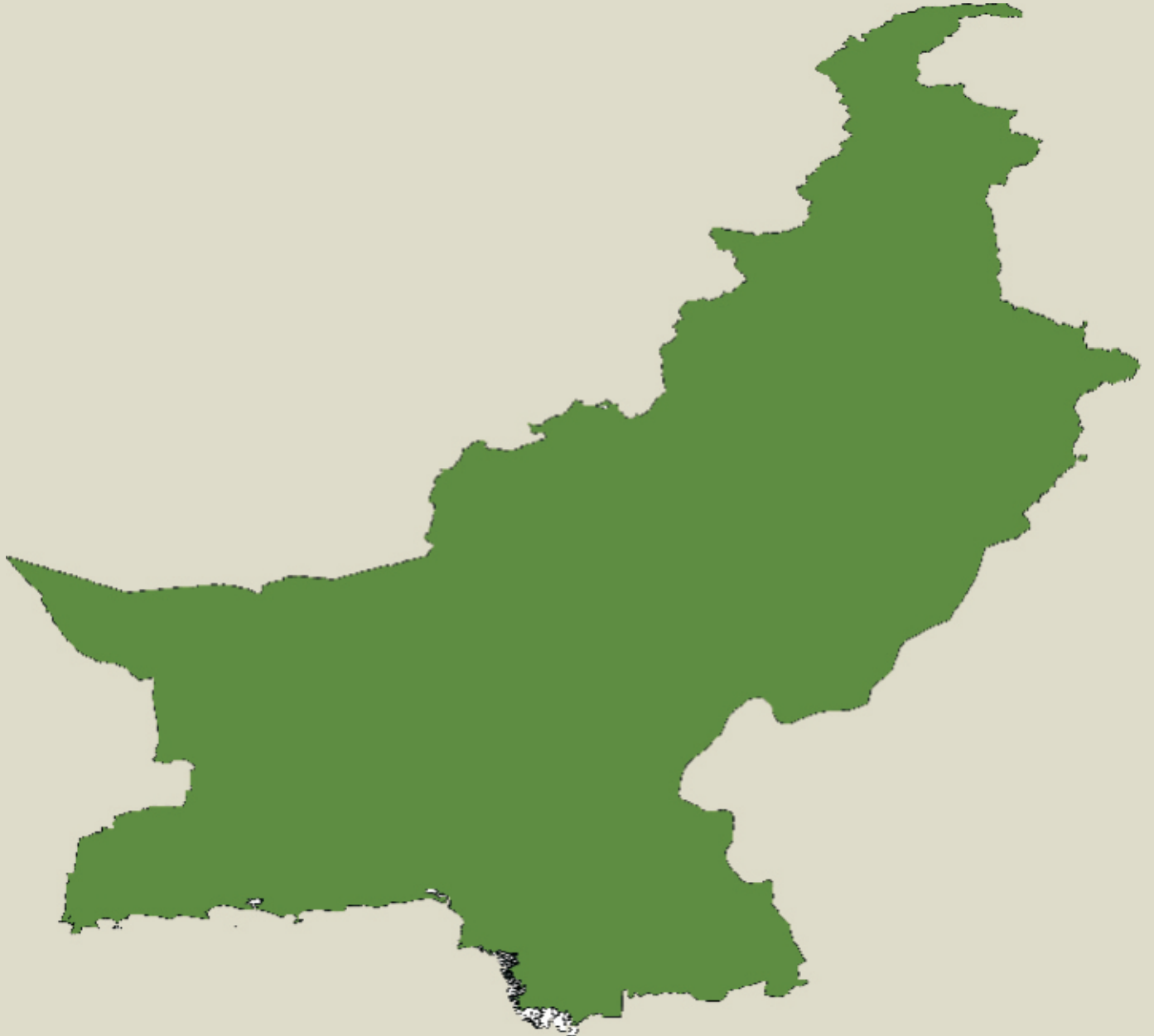


January 2025

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

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



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

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Challenges in 2025, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 01 January ¹

The talks between the PTI and the government, set to resume tomorrow, come as a challenge for the political forces. Its high time divisive approaches were kept aside and a consensus was struck to move ahead by burying the hatchet. Release of political prisoners for ushering in a societal thaw, creating space for an independent judiciary and buoying growth by increasing exports and broadening the taxation base, are indispensable. *Last but not least, Pakistan has a mounting challenge of retiring debts and working closely with the IMF to reform the economy. An unflinching resolve to fight terrorism by nailing down disgruntled elements in our midst will remain a priority.* The armed forces and local security apparatus must continue to enjoy the support of the nation so that the faceless enemy is exterminated. *As fissures of unrest are all around on the western frontier, a renewed understanding with the Taliban rulers in Afghanistan to act against TTP, and likes, is the way to go.* Striking a perpetual peace deal in Parachinar and restoring the writ of the state in merged tribal districts are other summons for the New Year.

Internet woes, Editorial, *The News*, 06 January²

Pakistan has long grappled with adversarial relationships – both within its borders and with its immediate neighbours. Now, it seems even the deep sea conspires against the country, as submarine internet cables repeatedly fall victim to mysterious disruptions. On Thursday, millions of internet users faced yet another outage when a cable near Qatar sustained damage. *While the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) claims to have patched the issue with temporary bandwidth, the underlying problem remains: a digital infrastructure so fragile that it risks jeopardizing the country's economic future. The timing of this disruption couldn't be worse. On the same day, the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information Technology once again postponed the Digital Nation Pakistan Bill,*

¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2519310/challenges-in-2025>

² <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1269000-internet-woes>

a cornerstone for modernizing the country's digital framework. The committee raised concerns over the persistent internet outages in the country, saying that while the PTA assured that internet-related issues would be resolved by October 2024, there has not been any noticeable progress in that regard. The economic ramifications of an unreliable internet are staggering. According to the Pakistan Association of Software Houses (P@SHA), frequent outages cost the country a whopping \$300 million annually. These losses are not just numbers; they signify eroded trust in Pakistan's ability to function as a credible tech destination. Chronic connectivity problems will inevitably drive international clients to more reliable markets, dealing a devastating blow to an industry that could otherwise offer salvation to a beleaguered economy.

Third round of talks between Government-Opposition, Editorial, *The News*, 14 January³

The announcement of a third session of talks between the government and the PTI, scheduled for January 16, brings some hope in a politically polarised landscape. This in-camera session, held under the auspices of National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, comes at a critical juncture. *The PTI's demands the release of political prisoners and the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the events of May 9, 2023, and November 26, 2024 will reportedly be presented in writing. Yet, even as both sides move toward dialogue, the spectre of mistrust looms large, threatening to derail the process before it gains momentum.* The PTI's insistence on a January 31 deadline for concluding talks has also raised some questions about the sustainability of this negotiation effort. While deadlines can serve as tools to inject urgency, they may also backfire by imposing an artificial rigidity on an inherently fluid process. Observers have noted that the PTI's history of contesting unfavourable outcomes casts doubt on whether it would accept the conclusions of a new judicial commission, should the investigations not align with its narrative. *Still, if both sides manage to reach a consensus, the formation of judicial commissions could pave the way for greater accountability and transparency – qualities sorely lacking in Pakistan's political arena. The PTI's apprehensions about being perceived as seeking a 'deal' complicate matters further. The delay in the Al-Qadir Trust case verdict has only added to the mistrust.* For the

³ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1271882-third-time-s-the-charm>

PTI, a focus on substantive issues, rather than posturing, could shift public perception in its favour. For the government, meeting the PTI halfway by agreeing to at least some of its demands, such as the release of political prisoners, could build trust and demonstrate good faith. Both sides must recognize that the alternative to dialogue is a return to instability.

PPP's season of discontent, Editorial, *The News*, 16 January⁴

The political relationship between the PML-N and the PPP has become a key focus in Pakistan's ever-changing political landscape, especially following the controversial February 8 elections and the formation of the second PDM government last year. What once seemed like a strong coalition between the two major political forces is now showing signs of strain. Growing disagreements and unmet expectations are threatening the stability of this fragile alliance. *When the initial PDM government was formed under Shehbaz Sharif, there was a clear sense of cooperation between the PML-N and the PPP. The PPP not only joined the federal cabinet but also took on important positions, including the foreign ministry. But now, the PPP has taken a different approach. It has chosen not to join the cabinet and instead has opted for constitutional positions such as governorship of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the chairmanship of the Senate, and the presidency. Political analysts have pointed to several reasons behind this shift.* A major factor seems to be the unpopularity of the PML-N government, particularly after the disputed elections. The PPP, aware of the need to safeguard its own political future, seems to be distancing itself from a government that many view as controversial. By taking up constitutional roles, the PPP is still involved in governance but avoids being closely associated with the government's unpopular decisions. Despite this distancing, the PPP has not been shy in criticizing the Shehbaz-led government. There are key issues that have caused tension, including internet restrictions, disputes over provincial resource distribution, and the creation of the Pakistan Maritime and Seaport Authority.

⁴ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1272626-ppp-s-season-of-discontent>

Judicial matters, Editorial, *The News*, 23 January⁵

The SC has over the past few years been seen as a fractured institution. Former CJP Justice Faez Isa's tenure was marked by sharp confrontations between the judiciary and the executive. Then came the 26th Amendment, a highly contentious piece of legislation that altered the power dynamics within the apex court. It also changed the process for appointing the chief justice of Pakistan, leading to the unexpected rise of Justice Yahya Afridi over Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, who was originally in line for the position. *The changes to the constitutional bench and the manner in which cases are assigned to it have clearly become a source of contention. As predicted, the reorganisation of the court and the reshuffling of powers have not led to a smooth transition; the recent controversy is a case in point: the reallocation of cases, the withdrawal of cases from judicial benches and questions about the motivations behind these decisions point to deeper unresolved issues.* Justice Shah's comments, questioning whether some judicial decisions might be withdrawn if they potentially go against the government, also point to growing concerns about the encroachment of political interests into judicial matters. *As such, it would be wise for the SC to address these internal issues head-on. If these problems are not resolved swiftly, they will only provide more ammunition for those who would argue that judicial independence is under threat. Not only that, the government may seize on such disarray to push through further legislation that could alter the judicial landscape even more ala the 26th Amendment.* If the judicial system is to function effectively and maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of the public, it must show that it can handle its internal challenges without the need for external intervention. The alternative – a judiciary plagued by division and inefficiency – will only erode public trust.

Gwadar Dream, Editorial, *The Daily Times*, 28 January⁶

For over two decades, government after government has come to the seat of power, placing immense hope in the envisioned port city in the South, anticipating it as a befitting answer to Dubai, a shimmering economic El Dorado on the horizon. Although the dream remains

⁵ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1274983-judicial-matters>

⁶ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1260252/gwadar-dream/>

largely unfulfilled, the pitter-patter of development, most recent of which saw the first flight landing on the much-awaited international airport, manages to keep the optimism alive. Quite expectedly, this milestone generated a wave of exuberant assertions from Islamabad, celebrating what they termed “Shehbaz Speed” in the context of the game-changer CPEC. However, much to its dismay, the media’s focus has, regrettably, shifted to controversies, calling into question the integrity of the project. *Like it or not, there are palpable concerns regarding governance, which only allow those poised to exploit social unrest to play with grievances however they wish. Instances such as the opaque handling of local fishing rights and the government’s difficulties in gaining the confidence of community activists are some of the significant oversights that could have been handled differently.* To transform Gwadar into a thriving hub, Pakistan would have to establish a transparent framework that empowers local communities, fostering an environment where development is collaborative, rather than top-down. Our vision for Gwadar cannot be one that ignores the voices of its residents. *Treating it as an isolated venture, detached from the aspirations of its people, would be a profound misjudgement. Any and all plans for the crown jewel must be crafted with careful consideration of what its communities truly want and need.*

Law or gag order? Editorial, *The News*, 29 January⁷

The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has declared January 27 a ‘black day’ for Pakistan’s democracy. For journalists, the fear is not just about the potential for censorship, but about the chilling effect that such laws could have on the media’s ability to report and critique government actions without fear of retaliation. *The Peca amendments also raise significant constitutional and legal concerns. Digital rights activists have warned that the law could empower state agencies to arbitrarily stifle dissent, bypassing the judicial oversight typically provided by higher courts.* Instead of allowing the judicial process to unfold through established channels, the law introduces a special tribunal whose decisions would be appealed directly to the Supreme Court – cutting out the high courts entirely. Critics also argue that, while the government’s digital ambitions may align with global trends, the lack of meaningful consultation and the speed with which

⁷ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1277172-law-or-gag-order>

the law was passed raises serious questions about the ruling party's commitment to democratic processes. *Such bulldozing of legislation risks alienating those the government claims it seeks to engage – a case in point would be journalists' organisations. Instead of fostering a constructive conversation, Peca's latest version has only intensified divisions, creating further tensions between the government and its critics.* The PFUJ has already vowed to take legal action and organise nationwide protests in a bid to roll back the amendments.

Need to get back to talks, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 30 January⁸

With political instability taking new swings, it is the government that is to be blamed this time around. The beleaguered ruling dispensation seems unwilling to oblige the opposition. The PTI, having refused to attend the third session of talks, scheduled to take place on January 28, has posted a tougher line of action. *It had made it categorically clear that formation of judicial commissions to inquire into the May 9 and November 26 incidents is a prerequisite for getting along, and simultaneously ironing out other differences in the political and governance texture. An instant reaction from the PTI to change its comrades at the helm in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab by bringing in proven loyalists, known as 'hardliners', will come as a challenge.* The elevation of Junaid Akbar and Aliya Hamza in the two provinces as top negotiators will surely change the tone of interaction, making it more of an uphill task to find a middle ground for the government. Former PM Imran Khan, known for setting new fields, has raised the bar - something which is an indication of brinkmanship in a party that feels being pushed to the wall. *Even saner voices such as chairman Ali Gohar Khan are feeling the heat, and pointing a finger at the coalition for not living up to the expectations of a thaw. With the PTI gearing up for a new agitation campaign, as a year to ballot (February 8) is round the corner, the government must revisit its stance and offer an olive branch.* The bourses are taking a dip for the last several days, and renewed volatility in politics could make it worse.

⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2525353/need-to-get-back-to-talks>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Economic plan, Editorial, *Dawn*, 02 January⁹

The ‘home-grown’, five-year economic plan Uraan Pakistan, which was unveiled by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif this week, hopes to build on the country’s nascent economic recovery to boost growth. *The initiative is based on the ruling PML-N’s five-point development agenda referred to as the ‘5Es Plan’. It focuses on exports, information technology, environment and climate, energy and infrastructure, and justice for all as a “unified roadmap” to make Pakistan a trillion-dollar economy roughly triple its present size by 2035.* The roadmap aims to address key economic challenges through a ‘National Economic Transformation Plan’, providing short- to medium-term solutions for stabilisation and growth. However, the targets are ambitious, if not unrealistic, as they seek to achieve a sustainable growth rate of 6pc by 2028 and attract \$10bn in private investment each year to double exports to \$60bn over the next five years. But then, the state minister for finance has downplayed the focus on the plan’s targets. According to him, the plan was an effort to give the economy direction so that it does not heat up when the growth accelerator is pressed. *Furthermore, the programme points at decades of political instability, policy inconsistency, and repeated military-led disruptions in the political process as reasons for the current state of the economy. Yet, there has been little inclination to address these challenges.* The absence of clear mentions of policy reforms backed by a solid strategy to execute the targets allows the bureaucracy a lot of space to wriggle out of responsibility.

CPEC 2.0, Editorial, *The Nation*, 13 January¹⁰

The renewed commitment between Pakistan and China to advance the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into its second phase marks a significant step forward in bolstering Pakistan’s economic trajectory. *With both nations pledging to enhance infrastructure, energy projects, and industrial cooperation, the promise of CPEC 2.0 stands as a*

⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1882571/economic-plan>

¹⁰ <https://www.nation.com.pk/13-Jan-2025/cpec-2-0>

beacon of economic revitalization for Pakistan. This phase not only aims to address critical development gaps but also seeks to expand special economic zones, foster industrial growth, and create employment opportunities, all of which are essential for stabilising Pakistan's fragile economy. Pakistan stands to gain substantially from this continued collaboration. Improved infrastructure will facilitate better connectivity, reduce logistics costs, and attract foreign direct investment. Moreover, the focus on renewable energy projects will alleviate Pakistan's chronic energy shortages, paving the way for sustainable industrialization. The creation of thousands of jobs across various sectors promises socio-economic upliftment, particularly in underdeveloped regions. China, on the other hand, secures strategic access to the Arabian Sea through the Gwadar Port, enhancing its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and facilitating trade routes that bypass traditional maritime chokepoints. Additionally, by investing in Pakistan's industrial sector, China diversifies its economic partnerships and strengthens geopolitical alliances in South Asia.

SECURITY SITUATION

Bridging divide in Kurram, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 09 January¹¹

The government's response thus far has been inadequate, and the reliance on local jirgas to mediate the conflict shows a concerning abdication of state responsibility. Moreover, negotiating from a position of weakness risks emboldening insurgents and perpetuating the cycle of violence. *The arrests following the Bagan attack, including those of suspects and elders who refused to sign the peace agreement, may offer short-term appeasement but do little to address the underlying causes of the conflict. While jirgas do hold cultural significance, they lack the capacity to address the broader socio-political complexities of the longstanding crisis.* The state must take a more assertive role in resolving the conflict. Heavy-handed measures may be necessary to restore order, but they must be balanced with efforts to rebuild trust and demonstrate a commitment to the welfare of the affected population. *The state must*

¹¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2520887/bridging-divide-in-kurram>

assert its authority and demonstrate that it can provide security and basic services to all its citizens, regardless of their geographic location. Failure to do so will not only undermine the state's legitimacy but also leave regions like Kurram vulnerable to further instability and suffering. Without decisive intervention, Kurram will remain a flashpoint of instability, undermining the state's credibility and leaving its citizens to suffer in a prolonged state of siege. The time for remedial measures has passed. Ensuring the safe passage of relief convoys, reopening vital access routes and addressing the root causes of the conflict must be done with a firm resolve.

Saving Kurram, Editorial, *The News*, 15 January¹²

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's hope for lasting peace in Kurram district is a welcome gesture, but it will only mean anything if it is backed by sustained action. The gradual improvement in the area following a peace deal between the warring factions, as well as the delivery of essential goods, offer a glimmer of hope for a region that has seen more than its share of tragedy recently. *The state though cannot afford complacency. The clashes in Kurram last year claimed over 130 lives and left more than 180 injured. A decades-old land dispute, exacerbated by sectarian tensions with roots in the Afghan jihad era, spiraled into a humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately, despite repeated warnings and pleas from locals and political figures, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government failed to act decisively when violence first erupted in July.* This inaction allowed a localized land dispute to morph into a broader sectarian conflict with repercussions beyond Kurram. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has attributed the delayed response to the provincial government led by Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. This is not far off the mark in one sense and timely intervention could have curtailed the violence, prevented bloodshed, and mitigated the ensuing humanitarian crisis. *Road closures further compounded the situation, leading to shortages of food, medicine, and other essential goods, while the KP government remained preoccupied with its political priorities.* To start with, the KP government must show genuine commitment to resolving Kurram's underlying issues. This includes addressing the longstanding land dispute and fostering dialogue between sectarian communities to

¹² <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1272247-saving-kurram>

build trust. Proactive measures like deploying mediators and forming community-based conflict resolution committees can help prevent future flare-ups. But this is not all.

Kurram conundrum, Editorial, *Dawn*, 20 January¹³

The validity of the claim by state functionaries that the violence in KP's Kurram district stems from a 'tribal dispute' has been severely put to the test by recent events. After an attack on a convoy in the Bagan area on Thursday led to the loss of security personnel, a counterterrorism operation seems imminent, and the state has prepared plans to shift civilians to safer areas. *While tribal disputes over land and water have played a key role in exacerbating tensions in Kurram, the fact is that sectarian groups and terrorist outfits have exploited these differences to establish footholds in the district, as the state has fumbled for responses. At least two security men were martyred in the convoy attack, which is the second of its kind; an earlier attack had targeted the then Kurram DC, who survived the ambush.* In the latest outrage, militants looted the trucks carrying goods to Parachinar, while four drivers have been found dead, with their hands tied and their bodies bearing signs of torture. Unfortunately, if the state all institutions, including the centre, *the KP government, and the security establishment had moved with alacrity when violence initially flared up last year, such bloodshed could have been avoided.* But it seems that the administration was in denial, letting the Kurram cauldron boil until it was ready to explode, which it certainly has. Now, thousands of people will be displaced as the security forces go after militants. Besides, matters will be complicated by the fact that the local militants including those fighters allied with the banned TTP and IS-K have ideological comrades just across the border in Afghanistan.

¹³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1886210/kurram-conundrum>

Economic “Udaan”, Editroial, *Roznama Jang*, 02 January¹⁴

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif launched the country's sustainable development initiative, a five-year plan named "Udaan Pakistan," which essentially serves as a roadmap for the nation's economic journey, outlining not only the path forward but also guiding the way toward the destination with several key points. It would be beneficial if a broad-based commitment like the “Charter of Economy” were also introduced, which would further strengthen the nation's hopes, which have long been plagued by difficulties, for better days. The presence of representatives from multiple political parties (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party) and federal and affiliated units (Punjab and Azad Kashmir) at the ceremony indicates encouraging harmony. In his speech, the Prime Minister also referred to the current spirit of cooperation between governments and institutions and prayed that this partnership continues until the end of time. *The newly introduced plan spans five years. In the past, five-year plans have yielded good results, but circumstances later arose in which such programs couldn't be practically implemented. Meanwhile, there are countries that have designed economic, strategic, global, and domestic roadmaps for more than a century, and changes in governments or external events do not affect their progress. The key areas of the "Udaan Pakistan" plan include exports, e-Pakistan, environment, energy, and equity (the Five E's), with significant targets set for various sectors, which will require hard work to achieve.* This effort must focus on protecting the middle and lower classes from additional burdens by implementing measures that help them recover.

The Prime Minister himself pointed out that for the country to move forward, the elite will have to make some sacrifices. He also highlighted that former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh adopted Nawaz Sharif's model to drive India's development, which helped India move ahead. He stated that for Pakistan to progress, taxes must be reduced, and if it were up to him, he would cut taxes by 10-15% to reduce corruption and improve

¹⁴ <https://e.jang.com.pk/karachi/02-01-2025/page4>

productivity. While such a move is not immediately possible, as the Prime Minister said, "The time will come for this."

Big Threat for Pakistan? PTI & Govt Talks & "Uraan Pakistan" Plan Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, *Geo News*, 01 January¹⁵

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif formally unveiled the National Economic Transformation Plan 2024-29 on Tuesday called "***Uraan Pakistan: Home-grown National Economic Plan***", with the promise to revive the country's economy. The five-year plan aims to address key economic challenges through a targeted framework called *the "Five Es" Exports; E-Pakistan; Equity and Empowerment; Environment, Food and Water Security; and Energy and Infrastructure*. Mir asked if there is no political stability in the country how will there be economic stability. **Guests:** Khawaja Asif (*Minister of Defence of Pakistan*). **Khawaja Asif** talking about the plan he agreed there should be political stability but instead of the instability there has been indicators of economic growth and development. He added that although inflation has not been over all scrapped but it has improved, the remittance has also increased. Uraan Pakistan is a dream for all and the representative from KP also took part in the same. The interest rates have massively come down and now people can do investment, inflation has also come down. He added that now if there is political stability then Pakistan can reach to new levels in the economic growth. He underlined that political battles should be fought in political ring and it should not come to economy, as the PTI is doing asking the NRI Pakistani's not to send remittance to Pakistan if government does not agree to their demands. Talking about terror attacks and increasing incidents in KP whoever is dying are the residents of Pakistan, there is a need to counter these elements in KP. ***Talking about the threats of TTP he pointed out that we need to change the policy towards fighting these terror groups especially in Balochistan and KP. There was an effort to ceasefire with TTP but in real they were not committed to the process, General Faiz went to talk with the TTP in the past during Imran Khan's tenure.*** Rana Sanaullah also pointed out on this show that there are certain factors of TTP, some want to settle and talk and other faction are not ready to talk. He

¹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ps2m3PquXkM>

added that in closed door Bajwa and Faiz said that TTP should be settled down and it is a great step, Imran Khan agreed to the same when he was PM and later took U-turn on the same.

Shutter down strike observed against police action in Gwadar, *Daily Sangar*, 12 January¹⁶

A city-wide shutter-down strike was observed on 12 January in the coastal city of Balochistan and CPEC hub, Gwadar against the raid on the residence of the convener of the All Parties Alliance. The shutter-down was observed in Gwadar on the appeal of the All Parties Alliance who opposed the raid on the house of Abdul Ghafoor Hoot and his harassment. Due to which, business and commercial centers, petrol pumps, banks, hotels, restaurants and other commercial activities in the city were closed. According to the All Parties Alliance, yesterday, the police surrounded the residence of the head of the alliance, Abdul Ghafoor, in retaliation for his political activities and tried to harass him. Such an act will not be accepted. The leaders said that the All Parties have been staging sit-ins for the rights of the people for the past four weeks. Our demands are not illegal and are not against the constitution. We have demanded from the administration to resolve other public issues, including border trawling and electricity supply in the city. But instead of resolving these issues, the administration is pressuring to end the sit-in, which is in no way acceptable to the political leadership here. We will adopt every path of peaceful democratic struggle for the fundamental rights of the people.

Balochistan, the richest province! Shuja Sageer Khan, *Jasarat*, 14 January¹⁷

Pakistan is a priceless gift of nature to the Pakistanis which we have not appreciated till now. There is so much wealth in Pakistan that we do not need loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. We need an honest establishment and an honest ruler. It is the misfortune of the nation that it could not get honest

¹⁶ <https://dailysangar.online/?p=56122>

¹⁷ <https://www.jasarat.com/2025/01/14/250114-03-7/>

leadership. The only honest party, Jamaat-e-Islami was never given the opportunity to rule by the people or the establishment. But the JI has never been sad about it, as power has never been their goal. *Balochistan is the richest province of our country but our rulers have never paid attention to ending the feeling of deprivation of Balochistan. Instead a great Baloch leader, Nawab Akbar Bugti who used to talk about the rights of his people who was demanding the rights of the Baloch people were killed.* About 40 vast reserves of highly valuable underground minerals have been discovered so far in Balochistan, which, according to conservative estimates, can meet the country's needs for the next 50 to 100 years. These include reserves of oil, gas, gold, copper, uranium, iron, coal, granite, lead, silicon, sulfur and platinum, etc. Reko Diq is expected to yield 10 billion kilograms of copper and 368 million grams of gold. According to official figures, the country's economic growth rate in 2024 was 0.92 percent. In this, the mining growth rate was negative 4.6 percent, which is unfortunate.

Future of the negotiations? Editorial, Jang, 20 January¹⁸

After the talks between the government and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) began, every conscious Pakistani wants them to succeed. Without ending the political crisis neither the political order nor the economy can be restored on a sustainable basis. These talks began with the permission of the founder of the PTI and his colleagues are participating in them only as per his instructions. During this time, news of the party leaders' contact with the Army Chief also came to light and the founding chairman expressed his satisfaction and expressed his desire to move forward. However, for this, it was necessary that the series of malicious propaganda against the military leadership be stopped at all levels. *But not only is the propaganda being continued through the powerful social media network of the PTI, but Imran Khan has also jeopardized both its formal talks with the government and the establishment and the secret talks via his latest post on X. A source close to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has revealed that both Ali Amin Gandapur and Barrister Gohar had requested Imran Khan to refrain from attacking the army and its leadership. But after the verdict in the Al-Qadir Trust case, Imran Khan has said in his post that "the history of*

¹⁸ <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/834483>

1971 is being repeated in Pakistan. Yahya Khan II has destroyed the country." If this expression of anger and rage against the military leadership is due to being found guilty in the 190 million pound case, then it is misdirected. He was found guilty by the court on the basis of evidence that the prosecution has proven its allegations. This decision can certainly be disputed, but the method for doing so is not through hateful rants on social media, but rather by appealing against it in the higher judiciary.

America has never come to the help of Pakistanis, Mehmood Shaam, Jang, 23 January¹⁹

"America's golden age has now begun. From today on, our country will be prosperous and respected around the world. Now America will be first. *We all consider America the most prosperous and powerful country. What is its 47th president saying? "America will soon be greater, stronger, and more unique than ever before. I return to the presidency with confidence and hope. Now is the beginning of a new era of national achievement. A wave of change is sweeping across the country. "* Will America really be saved from decline now, or will the entire world be concerned that America will start trampling on smaller nations to improve its own affairs? Finally, the date of 20 January made its mark. Donald Trump, who was convicted by the courts in the country, took the oath of office as the 47th President of the United States (US). Despite all the efforts and conspiracies of the establishment, Trump will be in the White House for the next very important 4 years. This long excerpt (quoted above) from his swearing-in speech is a testament to his determination, perseverance and making America great. The American people have now enthusiastically supported him, and whites are feeling a new passion. Spring has come for white Americans. But what will happen to blacks and others? How many millions of illegal aliens will be deported from America? America is considered a paradise all over the world. How many illegal ways do people take to reach this earthly paradise and endure suffering? Especially for the residents of neighbouring countries, bad times are coming, America has been inviting immigrants to stay in the past. And it has also been proud of the fact that other countries, continents and lands have enriched America's

¹⁹ <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/836097>

civilization, society and literature. But now that whites are becoming afraid of the increasing number of foreigners; they are all pinning their hopes on Trump, that he will run a campaign for an “America for Whites Only” and succeed.

PTI and government take a tough stance on negotiations, Editorial, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 28 January²⁰

Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Barrister Gohar Ali Khan says that what PTI founder Imran Khan said regarding the talks with the government is the party's decision. The government delayed the start of the talks and also delayed the formation of the commission. Talking to the media yesterday, he said that if the government is still serious, then it should take one positive step; we will talk to the PTI founder. *On the other hand, the spokesperson of the government's negotiation team, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, responded to Chairman PTI Barrister Gohar's position in a strong tone; He said that neither talks will be held with PTI nor a judicial commission will be formed before the seven-day deadline that was set for the talks.* According to him, PTI suddenly and unilaterally ended the talks. We will not respond to threats or boycotts in this way. We are ready for the January 28 meeting. *In principle, the government and the opposition should resolve any controversial issue by sitting at the negotiating table, which is the basic principle of democracy. Unfortunately, the PTI leadership refused to negotiate with the government and kept hinting at talking to the establishment only on its demands and then relying on the newly elected US President Trump.* However, all other expectations failed, the founder of PTI gave a signal for negotiations with the government. The PTI presented a two-point charter of demands for negotiations, which the government team demanded to be presented in writing. But the PTI negotiation team chose to avoid it and then the Chairman of PTI Barrister Gohar, after meeting the founder of PTI in Adiala Jail, suddenly announced the end of the negotiations three days before the deadline set for the negotiations.

²⁰ <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/28-Jan-2025/1863169>

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Big Threat for Pakistan? PTI & Govt Talks & “Uraan Pakistan” Plan, Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, *Geo News*, 01 January²¹

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif formally unveiled the National Economic Transformation Plan 2024-29 on Tuesday called “*Uraan Pakistan: Home-grown National Economic Plan*”, with the promise to revive the country’s economy. The five-year plan aims to address key economic challenges through a targeted framework called the “*Five Es*” *Exports; E-Pakis-tan; Equity and Empo-werment; Environment, Food and Water Security; and Energy and Infrastructure*. Mir asked if there is no political stability in the country how will there be economic stability. *Guests: Khawaja Asif (Minister of Defence of Pakistan)*. *Khawaja Asif* talking about the plan he agreed there should be political stability but instead of the instability there has been indicators of economic growth and development. He added that although inflation has not been over all scrapped but it has improved, the remittance has also increased. Uraan Pakistan is a dream for all and the representative from KP also took part in the same. The interest rates have massively come down and now people can do investment, inflation has also come down. He added that now if there is political stability then Pakistan can reach to new levels in the economic growth. He underlined that political battles should be fought in political ring and it should not come to economy, as the PTI is doing asking the NRI Pakistani’s not to send remittance to Pakistan if government does not agree to their demands. Talking about terror attacks and increasing incidents in KP whoever is dying are the residents of Pakistan, there is a need to counter these elements in KP. Talking about the threats of TTP he pointed out that we need to change the policy towards fighting these terror groups especially in Balochistan and KP. There was an effort to ceasefire with TTP but in real they were not committed to the process, General Faiz went to talk with the TTP in the past during Imran Khan’s tenure. Rana Sanaullah also pointed out on this show that there are certain factors of TTP, some want to settle and talk and other faction are not ready to talk. He added that in closed door Bajwa and Faiz said that TTP should be

²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ps2m3PquXkM>

settled down and it is a great step, Imran Khan agreed to the same when he was PM and later took U-turn on the same.

Imran Khan gives direction to continue the talks with government committee, Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, *ARY News*, 08 January²²

The host pointed out that Imran Khan met with important leaders of the committee behind doors in Adiala jail and directed them to continue the talks with the government. He also pointed out that the talks are not going any where and there are cracks on both sides of the party, government and opposition. Faisal Chaudary was one of them, he is one of the guest on this episode. The host asked where is the politics of the country going, will these talks go ahead between the government and opposition? **Guests:** Muhammad Malick (Senior Analyst), Faisal Chaudhry (PTI Lawyer), Mohammad Zubair (Former Governor Sindh).

Muhammad Malick talking about the recent politics he underlined that the importance of Mohsin Naqvi has increased because the track two talks have also been initiated by him, and establishment is behind him. Talking about the PTI, he added that they do not think that the government has power and that they are indirectly controlled by the establishment. He added that the government may give a judicial commission on May 09 but they will not get the same on 26 November. Nobody is opposing the talks with PTI from PML-N but Maryam Nawaz has labelled the PTI as terrorist many times. He added PTI has nothing to lose, and they should take a stand and take some time and deal with the government. **Mohammad Zubair** pointed out that the team on the government side has no power to negotiate nor to decide the date of meeting, the reality is that the key is with the establishment, when they say yes then things will move on. Mohsin Naqvi is on the side of the military and he will bring messages from the army side. Talking about the changing position of Imran Khan every now and then, he added that the present judges are biased and they will give judgment against the government. The negotiations are going nowhere and the PTI has fallen in a trap, the government is illegitimate and the PTI should not talk to such a government. The hawks want to

²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw7mP40volk>

destroy the PTI, they have no power, and they can go on and demonstrate. **Faisal Chaudhry** pointed out that he talked to Imran Khan and that he told him that they are not letting us meet. He again added that he questioned the power of the team on the government side, if they will be able to negotiate the demands of the PTI. He added Shehbaz Sharif has given go ahead to the team to talk, but on the other side there is a group that belongs to Nawaz Sharif who is not on board on certain things. They should form a judicial commission and it is a genuine demand. The talks are dragged and we know the thing, they are trying to dilute certain things. The government should show some seriousness and if they do not consider our demands otherwise the talks will be derailed.

Musakarati Committee opposition met Imran Khan: stresses on Judicial Commission Naya Pakistan with Shahzad Iqbal, Geo News, 12 January²³

The host informed that at last the representatives of Musakarati Committee of the opposition met Imran Khan in jail and when they came out they informed the media that Imran Khan wants judicial commission for 9th May 26 November incidents and also he stressed on the release of the workers of PTI behind jail. After this meeting the talks behind government and PTI might resume soon, it is hoped. He also informed that the case of Al Qadir trust will be decided and the judgment will be out within days, PTI said the judgment will be against the PTI, Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi. The government hopes that the judgment will be based on facts and justice will prevail. Khawaja Asif strictly talked about the 190 Million pound money grabbed by Imran Khan through an Al Qadir Trust. **Guests:** Allama Raja Nasir Abbas-member opposition musakrati committee & Ahsan Iqbal-PML-N. **Allama Raja Nasir Abbas** talking about the meeting with Imran Khan he added that they met with him recently and it is very important that government allow frequent meetings with Imran Khan and it should be in open and fair environment. He added that the room was the same where they met and it was very small, everywhere the room is bugged and that is why we said it happened in a controlled manner. He added if the government want to take the talks ahead they

²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8SIkxQg5zI>

should give us a fair environment, underlining that we will not talk against the government in any case. The government has asked us to give in written instead of minute of meeting, but they did not provide any pen and paper. The meeting with Imran Khan is strategic and it is the only way to better the future of Pakistan. Judicial commission is important and Imran Khan stressed on the same and asked us to accelerate this demand. He also added that the commission should be independent and if they do not make such, then they will close the door for the development of the country. The political prisoners should be let out and give a green and positive signal to the people. **Ahsan Iqbal** talking about the issue of water by PPP in Sindh he added that we should not use the issue as political tool, he added that it was a technical answer and talked about water accord and according to that accord water distribution to all provinces are decided accordingly. In the coming day there will be imbalance in the water flow, but that does not give one state the right to take more water. There are forums that can be used to resolve the issues and not to play the blame game as done by the PPP now. The apex committee can also be consulted to resolve the water issue and not to make any controversy out of it. If there is no solutions then only they can bring it in the public domain. The PPP should take the issue to the government and try to resolve the water issue in Sindh.

Government-Opposition Talks: What is PTI's Trump Card? Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, ARY News, 14 January²⁴

The Host talked about the production order of Senator Ijaz Chaudhary by chairman Senate and how despite of the orders he was not pretend in the court, the superintendent police of Punjab did not allow him. He asked how this can be read. In the second part they talked about the current political crisis and the talks between government and opposition. He asked is this a political decision to defer the production order? **Guests:** Senator Faisal Vawda (Senior Leader) & Mohammad Zubair (Former Governor Sindh). **Senator Faisal Vawda** he underlined that if a police officer rejected the production order that it is the failure of the whole parliament. It is the jail in Punjab and comes under

²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQnWKBoIHW0>

Punjab government that means it is the failure of the government of Punjab too. He pointed out that there is more than that meets the eyes, the interior minister can also be involved and the production order was by chairman Senate that was rejected. Talking about the Al Qadir trust (*90 Million Pound case*) he underlined that he was against the issue since from the start even when he was with the PTI. He added that he endorse that the whole government of PTI is responsible for the issue and case should be added to others too. There will be disappointment in the PTI about the *Trump card*, this can go in the governments hand before the PTI. He added there is a propaganda within. **Mohammad Zubair** pointed out that if the CM has done in Punjab, the Punjab government and the Federal government did not wanted the production. There is no rule of law and anything is happening on whims and fancies. He added that the hawks in the current government are using senseless methods to suppress the opposition and restoring to these unlawful means. Talking about the 90 Million Pound case he added that the cabinet decision is a collective decision and not of one person like the PM. He asked what has stopped the future governments of the PDM to reverse the decision by the PTI. There is no way there will be pressure from US on government of Pakistan in favour of PTI. Trump has said anything he wanted to say about all countries and nothing about Imran Khan till now, why he is silent about Pakistan? He added there will be no benefit for Shehbaz Sharif from Trump, we can hope no harm comes from him because he is unconventional.

Judicial commission must for further talks: PTI, 11th Hour with Waseem Badami, *ARY News*, 22 January²⁵

Talking about the government and PTI talks, he informed that the PTI has said that if the government does not form the commission after the fourth meeting then there will be no meeting. The government has said that they will make it clear on the next meeting on 28th January , but the PTI is saying before that meeting the government should give some reassurance on the judicial commission. Has this demand of the PTI complicated the direction of talks between the government and the PTI. **Guests:** Ijaz-ul-Haq-PML-N,

²⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpkD_8vup78

Sheikh Waqas Akram-PTI, Barrister Saad Rasool (Analyst) & Muneeb Farooq (Analyst).

Ijaz-ul-Haq pointed out that if the PTI want to stop the talks then its fine otherwise they have to show some flexibility. We will prepare an answer for the PTI's letter and discuss on the demands. It is a serious matter and things will be discussed in the fourth meeting, government is serious about the talks. **Sheikh Waqas Akram** pointed out that from the first day we are taking stock of the things from the government side and we have been raising questions. If the committee from the government side can't help us meet Imran Khan in jail then what power it has, the government was never serious about things from the start. PTI has top legal fraternity in the party and in compared to the government's legal team its way better, the government is sacred by the protests of the PTI and the resistance of Imran Khan that he will not take any deal. He added we want independent judicial commission probe and not answers from the government. If the process of the talks is derailed we will go and protest and point out things on the floor of the house as well as the road. **Barrister Saad Rasool** pointed out that it is realpolitik and the narrative of all sides matter and part of it. Not only logically but legally also Imran Khan should be out. There is no open and shut case, in the appeals it is not visible so. If he is not out this time we have to concede that there is no process or legality, we are living in a system that is lawless and despite of the legality one can be kept behind bars. **Muneeb Farooq** according to logic Imran Khan can be out of jail, it has been long time since he is behind jail. Now again he is convicted in many cases, it may go on for long time. The case of Imran Khan is very peculiar and he cannot be behind the jail for a longer time, now if he wants if he behave or surrender things can change for him. The establishment is on the peak power and we are national security state where military will be dominant and it will be like this forever. The sad part is that there is no willingness or keenness on the side of the government. Basically the issue is very complicated and now the crude reality is that it is not only about what Imran Khan think, the realization should be on the establishment side too. Imran Khan is a leader of the mainstream party called PTI and it cannot be denied. 9th May happened way later but the process to put Imran Khan behind jail started before, the establishment is still not ready to bring Khan out of the jail, and there is no realization yet.

Senate Committee approves PECA Amendment Act 2025: Journalists Rejects it,
Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Geo News, 28 January²⁶

In the first part Hamid Mir informed that National Bank of Pakistan has decreased the rate of interest from 13 to 12% and another information is that standing committee of Senate interior has passed the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (PECA) Amendment act 2025, journalists were invited in the meeting but their issues were not given any accommodation. “The amendment introduces a criminal offence against those perpetrating so-called ‘false and fake information’ and imposes a maximum penalty of three years’ imprisonment with a fine. The vague and ambiguous framing of some elements of the offense together with a history of the PECA being used to silence dissent raises concerns that this new offence will chill what little is left of the right to online expression in the country. The main point is that the chairman Senate Committee is from PTI, Senator Faisal Salim and the party has given a showcase notice to him after passing this bill. It will be accepted from all other place, the question is why the government is in such a hurry to pass this bill? Guests: Senator Musadik Malik-PML-N & Aon Abbas Buppi-PTI. **Senator Musadik Malik** pointed out that the chairman of the committee is Senator Faisal Salim and he belongs to PTI, he has been given showcase notice and the day the PTI announce protest date he will leave the party. If the party decides that PTI will stay in the party, then the PTI has to tell if you are accepting it then why the protest, and if not why Faisal Salim accepted it. As chair Senate Committee he should have called the media persons and debated on the act, he has the power to do it, it is wrong to say that he is alone. PECA Ordinance was brought out by PTI, and now they have to tell what the problem is. The issue is of fake news and led to violence and murder, this act is to curb all these fake news that spread like wildfire in the social media. Faisal Salim has said that he is himself victim of the fake news. Talking about the PTI and the PECA ordinance he added that it was for safety for women and religious sentiments and now the act is against the media and opposition, why this double standards. It is true that there should be balance in the law and it should not be used for political victimization. **Aon Abbas Buppi** the act was sent by interior ministry and not information ministry as it is related to media. The

²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcOf7Ddn-Vw>

journalists has issues with it and their grievances are not considered. Senator Faisal should have abstained according to the party rules but it has to be noted that he was the only one in the committee and others were from PML-N and PPP. This act is bogus and it will be challenged in the court, how is it possible that we have to take clearance from the interior ministry before opening the YouTube channel and all other social media will be scrutinized. Talking about the PECA ordinance that the PTI brought he informed that it is true that they did it but the ordinance was challenged in the courts and it was not passed. He added if the PECA is directly to attack the journalists and the opposition party like PTI and to curb them from posting anything against the government in media. He asked even though if there is debate in the Senate there is no chance that the government will reverse the act. He added that the act can't suppress the voice of the people on the social media, the act is all a fake scream.

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Khurram ²⁷	17/01/2025	Death toll in attack on Kurram convoy rises to 10: official	06	10
Khyber ²⁸	26/01/2025	30 terrorists killed, 8 hurt in KP operations: ISPR	30	08

²⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1885873>

²⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1887694/30-terrorists-killed-8-hurt-in-kp-operations-ispr>