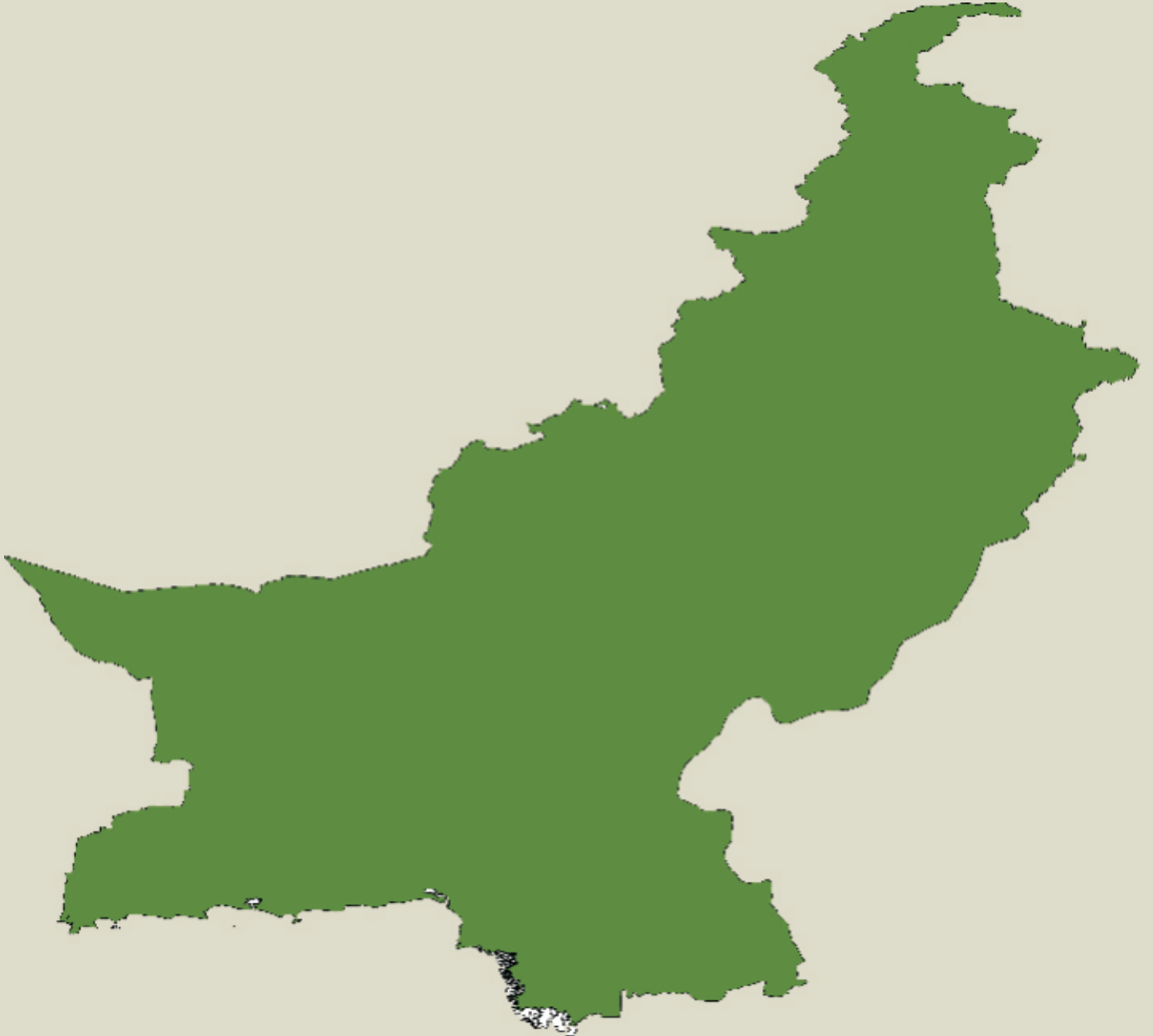


November 2024

# 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  
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## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### **ATA amendment, Editorial, *The News*, 04 November<sup>1</sup>**

The proposed amendment to Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) of 1997, granting security forces the authority to detain individuals suspected of terrorism for up to three months, can be seen as a troubling shift in the balance between national security and civil liberties. *While there is no denying the importance of robust counterterrorism measures in times of heightened threats, laws that allow indefinite detention based on suspicion alone are fundamentally at odds with the principles of justice and accountability. While the amendment cites security needs as its rationale, the logic of sacrificing due process for preventive detention is flawed.* Far from establishing peace, laws that erode fundamental rights and facilitate arbitrary detention often fuel resentment and mistrust among the public. They compromise the very freedoms that democratic societies are meant to protect and, in the process, weaken the legitimacy of the state itself. Pakistan's response to rising terrorist threats should not compromise rule of law. Rather, it should involve creating a legal framework that upholds international human rights standards while enabling effective counterterrorism. *Adopting such standards would include clearly defining criteria for detention, instituting robust checks and balances, and mandating regular judicial review. Ultimately, preventive detention laws may appear effective in the short term, but there are legitimate concerns that they could set a precedent that undermines democracy. True security cannot be achieved by diminishing the rights and freedoms of the people it is meant to protect.* That said, it is also dangerous to ignore the rising terror threat in the country, which is and should be a very serious concern for all of us: what we need is a fine balance between ensuring citizens' safety and civil liberties.

### **Beijing's firmness, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 14 November<sup>2</sup>**

China stood with Pakistan in reiterating that ongoing fissures and downslide will not be a deterrent in their time-tested ties. Beijing's kindness to put it in so many words has come

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1247098-ata-amendment>

<sup>2</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2509409/beijings-firmness>

at a time when there were speculations that China is taking a backseat, and many of the developmental ventures could hit snags owing to a new spike of terrorism and revulsion inside Pakistan. *This consolidated resolve is an asset and goes on to confirm the strategic wavelength that the two states enjoy. A spokesperson from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Lin Jian, put it in unequivocal terms that dedication to CPEC's success is unconditional and the speculation that violence will derail the momentum is unfounded.* This promising geopolitical abstract is in need of being carried further, and cemented with substantial measures to plough the loopholes in the system that give way to disgruntled elements to create space for themselves. The dilapidated security situation deserves a renewed appraisal and can best be countered with political and economic muscles. Perhaps, this is why Beijing has reposed its complete trust in Pakistan's professional security edifice, and has also hinted at collaborating with it by putting in its expertise for finding a perpetual solution to the issues at hand. *Apparently a clause mentioning the buoyed role of security agencies and military forces to assist in counter-terrorism missions and conduct joint strikes is the way to go forward in all humility.*

### **Constitutional benches, Editorial, *The News*, 14 November<sup>3</sup>**

With the inauguration of Pakistan's first seven-member constitutional bench, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan will lead the bench in interpreting cases that fall strictly under Article 191A. *This development, following the passage of the 26th Amendment, aims to channel politically charged cases to specific constitutional benches, thereby allowing other benches to focus on the everyday grievances of the public. Yet, despite the apparent clarity of purpose, the division within the Supreme Court may open up further questions on the effectiveness of this new system.* Nevertheless, the constitutional bench is no cure-all. Justice should be dispensed impartially, whether a case is deemed political or not. The creation of these specialized benches does not absolve the judiciary of its duty to uphold rule of law across all cases. If anything, it should reinforce the judiciary's commitment to focus on justice above political influences, allowing parliament and politicians to carry out their responsibilities without judicial interference. *As the country embarks on this new chapter of judicial bifurcation, much will depend on how quickly and effectively the Supreme Court adapts. If these constitutional*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1250751-constitutional-benches>

*benches can demonstrate swifter processing of cases without compromising justice, this model may well become a progressive step in judicial reform.* If, however, they merely add to institutional fragmentation, the judiciary's credibility may suffer further.

#### **Digital Disconnect, Editorial, *The Nation*, 18 November<sup>4</sup>**

The Council of Islamic Ideology's recent controversy surrounding its comments on VPN use highlights the growing absurdity of Pakistan's discourse on internet access. Although the council distanced itself from the remarks, the damage has been done. Ridicule was swift, and deservedly so. *Technology, by its very nature, is neutral. Declaring it moral or immoral based on use is akin to branding the printing press or a smartphone unethical. This incident underscores a larger problem: the nation's reluctance to embrace the digital age meaningfully. Planning Minister Ah-san Iqbal's call for a digital revolution is a stark contrast to such regressive rhetoric.* His emphasis on the transformative potential of digital technologies for governance, education, and economic progress should be a wake-up call. However, aspirations for a digital Pakistan ring hollow when internet services are repeatedly disrupted under the pretext of security, stifling economic and social growth. Access to a free and open internet is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity for a thriving modern economy. *Instead of fearing technology, policymakers should prioritise fostering an environment where innovation can flourish. Efforts must focus on expanding digital literacy, improving access, and safeguarding rights not on curtailing freedoms or indulging in misguided moralistic debates.*

#### **VPN fatwa, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 19 November<sup>5</sup>**

Pakistan's cyberspace has long been a battleground where the state seeks to exert control over the narrative. Over the years, authorities have ramped up efforts to regulate online content, blocking websites, throttling social media and cracking down on platforms that refuse to toe the line. Now, with the CII's fatwa against VPNs, there is growing fear that this could be yet another tool to control the digital space. *In the age of the internet, where*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nation.com.pk/18-Nov-2024/digital-disconnect>

<sup>5</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2510437/vpn-fatwa>

*VPNs have become essential for safeguarding privacy and accessing uncensored information, branding them as haram seems like an attempt to clip the wings of information sharing. The decree has drawn sharp criticism from various quarters, including renowned Islamic scholars who question the logic behind the CII's decision.* If VPNs are considered un-Islamic for their potential misuse, well-known scholar Maulana Tariq Jamil argues, then by the same logic, mobile phones - which can access the same "harmful" content - should also be deemed haram. Moreover, the fatwa comes at a time when internet freedom is already under significant pressure. With attempts at restricting digital spaces increasing, many see this decree as less about religious morality and more about tightening control over the flow of information. *What is more troubling is the precedent this sets. If history is any guide, we should know far better than anyone that the blending of religious decrees with state control is a dangerous cocktail, which could pave the way for even stricter internet controls, pushing the country closer to a digital authoritarian state where surveillance is the norm, and freedom of speech is the casualty.*

**PTI's chaos curve**, Editorial, *The News*, 25 November<sup>6</sup>

The latest chapter in the PTI's recurring tale of protest unfolded yesterday Imran Khan's 'final call' to march on Islamabad ostensibly fizzling out, in the wake of road closures, internet disruptions, arrests, and general public frustration. *While the protest may not have escalated into major violence, its impact on ordinary citizens and the national exchequer was significant. Per reports and claims, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's prior warnings and the Islamabad High Court's directives against such gatherings did little to deter PTI, which charged ahead regardless, with convoys of supporters facing arrests en route to the capital.* The government, in turn, reacted with heavy-handed measures blocking roads, closing educational institutions, and reportedly tampering with internet services under the guise of maintaining order. *As has become routine with PTI protests, normal life ground to a halt for many citizens, while millions of rupees were drained from the national coffers. Imran's apparent refusal to listen to dissenting voices within his party or to engage in meaningful dialogue with other political stakeholders is emblematic of the same rigidity that has plagued his leadership.* It

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1254589-pti-s-chaos-curve>

may rally his hard-core supporters, but it alienates the broader electorate and strains the patience of a public already grappling with economic instability and security challenges. The reality is that anarchist politics only lead to diminishing credibility over time. The November 24 protest, like those before it, seems to have achieved little except sowing more chaos.

### **Failure of politics, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 28 November<sup>7</sup>**

The outcome underlines that politics has failed. The coalition government unnecessarily went over the brink to make a point that it is intolerant to dissent. In doing so, it perhaps forgot the simple reality that the political process is all about protests, difference of opinion and the right to coexist under the nomenclature of the constitution. *The PML-N leaders who vowed to avenge the PTI sit-in from the pulpit had put up a disgusting show for the sake of political expediency, and the PPP's distancing itself does not absolve it of the ramifications in line. With PTI workers seen abiding by the limits of the Red Zone, a crackdown was unacceptable.* The government should have waited for them to grow tired and fatigued in the chills of Islamabad, forcing them to thin out in due course of time, and at the same time engaging the PTI leadership in meaningful talks. *The Interior Minister and his cavalry, by resorting to excessive use of force, has set a wrong and unlawful precedent. With a traumatised and leaderless PTI pledging to continue protest, the equation is back to square one.* The government's brinkmanship has failed, as the issues on agenda still are: release of political prisoners and acceptance of the February 8 mandate. It's pitiful that we don't learn from history.

### **The Way Forward, Editorial, *The Nation*, 29 November<sup>8</sup>**

In the wake of the Islamabad protests, conflicting claims have flooded social media about what transpired that night. Many of these assertions are unverified and often exaggerated to align with particular narratives. *For instance, the claim that over 200 people were killed in a so-called massacre is clearly exaggerated and should be treated as such. Conversely, assertions*

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<sup>7</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2512322/failure-of-politics>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Nov-2024/the-way-forward>



*that there were no injuries at all are equally misleading and an attempt to obscure the truth. PTI must adhere to the boundaries set for such protests. It is critical that demonstrations do not encroach upon sensitive areas housing vital state institutions.* This mutual understanding would strike a balance, allowing both parties to achieve their aims while upholding the dignity of the democratic process. Ultimately, the goal should be to reintegrate PTI into parliamentary proceedings. The absence of the opposition has reduced parliament to a rubber-stamp body, undermining its democratic function. *By facilitating PTI's return, the government can revitalise the parliamentary system, providing a legitimate platform for debates, grievances, and objections. This is a time for compromise, ensuring that incidents like the one in Islamabad are not repeated.* A commitment to dialogue, restraint, and respect for democratic norms will pave the way for a more stable and inclusive political future.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**

**Seeking investment, Editorial, Dawn, 01 November<sup>9</sup>**

Saudi Arabia has agreed to increase its promised investment in Pakistan by another \$600m to \$2.8bn, with Riyadh signing seven more MoUs during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's just-concluded visit to that country. A Saudi delegation, led by the Saudi investment minister, had concluded 27 MoUs worth \$2.2bn in Islamabad last month. *The decision to boost the volume of Saudi investment in Pakistan was made after Mr Sharif's "very productive" meetings in Riyadh. According to the Saudis, some of the MoUs have resulted in exports from Pakistan in agriculture and other sectors. After his Saudi visit, the premier reached Doha to woo Qatari investors to Pakistan.* For over a year, Pakistan has been chasing official and private investments in state-owned enterprises, agriculture, oil and gas exploration, the aviation industry, mining and other sectors of the economy. Initially, we were told that three friendly Gulf nations Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar had pledged to invest \$25bn each in Pakistan over the next five years. *The previous Shehbaz Sharif government also set up the military-backed Special Investment Facilitation Council to provide 'prospective' Gulf investors*

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1869044>

*some comfort on policy consistency. In fact, the Saudi announcement to increase its promised investment in Pakistan coincided with all but one bidder pulling back from the process of the airline's sale.* Potential Chinese investment under CPEC's second phase also appears a distant possibility because of security concerns. China is upset not only over the terrorist attacks against its nationals working in Pakistan but also the narrative built around the power plants set up under the CPEC plan.

### **Unscheduled visit by IMF, Editorial, Dawn, 13 November<sup>10</sup>**

An IMF mission is in Islamabad for unusual, early talks with the Pakistani authorities as the lender seems worried over the government missing critical targets and veering off the course charted for the country under its \$7bn funding programme. *The first of the six biannual performance reviews was not due until the first quarter of 2025, before the scheduled release of the second tranche in March. But, given the IMF's anxiety over the programme's implementation, the move to accelerate the first review of the nation's finances amid a growing shortfall in tax collection is understandable.* Finance ministry officials, on their part, according to media reports, have insisted that the discussions with the Fund are not part of the first performance review. Apart from discussing the country's fiscal deficit amid huge tax collection slippages of Rs190bn between July and October, the mission will evaluate progress on the measure to arrange \$2.5bn to fill the external financing gap for FY25, the plan to tax retailers and agriculture, SOE privatisation, which has experienced a setback after the failed attempt to sell PIA, and the shortfall in provincial cash surplus thanks to Punjab's questionable spending on power subsidies and energy sector reforms in the face of growing losses. *The unusual visit also makes it abundantly clear that the lender will closely watch implementation of the programme goals to prevent it from derailing, as pointed out in this space a few times in the recent past.* If Pakistan wants a continuation of funding under the programme, the government will have to walk the talk it has done in the last nine months. Any further dilly-dallying on reforms agreed under the bailout will only hurt the common people. The Fund itself has nothing to lose.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1872055/unscheduled-visit>

## SECURITY SITUATION

### Looming Iran strike, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 07 November<sup>11</sup>

Iranian foreign minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi visited Pakistan earlier in the week. The visit comes at a critical juncture in the Middle East's geopolitics. Although the official press release stated that the purpose of the visit was to emphasise the need for improving coordination with Islamabad to strengthen border security and prevent cross-border terrorist attacks, the real reason was perhaps different. **The visit comes after the October 26 Israeli counter-strike against Iran in the ongoing war against the Axis of Resistance and Palestinian factions. Following the attack, Tehran vowed to "certainly" respond to Israel's latest attack in a "well-measured" and "well-calculated" manner and increased diplomatic efforts in the region. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei also promised a "crushing response".** Araghchi's Islamabad visit appears to be a part of a broader strategy to garner regional support for its political stance and also in preparation for another retaliatory strike against Israel. Iran's foreign policy is shaped by its desire to challenge Israeli influence and power in the Levant and strengthen its diplomatic relations with other regional states.

### More attacks, Editorial, *The News*, 21 November<sup>12</sup>

According to a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), 12 security personnel were martyred in a suicide blast in Bannu when terrorists attempted to attack a joint check post in the area on Tuesday. Six terrorists were also killed in the attack. In a separate incident and as per media reports, at least eight security personnel were martyred in gun battles with terrorists over the weekend in the Tirah valley while nine terrorists were also killed. *This, however, has not yet been officially confirmed. These attacks come on the heels of the apex committee meeting of the National Action Plan (NAP). According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister Office, the top civil-military body gave its nod to a military operation in Balochistan against terrorist groups who are targeting innocent civilians and foreign nationals to scuttle Pakistan's economic progress by creating insecurity at the behest of hostile*

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<sup>11</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2507922/looming-iran-strike>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1253190-more-attacks>

*external powers.* All provincial chief ministers, Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, cabinet members and senior government officials were among the attendees of the important huddle. *The top civil-military body stressed on a “unified political voice and a cohesive national narrative” to effectively address these multifaceted challenges. It was emphasised that political support across party lines and complete national consensus are critical to reinvigorating the national counter terrorism campaign under the framework of Vision Azm-e-Istehkam.* There is no denying that we need a political consensus on terrorism but unfortunately, we see that our political parties are busy fighting with each other. PTI’s ‘final call’ for a protest in Islamabad on November 24 and the government’s response that it will not allow the PTI to disrupt the capital shows how the focus of these parties is on political activities when it should be on terrorism.

### **Kurram atrocity, Editorial, Dawn, 22 November<sup>13</sup>**

Kurram is particularly sensitive, due mainly to its sectarian dynamics and proximity to Afghanistan, in addition to the presence of militant groups and heavy arms. *Yet the state has been unable to deweaponise the area, or judiciously resolve the tribal disputes that can spiral into communal bloodletting. It would be a monumental mistake for the state to continue ignoring the violence in Kurram. Instability can easily spread to the adjoining districts if not contained, and vested interests can exploit sectarian differences in the region to create communal discord across Pakistan.* The first duty of the state is to track down and punish the elements responsible for the latest attack. It cannot be business as usual after this brutal episode, and all state institutions must come up with solid plans to protect Kurram’s people, and other vulnerable populations in KP. A multiparty conference to discuss law and order in KP has been scheduled for next month. *Considering the latest outrage, this conclave should be held earlier. Moreover, along with state functionaries, the Ulema and tribal elders must also work to defuse the situation and ensure a retaliatory spiral of violence does not ensue.* The state has dithered over Kurram’s security long enough. It is time to provide justice to the victims of violence, while terrorists and their facilitators must be tracked down and made to answer before the law.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1874028/kurram-atrocity>

### **Cracks in Pakistan-China relations, Editorial, Jasarat, 01 November<sup>14</sup>**

*Pakistan has repeatedly declared that Pakistan-China friendship is higher than the Himalayas and deeper than the seas. However, every now and then China's views seem to change. Whatever may be the reasons but certainly China's mode changes and then Pakistani leaders, including military leadership travels China to pacify the Chinese. How can demand from a country asking for the security of citizens undermine strong diplomatic relations? The people of Pakistan can understand that their protection is not an important issue in the minds of the Pakistani foreign office and the rulers. It is part of the Chinese ambassador's statement which the Pakistani rulers have been declaring as a game changer (CPEC) for many years. Only time will tell for whom the game will change. But to say that CPEC cannot work in a security situation like this implies that the project is not to go ahead. Now the Pakistani rulers see to which side the game is changing and what penalty Pakistan will have to pay if the project is stopped. The Chinese ambassador said that he hopes that Pakistan will strengthen the security of Chinese citizens, institutions and projects. Pakistan should severely punish those who are involved in deadly attacks on Chinese citizens. He said that the President of China is concerned about the security of the Chinese and prioritizes the lives of Chinese people above all else. The Chinese ambassador also said that Beijing and Islamabad can together crack down on terrorists. This is another policy shift. Till now Pakistan was fighting against terrorists together with America. So will this war be fought together with two countries? Now Pakistani rulers have to think seriously that Pakistan is part of which camp. The Minister of Foreign Affairs should not act like a naïve. He should understand the incidents happening in Pakistan in the context of China-United States tensions and the conspiracies of US's tool, India.*

### **KP target of terrorists, Mohd Qasim, Ummat, 04 November<sup>15</sup>**

*The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is at the target of terrorists. The district of the Chief Minister, governor and IG, Dera Ismail Khan is at the top of the terrorists' list. Maximum*

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.jasarat.com/2024/11/01/241101-03-3/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://ummat.net/epaper/news.php?date=2024/11/04/&p=story4.gif>

*number of security forces, 74 have been killed in the district. In the ongoing year 429 people were killed and 789 injured in Dera Ismail Khan. Similarly, In Bannu, Bajaur, Peshawar, Khyber, Mardan, Mohmand, Deer, Kohat, North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Kurram, Hazara districts hundreds people were killed in various terrorist attacks.* On the other hand, security forces and people have carried out many actions in which hideouts of terrorists were destroyed. However, given the deteriorating security situation in Dera Ismail Khan, the Chief Minister and governor have been asked to take immediate steps. *Instead of taking appropriate action, the PTI led provincial government has decided to set up tent-villages.* According to some sources, the PTI has decided to cancel its rally in Peshawar on 8 November and decided to set up a tent-village there. On 10 November a tent-village will be set up in Swabi in which hundreds of tents will be installed for the PTI workers from across the province. *Apart from the workers, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, ministers, MNAs and MPs will also sit in the tent-village. It is also said that from the tent-villages the workers may march towards Islamabad which will be decided by the leadership. The people of KP have expressed their worry about the rise in terrorism, PTI is keen on protests, marches towards Lahore and Islamabad and now the idea of tent-villages. They have expressed their frustration at the government's inability to take proper action against increasing terror attacks. The provincial government shall first bring peace and stability in the province and protect the lives of the people.* The people of KP did not vote for the PTI so that it carried out protests and rallies. They voted for development and peace in the province. But the PTI does not appear serious about these issues. It now seems to focus on tent-villages for its workers to get media attention.

**US election and Pakistani politics, Hamid Mir, Jang, 07 November<sup>16</sup>**

*Two important decisions were made in Pakistan before the US presidential election. First, the tenure of service chiefs was increased from three years to five years.* Common Pakistanis do not even know the names of the chiefs of the Air Force and Navy. So there is a general impression that the term of the Army Chief has been increased from three years

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<sup>16</sup> <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/789448>

to five years. The government, which has done this by amending the Army Act, says that the army chief has not been given an extension of two years, but the term of his office has been determined, the main purpose of which is to bring stability to the country. *The second important decision is the appointment of the head of the Constitutional Court. Justice Aminuddin Khan will be the head of the constitutional court that will come into being under the 26<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment. Apparently, it will be only a constitutional bench and the original chief justice will be Yahya Afridi. But in reality there will be two chief justices now.* The judges included in the constitutional bench will be able to hear the unconstitutional cases, but the judges included in the non-constitutional bench will not be able to hear the constitutional cases. *Many petitions have been filed against the 26<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment and all these petitions will be decided by Justice Aminuddin Khan. It is not yet clear whether the formation of a constitution bench will reduce or increase the factionalism found among the judges of the apex court. The government has also increased the number of Supreme Court judges by passing a new law through Parliament. The general perception is that Justice Aminuddin is pro-government and by increasing the number of pro-government judges in the Supreme Court through the Judicial Commission, the government is mitigating the risks to itself.* In other words, the Supreme Court has become the arena of Pakistan's power politics. Although the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has voted for the approval of six other laws, including the extension of the army chief's tenure, several members of the party say off the record that democracy will not strengthen in the pretext continuity of policies by extending the tenure of the army chief's term. Strength of democracy lies in the implementation of the constitution, but the present parliament is facilitating the distortion of the constitution. *At present, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has not created any major threat to the current government. But the government is facing many threats from within. The PTI is preparing to launch a new movement against the government from 9 November.* It had tried to run a movement in November 2022. The aim of this attempt was to prevent the appointment of General Asim Munir as Army Chief but it did not succeed in this attempt.



**China's determination to increase mutual cooperation with Pakistan, Editorial, *Nawai-Waqt*, 13 November<sup>17</sup>**

*Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian has said that any attempt to undermine the mutual trust and cooperation between China and Pakistan will not succeed. China will continue to support Pakistan in carrying out counter-terrorism operations and will resolutely protect the security of the activities and institutions of Chinese citizens abroad.* He said that China and Pakistan are eternal strategic cooperation partners and have the determination and ability to thwart all conspiracies to sabotage China-Pakistan relations and bring terrorists to justice. *In the context of increasing internal and external conspiracies against China and Pakistan, especially the conspiracies to sabotage China-Pakistan friendship and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the leaderships of both countries are forced express their determination every next day that no one can create cracks in Pakistan and China friendship nor can anyone sabotage the CPEC.* About 11 years ago, when China started the CPEC project, many countries had expressed their reservations on the project. *The United States and India particularly had openly opposed it and started their conspiracies against the project. Through their agents and facilitators in Pakistan, they also terrorized the Chinese engineers working on the CPEC* in order to create differences between Pakistan and China and sabotage the CPEC. However, the leaderships of both the countries failed these conspiracies by acting with understanding and prudence and expressed their determination to further strengthen the bond of friendship that is sweeter than honey, deeper than the sea and higher than the Himalayas.

**IMF's New Terms, Editorial, *Roznama Jang*, 13 November<sup>18</sup>**

*The International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation's emergency visit to Pakistan is being viewed from the perspective of finding solutions to the difficulties faced in meeting certain targets after the approval of the \$7 billion IMF package in September and the receipt of the first tranche in Islamabad.* In the high-level talks that began on Monday evening, the IMF

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/13-Nov-2024/1841781>

<sup>18</sup> <https://e.jang.com.pk/karachi/13-11-2024/page4>



team, led by Nathan Porter, engaged in technical discussions with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and his assistants. *According to sources, during the mission's stay in Islamabad from November 11 to 15, discussions focused on a detailed review of several matters, including meeting the targets of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), new tax measures, IPP (Independent Power Producers) negotiations, the circular debt in the energy sector, and other issues.* Pakistan informed that during the first quarter of the current fiscal year, the tax machinery collected 11 billion rupees from retailers, wholesalers, and distributors. However, the expectations regarding the Traders' Friendly Scheme (TDS) were not met. *During the review, the IMF proposed two options: either a mini-budget should be introduced to collect taxes from the public to bridge the revenue shortfall of 89 billion rupees, or a feasible plan should be prepared to reduce unlimited expenditures. Both conditions appear challenging, but better results can be achieved if handled with sincerity.* The situation demands that, instead of repeating the same approach of increasing the tax burden on salaried individuals and industries, measures should be taken to collect taxes from the elite. Additionally, in order to reduce uncontrolled expenditures, it is necessary to bury the culture of wasteful spending and avoid expenses that raise public concerns. Our economic managers must have a strategy that can not only satisfy the IMF but also increase confidence among the public.

**“Un-Islamic” use of VPN! Nasrat Javeed, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 18 November<sup>19</sup>**

*Many people sent me a copy of an official letter that went viral on social media via WhatsApp. Through this letter, an organization that ensures peace and order in Pakistan informs another organization that keeps our minds on the right path that a huge number of Pakistanis are using the internet obsessively to find pornographic content. As the government, custodians of our morals diligently make obscene websites impossible to access, people addicted to obscene content turn to VPNs.* The letter that I received for two days from countless people was funny in many ways. The aim is to give the impression to the world that the majority of Pakistanis who appear to have good character are not the reality. A huge number of them have become addicted to pornographic material. It was also expected that the

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/18-Nov-2024/1843051>

organization on whose behalf this letter was allegedly written would strongly deny it. But this did not happen. *A few hours after the letter a fatwa-like statement issued by the chairman of the Islamic Ideological Council (IIC) came out. The statement described the use of an "illegal" VPN as an "un-Islamic" practice.* Despite the IIC declaring VPN as "Un-Islamic", some of the views expressed by some ministers including Prime Minister Shehbaz through Twitter were found while reading the newspapers. Twitter has been disabled in Pakistan. Sometimes it is opened for some moments without knowing why. Presumably by opening it, the government tries to find out who is accessing it through the VPN. *The letter makes one think that the people who use the Internet to access obscene material in the country founded in the name of Islam, why would they pay attention to the statement that VPNs are "Un-Islamic"?* While distractions spread around the world thanks to social media is true but always insisting that strict laws in some countries like the UK alone will help, is not, however, the correct approach. The real problem is to detect those who spread hatred through fake news in time and punish them with lightning speed from the court.

**Balochistan Constabulary holds high-level meeting to protect Chinese in Balochistan,**  
*Daily Sangar, 22 November<sup>20</sup>*

*A high-level meeting of Balochistan Constabulary (BC) was held to ensure the safety of the Chinese in Balochistan. The meeting was chaired by Additional IGP Commandant Balochistan Constabulary Agha Muhammad Yousuf at the Balochistan Constabulary (BC) Headquarters in Quetta. Deputy Commandant Balochistan Constabulary Commander (R) Attaullah Shah, SSP Headquarters, all Zonal Commanders, Khuzdar, Lor Alai, Gwadar attended online. AD Asadullah and all other officers attended. In the meeting, Additional IGP Commandant BC issued instructions to all Zonal Commanders to send recommendations for deployment of BC personnel in their respective zones to the headquarters so that the personnel can be transferred to their respective districts so that they can do duty with their children and pay special attention to the education, health, food and good environment of their children. The Additional IGP also has issued orders*

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<sup>20</sup> <https://dailysangar.online/?p=53502>

*that special attention should be paid to the security of Chinese in Balochistan so that no untoward incident occurs. He has issued instructions to all zonal commanders to fully secure the security of BC line educational institutions and government buildings and to educate soldiers how to ensure the safety of the lives and property of the people during duty. The Commandant issued instructions to all Zonal Commanders to send their recommendations to the headquarters to identify land for BC soldiers where they can build a residence, which will solve the problem of housing the soldiers and save them from trouble.*

**Protests and strike in Quetta against missing of minor student, *Daily Sangar*, 25 November<sup>21</sup>**

*A road blockade is being called in Quetta today to recover a missing young student. Educational institutions are also closed. The protest has been called in Balochistan today (25 November) against the non-recovery of an 11-year-old student. Political parties and business organizations have announced their support for the road blockade. The Balochistan Education Department said that schools, colleges and universities will remain closed due to the strike. It should be noted that on 15 November 11-year-old Musawar Kakar was abducted by unknown persons while going home from school in the Patel Bagh area. The family had said that the protest will continue until the child is recovered. A complete strike was called in Quetta on 19 November against the kidnapping of an 11-year-old student as authorities failed to trace him. The strike call in Quetta was jointly given by the Dharna Committee and the Traders Association to express solidarity with the family of the kidnapped child, while several political parties supported the strike. In addition, the business community also closed their businesses in support of the strike, during which all major markets, shopping plazas and business centers in the city remained closed. A sit-in is also underway in Quetta for the recovery of the child.*

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<sup>21</sup> <https://dailysangar.online/?p=53629>

## ELECTRONIC MEDIA

**Imran Khan Deal? - Bushra Bibi's Re-Arrest? Naya Pakistan with Shahzad Iqbal, Geo News, 04 November<sup>22</sup>**

The host pointed out that the PTI is trying to dodge the narrative that they had any deal with the government, after the release of Bushra Bibi. Imran Khan was allowed to talk to selected media and was also allowed to meet Ali Amin Gandapur and after the meeting CM KP criticised the government and informed that the PTI will hold its protest in Swabi interchange on 9<sup>th</sup> November instead of Peshawar. He added that this time we will be all ready and will plan on the future protests. Barrister Saif of the PTI on the show said that the PTI has realized that they need to change the policy after Bushra Bibi's release and there is an understanding from both sides, PTI and the establishment he implied. The host pointed out that the FIA has wrote a letter to the court asking that the release of Bushra Bibi is illegal and that she should be rearrested? He asked is there a policy shift in PTI and if so is there any deal? **Guests:** Hamid Mir-senior Journalist & Sheikh Waqas Akram-PTI. **Hamid Mir** pointed out that the bail of Bushra Bibi is touted as a deal but again the FIA has wrote a letter to Supreme Court challenging the release of Bibi, so he added how come it is deal. She is also staying in Peshawar because there is a fear that she will be rearrested. He added there is no deal at all and the people who are talking about the deal all belong to the government. Talking about Imran Khan he added that he is worried that there is internal divide within the PTI and also there is a communication gap between him and the outside and there was no proper update on 26<sup>th</sup> amendment. He informed that now after the meeting with Ali Amin Gandapur, Imran Khan has asked to continue the protest and Gandapur will continue the protest in Swabi. Talking about the case on Imaan Mazair he pointed out that there is a case of terrorism against her and her husband was also arrested, the government wanted to teach her a lesson but she was released on bail. There is still an effort to send her behind the bar under any case and also the government is trying to re-arrest Bushra Bibi as there is a chance of her attending the protest in Swabi. Talking about the US election he added

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

if or not Trump/Kamala Harris wins or loose there will be no change in the politics of PTI, things will move on as usual. There will be more problems for Pakistan from European Union (EU) countries then US. *Sheikh Waqas Akram* underlined that the policy of the government towards the PTI is not working, there use of power and force has not working. The PTI will continue to protest and on 9<sup>th</sup> November all workers will join in and there will be a Jirga on the same day and the future plans will be chalked out on the same day, it will be a one day event. Talking about the latest media interaction of Imran Khan he added that Khan has been always talking but it has not come out in the media. Many press conferences of the PTI has not been covered in the media.

**Trump's return to power positive for Pakistan & Imran Khan? Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, ARY News, 06 November** <sup>23</sup>

In this show the host talks about the victory of Donald Trump and its impact on Pakistan. He talks to Mushahid Hussain Syed, Former Senator who has been predicting the return of Donald Trump from a long time and has stated that his comeback will be the defeat of establishment and deep state and will be positive for Pakistan and World peace. He also pointed out that Trump is not a war monger, the host asked him questions about his prediction and why he think Trump's return to power will be positive for Pakistan?

**Guest:** Mushahid Hussain-Former Senator. *Mushahid Hussain* pointed out that Trump is different and he is not a man of the American security establishment, they tried its best and brought his soft quo by bringing a women to the competition in the last minute. Talking about Imran Khan he added that Trump do not know anyone in Pakistan except Imran Khan (*prisoner number 8*). Imran Khan was treated as a celebrity in US by his family. Also Trump has said that Kashmir is an issue and it should be trilateral. Talking about Trump's policy on Palestine he said that there will be no drastic change but his relations will improve with Saudi Arabia and UAE and with the help of Saudi he will resolve the issue of Palestine. The elephant in the room is Iran and now Iran will also be ready to talk. Trump has exposed the American system and the establishment and has said that it has failed in Afghanistan. It is the biggest political comeback in the World

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6chUoxHyqE>

history and the biggest failure of the establishment and deep states. In Pakistan there was a thinking that Trump will not come back and some leaders including Bilawal Bhutto and Maryam Nawaz criticised the leader and others has stated that Imran Khan is the Trump of Pakistan. Now they are busy congratulating Trump, this suggests that these leaders have no value and character. *Ali Muhammad Khan* of the PTI who met Imran Khan in Jail, informed on this show that Imran Khan was happy with the news of Trump coming back to power and stated that the negativity has gone with the defeat of Biden administration. He also said that Imran Khan and Trump were friendly and talked over phone many times. Mushahid Hussain again repeated that there will be a call from Donald Trump about the release of Imran Khan and a call from America could not be resisted by Pakistani government. Trump will also take the Muslim nations on board before calling and putting pressure on Pakistan to release Imran Khan. The Pakistani supporters of Trump and who voted for him are also supporters for Imran Khan and they have a hope that he will do something about Imran Khan. There are many similarities between Imran and Trump, both are victims of the system and establishment.

**PTI's Final Plan for Imran Khan's Release & Pakistan's economy in question? Mere Sawal with Absar Alam, *Samaa TV*, 11 November<sup>24</sup>**

Ali Amin Gandapur has told that Imran Khan will give the dates of protest soon towards end of November and due to this the workers are not happy. In the first part the host and guest talks about PTI's politics and in the second part he discuss the state of economy with Miftah Ismail top economist of Pakistan. He informed that IMF team was to visit Pakistan in March 2025 but the team will be visiting the country tomorrow 12 November, he asked why the plan has changed. **Guests:** Sher Afzal Marwat-MNA, PTI & Miftah Ismail-Awam Pakistan Party, economist. *Sher Afzal Marwat* talking about the strategy of PTI, said that there is no deal with any one, neither government nor establishment. About Bushra Bibi he added she has nothing to do with the politics, her only fault is that she is wife of Imran Khan. If there was a deal with NAB it would be visible, Imran Khan is behind jail for no fault of his and it is about more than one year. Even after the courts like SC released him from one case, he has been re-arrested in other

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<sup>24</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sW\\_-lUfEX4M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sW_-lUfEX4M)

cases. Talking about the angry workers of the PTI he added that there are very few workers that are not happy and added that the government is planning to stop the routes of protest as they did in Swabi. He asked why the government is scared of the protests of the PTI that every time they stop us. There will be a final call of protests and we are expecting the workers and supporters to attend in large numbers. Talking about the economy of the Pakistan he added that the situation is getting worst and they are not able to stabilize the economy and on top of it the government is giving extension to the COAS for their own benefits. *Miftah Ismail* answering the question if there is improvement in the economy, he added there is still inflation in Pakistan but there is a bit of slowdown in the process in the whole World. But there is no role of the government in the same, they are not even able to improve the condition of PIA, taxes are the same and also the tax structure are the same.

**Security Situation & recent Political Development, Nadeem Malik Live, Samaa TV, 20 November<sup>25</sup>**

Nadeem Malik in the introduction talked about the security situation in the country referring to the recent attack on security and dead of 12 army personal. He added that it is not the first time but there is increase in the case of terrorism and terror activities in the country, especially in Balochistan. He added that it is the responsibility of the government that it takes action against the terror groups like BLA in Balochistan. This should be our consistent approach and not have another policy on terror like Presidential pardon. *Guests:* Senator Faisal Vawda, Senator Daniel Chaudhry- Parliamentary Information Secretary & Ahmad Owais-PTI *Faisal Vawda* underlined that it is the collective responsibility of the government who are in power and should make them accountable. He added there is no consistency in our policy towards terrorism in our country and there is need for tough decisions. There is need of operations against terror outfits and all parties should come together on this issue. He added that after 24 November the charges against Imran Khan and Faiz Hamid will take speed and that is why there is panic mode in the PTI. There is definitely an understanding between PTI and government that is why Ali Amin Gandapur and Barrister Gohar are going in and

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGHxllQ6gtM>



out, he added why is that everyone around Imran Khan is getting relief and not Imran Khan. He added that something is happening behind the scene, but there can be house arrests soon. He pointed out that the party workers of Imran Khan are misusing its power and they do not want him to come out of jail. Army chief COAS said in the Apex meeting said that there is a difference between protest and violence and underlined that if there is violence in protest we will deal with iron fist. He added that this call of protest can be called off or taken forward. **Daniel Chaudhry** pointed out that if there is an understanding between PTI and establishment, only the PTI can tell but majority of the PTI leaders and members are compromised. They want to keep the chief of PTI behind jail and get benefit of it as they are not ready to bear the brunt of the policy and narrative of Imran Khan. In the apex committee there was talk about security situation in KP and Balochistan with CM KP Ali Amin Gandapur and other representatives. We are trying to address the issues of the CM KP. The PTI is running away from the 9<sup>th</sup> May event but unless the cases of the event is resolved nothing can go forward. For the government safety and protection of the city of Islamabad is more important than the protest, these protests have severely impacted on our economy. **Ahmad Owais** pointed out that Pakistan politics is at a precarious situation and it looks like that Imran Khan will not get bail, he will be again charged with cases related to the 9<sup>th</sup> May event. Bushra Bibi was arrested in false case and therefore bail was granted, there is no deal with establishment that is related to her release. He added that this present government does not have the support of the people, and this protest on 24 November will proof the same. He added that people of KP will come out in large numbers and march towards Islamabad. The government is making the 9<sup>th</sup> May as a pre-tax and not talking about the 8<sup>th</sup> February elections, the result of the elections and vote for Imran Khan speaks louder than words. If the PTI was involved in 9<sup>th</sup> May why there is no inquiry and trail of the event?

### **Passenger Vehicles Targeted in Kurram & Islamabad Shut Down, Capital talk with Hamid Mir, *Geo News*, 21 November<sup>26</sup>**

Talking about the security situation in Pakistan Hamid Mir pointed out that what is the use of security apparatus and defence technology that cannot protect the people of the

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUizxcnRhFE>



country. In lower Khurram KP a passenger convoy bus was targeted and 51 dead and about 81 injured. So about 132 casualties among the passengers from Parachinar in today's bus attack in Kurram. But most of Pakistan media is too busy in the political battle for Takht-e-Lahore and avoiding to give full coverage to the heart wrenching tragedy in Kurram. Is there any mechanism to protect the people and why government does not have a people security policy for its safety? *Guest:* Musadik Malik-PML-N, Malik Aamir Dogar-PTI & Ali Afzal (Correspondent). *Ali Afzal* informed that a convoy of 100 buses was coming from Peshawar and same number of buses were going back to Parachinar. He informed that still injured passenger can be there at the spot, and added that even the police were part of the convoy but instead of that this attack took place. Most of the people that was affected in the attack were from Parachinar. He informed that there is a history of attacks in this region and this is the not the first time and to travel in this region a convey with police and security has to be arranged because of the threats. *Musadik Malik* pointed out that we do not have a definite policy to control terrorism and terror activates in the regions. Sometimes we attack them and on other incidents we say they are part of our fabric and grant them Presidential pardon. There is a change of policy with each changing government in the centre. Talking about the changing narratives of the PTI he added that there is no unison of voice within the PTI, one part say they are talking to the government and another section says that they are not ready for any talks. There should be credibility in the leadership and there should be talks in good faith but this is not possible in Pakistan. *Malik Aamir Dogar* pointed out that this is the first time that there is an attack on the civilian vehicle despite of the security and police as part of the convoy. He added that mainly there is fight between the tribes and also terrorism has increased in these region in the last few months. There should be one security policy no matter what government comes in the centre, there can be amends every now and then. The ground reality in the KP region is very different then what the people in power thinks. He pointed out that talks are the main solution and every war has solved by talks on the table.

**Bushra Bibi versus Ali Amin Gandapur: Final Call or Missed Call? Sethi Say Sawal,**  
*Samaa TV, 29 November<sup>27</sup>*

The government is saying that it is not a *final call* by a *missed call* by PTI but on the other hand the PTI is adamant that they will continue to protest till their demands are met. The host pointed out that there is a debate on the role of Bushra Bibi within the PTI, and that the visible difference in view between him and Gandapur was visible in this protest. She asked what the political future of the PTI is and what Bushra Bibi's political role is, will she be re-arrested in the future? Is she trying to grab the attention to grope all the limelight on her? Who will Imran Khan side, his wife or the tallest leader and CM of KP who is his link to the establishment? *Najam Sethi* pointed out that there will be a harsh crackdown on the PTI and its protest, he underlined that the PTI has understood this and they are told to restrict to their regions. Sethi pointed out that there was an understanding between the establishment and PTI at one point of time, but it was suggested that the PTI can go on with the protest but not to come on the D-Chowk, in fact they were to divert to other venue for protest. But there was a confusion and Imran Khan told the PTI to go all the way. Also there was an issue that who will led the protest Gandapur or Bushra Bibi? But it was decided that Gandapur will led the protest but Bushra Bibi tried to take the limelight in between and when she got good response she got carried away. Gandapur was visibility not happy with the attention diverted to Bibi, they marched on till the last point and divert according to the arrangement. But there was too much pressure from the people who were charged which made the government nervous and thought the PTI might double cross. Barrister Saif and Gohar were also allowed to meet Imran Khan by the government, Saif announced that they will divert to Sanjani that is where Bibi diverted and took charge of the situation. At this point the government gave a strict warning not to go beyond the point and stop the march to D-Chowk. There is also a possibility that Imran Khan might have said another thing to Saif and Gohar, Bibi might have understood this and she took charge of the situation. In view of the action by the government the government informed Gandapur to flee the scene and he also told Bibi to take the run and that is why in the heat of the movement they

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<sup>27</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VU\\_3rN3Zp\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VU_3rN3Zp_Y)

both flee the scene. They were travelling in the same car and given space by the government to come out of Islamabad and reached KP. Mathiullah Jan the journalist was also arrested by the government for reporting misleading reports of the protest. The journalists are now protesting for his release. He added that the local media people should have allowed to report on the dead people in the firing because all the media independent and local are now giving different figures including international media.

## BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

*(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)*

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
<b>Balochistan</b>				
Quetta <sup>28</sup>	09/11/2024	A massive explosion struck Quetta Railway station, 30 people and injuring dozens.	30	12
<b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)</b>				
Khurram <sup>29</sup>	22/11/2024	More than 40 dead after gunmen attack passenger vehicles in Pakistan	41	16

<sup>28</sup> <https://thebalochistanpost.net/2024/11/inside-the-deadly-quetta-railway-station-attack-and-its-aftermath-tbp-report/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cqpw18yvrndo>