete without input from the military, but in any democracy worth its salt, the final decision rests with those in parliament. Mr Hussain's own party has, more than once, been at the receiving end of operations conducted by both the military and civilian law enforcers. So it is ironical that he should call for military intervention. The argument he has used, that the country is more important than democracy, cannot be sustained in the light of history. Military regimes have weakened rather than strengthened the country.

Security policy and reality, *Dawn*, February 27¹¹²

The National Internal Security Policy has been unveiled before parliament and the government appears to have absorbed a basic, but key understanding: there are no quick fixes when it comes to internal security; patience and perseverance will be required. Welcome too is the latest attempt to turn the moribund National Counter-Terrorism Authority into the coordinating policy body that it was envisaged to be. And while the idea of new rapid-reaction police forces in Islamabad and the provinces may not be

¹¹⁰<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/27-Feb-2014/peshawar-high-court-declaration>
<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/27-Feb-2014/justice-served>

¹¹¹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1089759/military-intervention>
<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/27-Feb-2014/altaf-s-inappropriate-suggestion>
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1089758/dying-at-birth>

¹¹²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1089760/security-policy-and-reality>
<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/27-Feb-2014/barely-stepping-up>
<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/26-Feb-2014/national-security-policy-at-last>

ideal — the politicians' penchant for reinventing the wheel instead of working to strengthen existing institutions appears to have won the day again — at least the emphasis on the capacity of the civilian security apparatus is correct. The approach the government has taken is narrow and starts at the wrong end of the policy pyramid. Internal security is not established in a vacuum and, particularly in Pakistan's case, is linked to the overall national security strategy, which looks both internally and externally and encompasses everything from military power to foreign policy. So, while the NISP does talk of past flawed policies on Afghanistan, India and Kashmir, it spends far too little time connecting the dots — and, perhaps most problematically, appears to assume that the past has been left behind and that all institutions today understand and accept what went wrong and are determined not to repeat the same mistakes. If only. [...] If the diagnosis itself is wrong, can the prescription work? Secondly, can militancy and terrorism be selectively eliminated after years of cross-pollination and cooperation between various groups and organisations? Every group that has turned its war on Pakistan itself was at one time considered an ally or asset. Are there still some non-state allies and assets today?

RELATIONS WITH INDIA

Bilateral trade: Industry wary as govt prepares to give market access to India, *Express Tribune*, February 8¹¹³

At a time when dialogue with India to boost trade ties is one of the top priorities of the government, the industries have once again strongly objected to opening the country's market for Indian companies, as Islamabad gears up to grant NDMA to Delhi. Following the Indian Show in Lahore starting February 14, the government may offer NDMA to India, a more open status than the MFN status. "In a recent meeting with leading businessmen of the country, Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir shared privately that they have decided to accord NDMA status to India without demanding reciprocal facility from the Indian side," said a source present in the meeting. "This announcement will be made when a high-powered delegation of Indian diplomats, politicians and businessmen visits Lahore next week."

¹¹³<http://tribune.com.pk/story/668957/bilateral-trade-industry-wary-as-govt-prepares-to-give-market-access-to-india/>

Indian High Commissioner calls on Asif Zardari, *The News*, February 8¹¹⁴

Indian High Commissioner Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan called on former President Asif Ali Zardari and discussed matters of mutual interest on February 8. Felicitating once again the Indian High Commissioner on his appointment, Asif Ali Zardari stressed the need for improved bilateral relations for the sake of wellbeing of over a billion people of the two countries and for regional peace and security. *"There is no alternative to peace through an honorable resolution of disputes between the two countries,"* he said. The former president said that there was an increasing political consensus in Pakistan on seeking normalization of relations with India.

Indian delegation's visit proving fruitful, *Express Tribune*, February 13¹¹⁵

Surprised at the infrastructure development, especially road networks, Indian entrepreneurs continued their visit to Pakistan on February 12, as part of a 15-member delegation of the FISME. The delegation signed a MoU with the KCCI. *"After meeting businessmen and government officials, I am convinced that India and Pakistan can increase their bilateral trade,"* FISME Joint Secretary (International trade) Mukesh Kalra commented on the signing of the MoU at Movenpick Hotel. Kalra said that Pakistan possessed an excellent road network, especially in Punjab, which would greatly benefit bilateral trade.

NDMA status to India will hurt Pakistani farmers, *Express Tribune*, February 14¹¹⁶

How can a taxed agriculture sector of Pakistan compete with the subsidised Indian Agri economy? This is the question which the farmer community of Pakistan is eagerly asking the Pakistan government amid the possibility of granting NDMA to India. *"We are not against trade with India, but we have to make our sector first in order to compete with Indian agri market,"* said Doctor Tariq Bucha, Farmers Associates of Pakistan president. India is providing subsidy to its farmers of around \$100 billion yearly, and supports around 30 crops, whereas in Pakistan wheat is the only crop which enjoys government support, Bucha said while talking to The Express Tribune. On the contrary, Pakistan's total agricultural production is \$50 billion per year and the subsidies given by the government are less than 1% of GDP.

¹¹⁴<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-137112-Indian-High-Commissioner-calls-on-Asif-Zardari>

¹¹⁵<http://tribune.com.pk/story/671023/indian-delegations-visit-proving-fruitful/>

¹¹⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/671451/ndma-status-to-india-will-hurt-pakistani-farmers/>

Military blocking Pak-India trade deal: Shahbaz, *The Nation*, February 2014¹¹⁷

On Indian affairs, Shahbaz Sharif, the chief minister of Punjab, is widely seen as the de facto Pakistani foreign minister, conducting diplomatic missions to Delhi on behalf of his brother Nawaz Sharif. But speaking to the Guardian, he warned that distrustful 'security agencies' in both Pakistan and India were one of the two main 'blockages' holding back plans to liberalise trade, which the Sharifs believe will provide a desperately needed boost to Pakistan's moribund economy. "Security agencies on both sides need to really understand that in today's world, a security-led vision is obviously driven by economic security," he said. "Unless you have economic security then you can't have general security." While the Sharif brothers, in common with most mainstream politicians in Pakistan, are impatient for a rapprochement with India, the military is far more wary.

Survey findings: Pakistanis warmer towards India, *The Express Tribune*, February 17¹¹⁸

More Pakistanis than Indians favour "cooperative" relations between Islamabad and New Delhi but people from both countries consider either state the "least friendly" country, said a survey released by PILDAT. The survey was conducted nationwide by Pildat with the support and assistance of DANIDA and the CSDS Delhi. The purpose for the survey was to measure various trends in both countries on democracy, trust of the people in different state institutions, their expectations of their elected representatives and impact of television and newspapers.

OPIONS AND EDITORIALS

Unwelcoming hosts, *The Nation*, February 6¹¹⁹

After the harassment faced by Pakistani sufi band Meekal Hassan at the hands of Shiv Sena in Mumbai, two realities become transparent: For starters, we are not exactly the most welcomed guest in India despite its constant insistence upon harmony and friendship. Secondly, for a country that is nearly always lambasted for being extremist and hostile, Pakistan has yet to show disrespect to guests from across the border. This is not to slide all misdeeds of our far-right wing parties under the carpet but even our most stringent hardliners aren't this nasty with our Indian 'rivals'. This was not the first time either; figures from the Pakistani entertainment industry have already spoken of the

¹¹⁷<http://www.nation.com.pk/national/14-Feb-2014/military-blocking-pak-india-trade-deal-shahbaz>

¹¹⁸<http://tribune.com.pk/story/672708/survey-findings-pakistanis-warmer-towards-india/>

¹¹⁹<http://www.nation.com.pk/editorials/06-Feb-2014/unwelcoming-hosts>
<http://www.dawn.com/news/1085155/creeping-intolerance>

less-than-pleasant reactions from Shiv Sena. Case in point: Veena Malik who faced a similar reaction, during her stint in Bigg Boss.

Pakistan, India and the NSG, RizwanAsghar, *Daily Times*, February 11¹²⁰

[...] From a nonproliferation perspective, India's NSG participation seriously threatens the credibility of the NSG, particularly given the irony of adding a member whose action was the very impetus for the body's creation. However, India's acceptance would make it the first non-NPT country in the NSG and encourage Pakistan to seek membership, emboldened by China's support. Acceptance of India as a member would permanently preclude later admission of Pakistan, as Delhi is most likely to vote against Islamabad's entry. NSG membership for India would increase resentment among those non-nuclear NPT states that regard the NSG as an illegitimate instrument of industrialized countries, which aim to refuse less developed countries access to economically significant technologies. India is thus far unwilling to ratify the CTBT; it is more likely that India would try to relax existing guidelines and thus be an obstacle to addressing future proliferation threats. This will also be a dangerous precedent with serious ramifications for international efforts to roll back Iran's controversial nuclear programme.

From Punjab to Punjab, Tridivesh Singh Maini, *The News*, February 20¹²¹

Engagement at the national level between India and Pakistan has been subdued ever since the rising tensions across the LoC in August last year and the terrorist attack in Jammu in September last year with a nervous UPA-2 government having neither the political capital nor the conviction to forcefully push the envelope, something the Indian prime minister has been trying to do earnestly over the past decade. Islamabad, on the other hand, is waiting for the electoral verdict of the May 2014 polls, and probably feels that it is more useful to engage with a new government. More recently, even Indian Commerce Minister Anand Sharma cancelled his Pakistan visit, stating that he would only visit after Pakistan operationalises three decisions that were agreed upon during the recent visit of Pakistan Trade Minister KhurramDastgir Khan.

These include 24/7-trade of all goods via the Wagah-Attarilandcrossing, doing away with the negative list of 1,209 items and also bringing down the sensitive list of items to 100 in accordance with the SAFTA. It should be mentioned here that Pakistan has been vary of granting the MFN status to India, since this gives the impression to hardliners of granting some special privilege to India, an enemy country. If Pakistan removes the negative list, it

¹²⁰<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/11-Feb-2014/pakistan-india-and-the-nsg>

¹²¹<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-233723-From-Punjab-to-Punjab>

will in effect be granting NDMA without ruffling too many feathers in Pakistan.

VERNICULARE MEDIA

Need For Sincerity in Talks, *Daily Ummat*, February 3¹²²

Government and Taliban have finally agreed to talk. Hope both sides will try their best to follow the talks in true spirit and face together the policies of both internal and external enemies. Enemies of Pakistan and the Muslims would never like to see talks succeed. They do not want to see stable and peaceful Pakistan. Taliban appointed five member based committee after government announced their committee for talks. The Taliban committee consists of Maulana Sami-ulHaq, Maulana Abdul Aziz, Mufti Kifaytullah, Prof. Ibrahim and Imran Khan. The uniqueness in this group is that no member of this group directly belongs to Taliban. [...] Imran Khan did not accept to be part of the Taliban committee group. However, he stated that he is ready to play an intermediate role between the two groups. He further stated that Taliban should have appointed members from their own organization and he has no capability to play this role. Mulana Abdul Aziz said that government should take steps of imposing Sharia, it's their responsibility according to the constitution. He said that government should take initiative by ending interest system. TTP can be persuaded not to stop talks on the pretext of drone strikes. Right now these attacks have also been stopped but US should not disturb the talks between two Muslim groups especially when it is about to stop the killing of innocent people. If America is going to sabotage the talks by drone strike, it should not be made an excuse and derailing the talks is not a wise decision and is against the teachings of Islam too.

Nuclear power plants and China's help, *Daily Ummat*, February 3¹²³

The work on two nuclear power plants has started at Karachi's Paradise Point. Once they are completed Pakistan will get more 2200MW electricity. The chairman of atomic energy commission Dr. AnsarPervaiz said that with China's help these nuclear plants will generate cheap electricity. China has also taken the responsibility for the supply of coal to these plants. One thing is clear here that due to the apprehensions of various powers about the safety of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, Pakistan has developed over a years a very robust and strong command and control system. The two new plants which have been established in safety matters are very safe. The area is also not prone to earth quake and there is also the infrastructure for the power plants. The reluctance of America from supporting and helping in our energy crisis

¹²²ummatpublication.com/2014/02/03/news.php?p=idr1.gif

¹²³ummatpublication.com/2014/02/03/news.php?p=idr1.gif

has created so many problems for us. China's help in this nature is a very welcome step. Government has the all the support from public on this matter. China is very trusted friend and now government should also try to provide the basic facilities to the people.

Has Imran Khan got stuck in some problem?Hamid Mir, *Daily Jang*, February 3¹²⁴

TTP's announcing of Imran Khan in their peace committee has put Imran Khan in a very difficult position. Naming Imran Khan in their talk committee is really a big bomb. Few days ago when Prime Minister announced four members committee for talks with Taliban, one issue was strongly criticized was that the committee did not have any veteran politician. When Taliban came out with the names of its talk committee, now question is being raised that why the names of politicians and ulema's are in the committee. The common perception now shared is that Imran Khan has stuck now in a big problem. Even before it few people used to call him Taliban Khan. Now Taliban has also announced his name in the committee and it proves that he is one of them. Taliban has announced one member who is in clean shave and does not keep beard. Imran Khan was also accused by MaulanaFazlulRehman as a Christian agent. [...] Announcing Imran Khan as one of the committee member by Taliban gives an impression that Taliban is not against those who do not keep beard. According to my sources there were people within TTP who opposed Imran Khans selection because of his outlook. But majority supported him by defending that he is needed for peace talks not for the imposition of Sharia. [...] number of my friends told me that the committee appointed by government has soft heart for Taliban. My answer to all of them was that if all those persons who have been appointed by the government for peace talks adheres the constitution, then we should not worry about that. Now the names of the members of Taliban committee have come out, so it is clear that every one of them believes in constitution. Two committees can now anytime sit and talk. This is an opportune moment, Imran Khan, MaulanaSamulHuq, Prof. Ibrahim, Mufti Kefayetullah, and Maulana Abdul Aziz should now move forward. They should start talk with government appointed committee. No world power or no intelligence agency will be allowed to impose their agenda. Whatever these committees decide, government should accept that. Imran Khan has not stuck in difficulty rather government and Taliban has stuck in difficult situation. If talks start both the parties have to declare cease fire. Both Taliban and government have to stop attacks. At any time both Taliban and government can demand US to stop drone strikes. America will then get in problem. Right now whole Pakistan

¹²⁴Jang.com.pk/jang/feb2014-daily/03-02-2014/col5.htm

has stuck in problem but an opportunity of coming out from the mess has emerged. Imran Khan should now come forward and start talks so that a new history can be created.

Taliban and Politicians, Salim Safi, *Daily Jang*, February 4¹²⁵

In past both forces and talks were used against Taliban. A stern force even F16's were used. Talks were also conducted by both politicians and ulema's. Tribal leaders, Intelligence people, and Lt. Generals were also involved in various talks. Neither talks nor force yielded any result rather the problem exacerbated over time. There were three main reasons for that; talks were always held with part not with whole. And force was also used against a part not against whole. Second reason is that the game being played by the intelligence agencies of the regional powers. There has been no way out of this mess at diplomatic level. The third reason of the failure is that state institutions were never on the same page. Government has decided to talk and this time it has decided to talk with the whole. But the other two hindrances are still there. One should remember that these two problems can be sorted out by the committee or Taliban. In this region there intelligence actors from France, Britain, America, India, Russia, and Iran and from the Gulf Countries and everybody is spending billions of dollars. Everyone has created its own proxies both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. [...] Taliban has succeeded in creating divisions between the political parties so that there is no conscience against Taliban. Members of the committee are known people but they have complicated the problem. Had the names of the Taliban committee come from government the conscience could have been reached. But those names came from the Talibani side. One thing is there that government has won the match against Imran Khan. When Hakeemullah Mehsud was killed by the drone, government gave the wrong information and used Imran Khan in its favour. Now selecting Rustam Shah as a representative of Imran Khan in the government appointed peace was again a best strategy. If talks fail, Imran Khan can't blame government for that. Imran Khan's name in Taliban appointed committee has made talks interesting one. It means now that Imran Khan's representative Rustum Shah from the government side will talk to Imran Khan. One can easily guess now that what would be the outcome of these talks. Let these talks between Rustum Shah and Imran can go but government should take urgent steps and talks should be held with military and other civilian institutions, so that all the political and religious parties can be on the same page.

¹²⁵jang.com.pk/jang/feb2014-daily/04-02-2014/col6.htm

One can only mourn about the desire of good relationship with India,
Nawa-i- Waqat, February 10¹²⁶

India has again rejected to resolve Kashmir issue through UN resolutions and reiterated that Kashmir is an integral part of India. Indian leadership has condemned the statement made by the spokesperson of the UN General Secretary in which he stated that if both Pakistan and India accepts the UN meditation, UN can play a great role. Indian leadership further commented by saying that UN Secretary General has revealed number of times on various international forums that there is no more relevance of UN on Kashmir. The foreign minister of India has also stated that no government in India will accept the UN intervention on Kashmir. It is clear that India is not sincere in resolving Kashmir issue on table. On the one side India is pretending in resolving every issue with Pakistan through dialogue but on the other hand when Pakistan tries to bring Kashmir issue on the table, India shows rigidity and claims that Kashmir is an integral part of India. This attitude of India is the main reason of three wars between Pakistan and India. Now India is trying to wage a fourth war on Pakistan. India is busy in making strategies of how to control all rivers which flows to Pakistan. In spite of it, India is accusing Pakistan for cross border terrorism. This shows the real intent of India. Thus, is it a viable policy to start friendship with enemy like India?. Our leaders are very eager even in providing visa free entry to Indian businessmen. Our leaders don't bother its impact on our industries. One can only regret on these policies and the mind set of our leaders.

One side ceasefire and other side fire and only fire, AsadullahGhalib, *Nawa-i-Waqat*, February 13¹²⁷

On the recent terrorist incidents, TTP committee has said that TTP has not taken the responsibility of these attacks so that they are not responsible for it. Then the question is who is doing all these terrorist activities. When military responds, every one criticizes GHQ. Blaming GHQ has become the norm because they can't say anything in their defense. If Taliban is not doing these activities then whoever is doing it, government should talk to them. There is a growing debate about the talk committees. On the one side there is TTP. On the second side there is a TTP appointed committee. Third party is government appointed committee. There is no difference between all these committees. They have the same DNA. All these parties are same both internally and externally. Those people should have been appointed who are different or contradict Taliban ideology. All these three committees are Taliban committee. No one trusts them and their decision cannot be accepted.

¹²⁶www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/editorials/10-Feb-2014/280408

¹²⁷www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/columns/13-Feb-2014/281236

It means one side is taking to same side of the people. This whole process of talks is a drama. Whatever decision they may make is nothing but bogus.

23 Security persons killed: no chances of talks, *Nawa-i-Waqat*, February 18¹²⁸

23 FC persons kidnapped in 2011 were killed in Mohmand Agency by TTP. Mohmand Agency group of TTP has taken responsibility through releasing of video. Umar Khalid Khorasani who is the head of the Mohmand Agency group said that they took revenge of their friends. He warned government to desist from extra-judicial killings of their friends. Prime Minister condemned this gruesome act and stated that government has taken this act very seriously. Sami-ulHuq on the other side has said that government has already given his nod to start military operation. Military operation is not going to solve our problem said Sami-ulHuq.

Killing of 23 FC is a deliberate act to sabotage the talk process. Government has no doubt in this matter. Terrorism cannot be solved through dialogue. Nation supported government in talk process but this gesture is taken as a weakness by TTP. Government has always said that if talks fail military operation will be started. Now there is no doubt that talks have failed. Government, people and military should be ready now to start military operation. No more chance should be given to terrorists to spread terrorism. There is no chance to get rid of terrorism without military operation. If government is afraid to terrorists, they should resign and go to home. So that they would be not responsible for the innocent deaths.

Bold decisions should be taken to maintain writ of the state, *Daily Express*, February 20¹²⁹

There is still a deadlock in talks between government appointed committee and Taliban committee. Government committee has demanded that Taliban should stop terrorism and declare ceasefire. Talks should not start till Taliban accepts of stopping terrorist activities.

During the Talks government showed a great patience and tried best to maintain peace but unfortunately the response from Taliban was not the same. [...] Those who are the guardians of the Islam do not massacre the people like Taliban did. Few people under the guise of Taliban collaborate with enemy forces that go against the teachings of Islam. State should be the only strong group within the territory because it is the state who is supposed to provide peace and security. Militants should never forget that Pakistan Army is one of the strongest forces in the World. How is it possible that

¹²⁸www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/editorials/18-Feb-2014/282452

¹²⁹www.ausaf.pk/wp-content/uploads/2014-02-20/p14_01.jpg

Taliban continuously target security forces and mutilate their bodies and there would be no response from military? Time has come to teach Taliban in their own language which they understood. We need to be united otherwise it would be too late and terrorism will spread from tribal areas to the mainland.

Baloch separatists have again become active in Britain,*Nawa-i-Waqt*, February 21¹³⁰

Pakistani High Commissioner in Britain Mr Wajid Shamsul Hassan has expressed regret about the growing suspicious activities by Baloch separatists like Harpiyar Muri, Bramadagh Bugti, and few others in Britain. He warned Pakistani government to take concrete steps to confront the Baloch separatist and their propaganda against Pakistan. He further stated that it is responsibility of government to confront propaganda by international media and discuss this issue with British government. Pakistan government should raise this issue with Britain government to stop those people who are involved in anti-Pakistan activities and propaganda.

Chances are still there for talks to succeed, *Daily Ummat*, February 25¹³¹

Member of government committee for talks with Taliban, Rustum Shah Mahmend has said that the dialogue process with Taliban has neither failed nor ended rather stalled. Like other patriot he also said that military operation is not the solution of the problem. There are many factions within the TTP who says that Pakistani constitution is not an Islamic. They want to impose sharia. However, there are many religious scholars who said that Pakistani constitution is an Islamic. Actually the problem is there implementation. But enemies of Pakistan, the secular class, western puppets want to end the Islamic system and to impose secularism so that an Islamic identity of Pakistan can be eradicated. These forces will never wish to see peace and stability to return in Pakistan. Syed Munawer Hassan stated that the US and India wanted to destroy Pakistan. He is right by prescribing to Nawaz Sharif that he should take the help of Afghan Taliban in talks with TTP. He further stated that Nawaz Sharif should send a delegation to Mullah Omer. Military operation is not the solution of the problem. We lost one portion of our territory in 1971 due to military operation. In these columns we give stress that help should be taken from Afghan Taliban to differentiate between good Taliban and bad Taliban in Pakistan.

¹³⁰www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/editorials/21-Feb-2014/283202

¹³¹ummatpublication.com/2014/02/25/news.php?p=idr1.gif

Indian presence in Afghanistan, Mohammad Sadeeq, *Bang-e-Sahar*, February 27¹³²

America has used Pakistan for its own interests. It used Pakistan first against Russia and then against al-Qaeda and Taliban. Now America has understood that Pakistan is not going to tolerate more pressure, it has started to give more importance to India in Afghanistan. That is totally unnatural. With this America wanted to tell Pakistan it can do business in Afghanistan without their help. More importantly India got an opportunity to harm Pakistan not only that it succeeded enough in this regard. Pakistan is facing an existential threat from western side of its border. The terrorists can't do it on their own they need foreign support for that.

Whatever India is doing on the pretext of reconstruction and development has nothing to do with common Afghani. They are all doing it for their own interests. India has only one interest in Afghanistan that is to harm Pakistan. From Afghanistan it can interfere in Baluchistan and easily supply arms and financial support to terrorists. Pakistan has no problem with India financial support to Afghanistan but we do have apprehensions why the US and Afghanistan is giving importance to India in Afghanistan. Pakistan has to raise the issue at the international level about India's real intentions in Afghanistan and have to fight at the diplomatic level. It has to convey to India that its real intentions in Afghanistan would be having deleterious consequences. And warn them that if they want stability and security in Afghanistan it has to limit its unnatural activities within Afghanistan.

Determined about operation in North Waziristan: army chief, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, February 28¹³³

The Army Chief of Pakistan Rahiel Sharif has said that army is ready to defend the country from both internal and external aggression. He further stated that army is determined to defeat terrorism.

In Swat Operation, army has already taught them a lesson. Terrorists can't hijack the whole nation. Both civilian and military leadership gave militants enough time to surrender before the constitution. National Security Bill has been announced now terrorists can't even run. About possible military operation in North Waziristan, TTP stated that tribal people will never welcome army there. Taliban is forgetting that during Swat Operation, tribal people fought along the army. They are still ready to fight against terrorists. There are many factions of Taliban who are supported and funded by Afghan and Indian intelligence agencies. Both opposition and religious political

¹³²www.bangesahar.net/popup.php?r_date=02-27-2014&img=02-27-2014page-2-5

¹³³<http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/editorials/28-Feb-2014/284993>

parties are on the same page about the military operation. People are with army and operation will be accomplished within four to six weeks.

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Balochistan				
Quetta ¹³⁴	9/2/2014	Gunmen kill nine in Balochistan violence.	9	0
DeraBugti ¹³⁵	14/2/2014	Four suspected militants killed in DeraBugti operation.	4	0
Quetta ¹³⁶	28/2/2014	Afghan official shot dead in Chaman.	1	0
FATA				
Sukkur ¹³⁷	4/2/2014	Firing at Dadu check post kills policeman, injures another.	1	1
North Waziristan ¹³⁸	11/2/2014	Seven troops injured in N. Waziristan attacks.	7	0
South Waziristan ¹³⁹	18/2/2014	Checkpoint attack kills one security man in South Waziristan.	1	0
North Waziristan ¹⁴⁰	20/2/2014	40 militants killed in North Waziristan aerial bombing.	40	0
Tirha Valley ¹⁴¹	24/2/2014	Fresh strikes: 38 militants killed in Tirah Valley air blitz	38	0
South/North Waziristan ¹⁴²	25/2/2014	Jet planes bomb hideouts in North, South Waziristan killing 30 militants.	30	0

¹³⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1085921/gunmen-kill-nine-in-balochistan-violence>

¹³⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086768/four-suspected-militants-killed-in-dera-bugti-operation>

¹³⁶<http://www.dawn.com/news/1090027/afghan-official-shot-dead-in-chaman>

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Peshawar ¹⁴³	1/2/2014	Four killed, 50 rounded up in Swabi raid.	4	0
Peshawar ¹⁴⁴	5/2/2014	Suicide blast near Imambargah kills nine, injures 50 in Peshawar.	9	50
Peshawar ¹⁴⁵	6/2/2014	Taliban commander, three guards gunned down in Waziristan.	4	0
Peshawar ¹⁴⁶	10/1/2014	Suicide blast in Peshawar kills four women, injures three others.	4	3
Dera Ismail Khan ¹⁴⁷	11/2/2014	Accidental explosion?: Three suspected terrorists killed in DI Khan.	3	0
Peshawar ¹⁴⁸	11/2/2014	Three explosions hit Peshawar cinema; 13 killed	13	19
Peshawar ¹⁴⁹	12/2/2014	Nine killed in Peshawar attack.	9	0
Mohmand ¹⁵⁰	17/2/2014	Mohmand Taliban claim	23	0

¹³⁷<http://tribune.com.pk/story/667324/firing-at-dadu-check-post-kills-policeman-injures-another/>

¹³⁸<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086222/seven-troops-injured-in-n-waziristan-attacks>

¹³⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1087838/checkpost-attack-kills-one-security-man-in-south-waziristan>

¹⁴⁰<http://tribune.com.pk/story/674090/fighter-jets-bomb-militant-hideouts-in-north-waziristan-killing-20-militants/>

¹⁴¹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/675398/fresh-strikes-38-militants-killed-in-tirah-valley-air-blitz/>

¹⁴²<http://tribune.com.pk/story/675842/jet-planes-bomb-hideouts-in-north-south-waziristan-killing-27-militants/>

¹⁴³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1084221/four-killed-50-rounded-up-in-swabi-raid>

¹⁴⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1084915/suicide-blast-near-imambargah-kills-nine-injures-50-in-peshawar>

¹⁴⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1085271/taliban-commander-three-guards-gunned-down-in-waziristan>

¹⁴⁶<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086115/suicide-blast-in-peshawar-kills-four-women-injures-three-others>

¹⁴⁷<http://tribune.com.pk/story/670248/accidental-explosion-three-suspected-terrorists-killed-in-di-khan/>

¹⁴⁸<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086328/three-explosions-hit-peshawar-cinema-13-killed>

¹⁴⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086537/nine-killed-in-peshawar-attack>

¹⁵⁰<http://www.dawn.com/news/1087561/mohmand-taliban-claim-killing-23-fc-men>

		killing 23 FC men.		
Peshawar ¹⁵¹	17/2/2014	Fifteen people injured in blast outside school in Karak.	0	15
Peshawar ¹⁵²	17/2/2014	Civilians targeted: Six killed as blast derails train in Jacobabad.	6	35
Peshawar ¹⁵³	18/2/2014	Army major killed in militant attack near Peshawar.	1	0
Hangu ¹⁵⁴	22/2/2014	Helicopter shelling kills six militants in Hangu.	6	0
Buner ¹⁵⁵	22/2/2014	QWP leader among three killed in Buner explosion.	3	0
Kohat ¹⁵⁶	24/2/2014	Uptick in violence: Bomb kills 13 in Kohat.	13	0
Peshawar ¹⁵⁷	27/2/2014	Pashto singer shot dead in Peshawar.	1	0
Khyber Agency ¹⁵⁸	28/2/2014	Three suspected militants killed in Khyber Agency encounter.	3	0
Sindh				

¹⁵¹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1087618/fifteen-people-injured-in-blast-outside-school-in-karak>

¹⁵²<http://tribune.com.pk/story/672729/civilians-targeted-six-killed-as-blast-derails-train-in-jacobabad/>

¹⁵³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1087866/army-major-killed-in-militant-attack-near-peshawar>

¹⁵⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1088731/helicopter-shelling-kills-six-militants-in-hangu>

¹⁵⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1088733/qwp-leader-among-three-killed-in-buner-explosion>

¹⁵⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/675404/uptick-in-violence-bomb-kills-13-in-kohat/>

¹⁵⁷<http://www.nation.com.pk/national/27-Feb-2014/pashto-singer-shot-dead-in-peshawar>

¹⁵⁸<http://www.dawn.com/news/1090084/three-suspected-militants-killed-in-khyber-agency-encounter>

Karachi ¹⁵⁹	1/2/2014	Three killed, four injured in Karachi violence.	3	4
Karachi ¹⁶⁰	4/2/2014	Four policemen shot dead in Karachi	4	0
Karachi ¹⁶¹	5/2/2014	Blast derails Shalimar Express outside Karachi, one killed 20 injured.	1	20
Kashmore ¹⁶²	8/2/2014	15 injured in Kashmore bus attack shootout.	0	15
Karachi ¹⁶³	9/2/2014	Firing in Karachi leaves eight people dead.	8	16
Karachi ¹⁶⁴	13/2/2014	Explosion in Karachi kills 13 people, injures 36.	13	36
Karachi ¹⁶⁵	14/2/2014	Blast near Rangers' vehicle in Karachi injures two.	0	2
Karachi ¹⁶⁶	18/2/2014	Karachi raid: Security forces kill 2 suspects involved in police bus attack.	2	0
Karachi ¹⁶⁷	20/2/2014		4	0
Karachi ¹⁶⁸	23/2/2014	Four killed in Karachi violence.	1	3
Karachi ¹⁶⁹	24/2/2014	1 dead, 3 injured in mosque firing incident in Karachi.	4	0
Karachi ¹⁷⁰	25/2/2014	Four killed in Karachi violence.	6	0
Karachi ¹⁷¹	27/2/2014	At least six killed in Karachi violence. Madrassa caretaker, son killed in Karachi firing.	1	0

¹⁵⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1084232/three-killed-four-injured-in-karachi-violence>

¹⁶⁰<http://www.dawn.com/news/1084680/four-policemen-shot-dead-in-karachi>

¹⁶¹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/667504/blast-derails-shalimar-express-outside-karachi-30-injured/>

¹⁶²<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-137052-15-injured-in-Kashmore-bus-attack-shootout-->

¹⁶³<http://www.dawn.com/news/1085923/firing-in-karachi-leaves-eight-people-dead>

¹⁶⁴<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086747/explosion-in-karachi-kills-13-people-injures-36>

¹⁶⁵<http://www.dawn.com/news/1086963/blast-near-rangers-vehicle-in-karachi-injures-two>

¹⁶⁶<http://tribune.com.pk/story/672763/karachi-raid-security-forces-kill-2-suspects-involved-in-police-bus-attack/>

¹⁶⁷<http://www.dawn.com/news/1088302/four-killed-in-karachi-violence>

¹⁶⁸<http://tribune.com.pk/story/675195/1-dead-3-injured-in-mosque-firing-incident-in-karachi/>

¹⁶⁹<http://www.dawn.com/news/1089149/four-killed-in-karachi-violence>

¹⁷⁰<http://www.dawn.com/news/1089376/at-least-six-killed-in-karachi-violence>

¹⁷¹<http://tribune.com.pk/story/676715/clash-between-2-asis-leaves-one-injured/>