

September 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
Dr. Ashok Behuria

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DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Rushed Legislation, Kamran Yousaf, *The Nation*, 09 September¹

Once again, the government has bulldozed the passage of a bill through Parliament with alarming haste, a move that underscores a troubling trend of undermining the legislative process. The recent enactment of the Public Order Bill, signed into law almost in a frenzy, reinforces the perception of Parliament as a mere rubber stamp for executive decisions. *This reckless approach to law-making not only erodes the legitimacy of our democratic institutions but also diminishes the credibility of the legislative process. In the long term, this cavalier attitude towards the parliamentary process is detrimental to all stakeholders involved. The rapid, unconsidered passage of such bills not only reflects poorly on the current administration but also jeopardises the health of our democratic framework.* The robustness of any law depends on thorough scrutiny and balanced debate, not on rushed endorsements. Had this bill been subjected to proper legislative review, it might have faced criticism but would also have had the opportunity to garner cross-party support. This approach would have assured the public that the law was designed not merely to target a single party, such as the PTI, but to address disruptive forces more broadly and constructively. Rushed legislation breeds mistrust and stifles constructive debate, ultimately undermining the very foundations of governance.

Baloch voices, Editorial, *Dawn*, 05 September²

Lawmakers from across the aisle will beseech Mr Mengal to reconsider his decision — and he must, or else he will leave the field open for proxies to further marginalise genuine Baloch voices. *At the same time, it must be asked: why did a prominent Baloch leader, who has engaged consistently and legitimately with the state, turn away?* “This is pathetic; our daughters and elderly women are protesting and spending nights out in the open only to highlight their concerns, but no one in the entire assembly is even bothered to ask a

¹ <https://www.nation.com.pk/09-Sep-2024/rushed-legislation>

² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1857053/baloch-voices>

question or raise a point of order in the house,” he had complained on his way out of the assembly that same day. *The anger must be understood. Balochistan has been boiling for many months. Breaking cultural taboos, its women recently took over the campaign for its people’s rights. Instead of the state recognising this change, it antagonised the Baloch people further by treating its new leaders with customary disdain.* Now, with the recent surge in militant attacks in the province and the state’s fulminations around them, things seem to be spiralling. The Baloch people seem to be fearing indiscriminate targeting during reprisals. This could explain why Baloch leaders want to distance themselves from the state. This perception needs to be addressed post-haste. Leaders like Mr Mengal, who do not sit idle or are the type to join hands with separatists, belong in parliament. They must raise their voice for the Baloch people in the legislatures.

PTI's comeback, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 10 September³

A pushed-to-the-wall PTI staged an impressive comeback on the political canvas by holding a public meeting on the outskirts of Islamabad. *It had many feathers to boast as the beleaguered opposition party was able to seek a formal approval for the first time in many months; was able to assemble people from the length and breadth of the country; and few of its underground stalwarts showed up at the venue.* The one-point thrust of PTI was to seek an early release of incarcerated former Prime Minister Imran Khan, and to struggle eloquently to bag the mandate delivered to it on February 8. The party, in a surprise change of tone, took the bull by the horns as it announced the launch of a movement in Punjab, resisting any maneuvering on the part of the ruling dispensation to influence the judiciary by exigently amending the Constitution. *The public rally was thickly participated, and the party's supporters braved administrative obstacles to make their presence felt. The most startling feature was the caravan of vehicles from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa that swirled for miles on both the arteries of Motorway and GT Road.* Most of them were unable to make it to the venue in real time, and were stranded for hours. So was the case with contingents from Punjab and Sindh. The fact that the twin-cities administration chose to lay containers on the way, and the normal traffic of the federal capital stood paralyzed

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2494824/ptis-comeback>

was an enigma for dwellers as this came despite a legal nod for the public gathering. Last but not least, reported scuffles between the police and participants as the timeframe for gathering lapsed at 7pm brought the law and order situation almost to a showdown, and exhibited how imprudently stakeholders get down to business.

Setbacks to Democracy, Editorial, *The News*, 11 September⁴

The optics of these arrests, however, are just one piece of the broader puzzle. Pakistan is inching towards a breakdown in any kind of political reconciliation, exacerbated by inflammatory rhetoric and increasing polarization. The PTI must rethink its strategy, the government's response to this escalating confrontation has also been less than ideal. Arresting lawmakers as they leave the Parliament House does nothing to quell tensions but only deepens grievances and hardens opposition resolve. The public assembly bill under which these arrests were made may be well within the scope of the law, but its enforcement smacks of an attempt to silence dissent. *Using legal tools to stifle opposition, particularly through highly visible and dramatic arrests of lawmakers, will only further fuel public cynicism and is a tactic reminiscent of our draconian political history. The current path all stakeholders are on is a recipe for further instability.* Political arrests, aggressive rhetoric, and the absence of genuine dialogue will only make things worse. If the government wants to de-escalate, it must lead by example and stop using detention as a form of political leverage. The PTI, for its part, must also take stock of its incendiary approach. There are no winners in the current standoff and what Pakistan really needs right now is not more polarization, but a return to reasoned political discourse. *On the one end, the PTI needs to tone down its rhetoric, engage in constructive dialogue with other political entities, and stop relying on threats of confrontation. On the other, the government must resist the urge to escalate tensions through heavy-handed tactics, and understand that arresting lawmakers outside the halls of parliament is a deeply damaging spectacle.* Can all sides take a step back, calm down, and learn to behave like adults? They owe this to the people in whose name they are politicking.

⁴ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1229076-setbacks-to-democracy>

Whither amendment, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 17 September⁵

A much-hyped constitutional amendment, which was set to rewrite the terms of judicial engagement, could not see the light of the day apparently owing to a lack of desired strength on the floor of the house. *The mysterious draft remained shrouded in secrecy till both the houses were prorogued, after a high-drama of being in session till the wee hours of Monday. While the government is still hopeful to go ahead with the stunt it had created of its own, critics see little potential in it. The JUI-F thoroughly remained in the spotlight as it maneuvered its demands to the core and refused to give in for reasons best known to it.* The PTI too put up a good show of defiance but was seen wandering in the dark as many of its legislators went astray and were not in the roll call. Last but not least, what pricked the balloon of amendment was a castigation from the Supreme Court directing the Election Commission to notify the so-called 'Independent' MNAs as PTI members in the lower house. *That fizzled out the momentum of floor-crossing. Moreover, the fact that such an overrated set of amendments did not go through the house committees, nor was it presented before the cabinet for approval made it an utterly disgraced show for the PML-N, which was steering the initiative.* The proposed amendment has dented the parliamentary credentials of the ruling coalition, and exposed their alleged intentions of clipping the feathers of the judiciary. Likewise, the thrust to route the appointment of superior judiciary through the legislature and executive would be seen as conflict of interest, along with undesired extension in service tenure of the sitting chief justice.

Lingering concerns, Editorial, *Dawn*, 19 September⁶

Days later, the possible repercussions of what could have been had the government's planned amendments to the Constitution been bulldozed through parliament are still being discussed. One thing seems clear: the government must have anticipated how strong the blowback would be if the details of its legislative coup were to leak beforehand. *Senior political leaders have spoken about the lengths to which it went to cover its tracks, to the extent*

⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2496663/whither-amendment>

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1859738/lingering-concerns>

that it told different stakeholders different things about its plans. It appears that it had good reason to be nervous. It is unclear for now whether the government will make another attempt to tweak the Constitution. Embarrassed after failing to muster the numbers during the high-stakes drama that played out all weekend, it will need time to regroup. It has also shown its hand and lost the element of surprise. This alone may force it to abandon the strategy altogether, especially after the strong pushback it has received from the legal community. Whatever the case may be, it would be well advised not to make another attempt in the manner it did last time. *There is a reason why the Constitution is a protected document that requires two-thirds of parliament's strength to acquiesce to any changes. Attempting to override this protocol by hiding legislative proposals and coercing other lawmakers to vote for them not only hurts our democracy but also signals that those making the changes may not be acting in good faith.*

Detailed SC verdict, Editorial, *The News*, 24 September⁷

The Supreme Court finally released its detailed verdict on the reserved seats case, reaffirming the PTI as a legitimate political party, entitled to reserved seats for women and minorities. Penned by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, the much-awaited detailed judgment comes over two months after the short order the apex court had issued on July 12, and just days after National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq had argued that the ruling could not be implemented following amendments to the Election Act. The detailed verdict predictably lays out a firm stance: the absence of an electoral symbol does not disqualify a party from participating in elections. *Not only that, the court's criticism of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is scathing. The ECP, as a "guarantor institution" of democracy, was expected to uphold transparency and fairness in the electoral process. Instead, says the Supreme Court, the ECP acted as a primary adversarial party against both the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) and the PTI, rather than an impartial steward of elections.* More striking, however, is the court's rebuke of its own dissenting judges, Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan. These judges had in a dissenting note opined that the PTI was not a party before the court and that the majority ruling violated

⁷ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1233181-detailed-sc-verdict>

constitutional norms. The detailed judgment has criticized the tone and manner of the dissent, suggesting it lacked the courtesy and restraint expected of judges from the nation's highest court. Regardless of who stands on which side of the issue, observers have noted that there is a clear and alarming intra-judiciary tension, which speaks to a growing divide within the bench.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

IMF's new rules on economic zones, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 12 September⁸

The government's tendency to repeatedly cave in to the IMF's pressure is now costing it its sovereignty. The decision to accept the Fund's condition - that no new special economic zones or export processing zones will be established, and tax incentives already availed by the existing zones will not be extended - will melt down whatever potential the economy is possessed with. The IMF has been quite unfair to Pakistan. Its recent manoeuvring is uncalled for, and its refusal to list Islamabad's case on the Board's roll-call is disgusting. *An immediate victim of new harsh conditionality's will be the foreign investment that Pakistan was eagerly looking for, as such undesired regulations are extremely hurting.* Likewise, the processing zone that was on the anvil in Karachi on the Steel Mills' piece of land will also wither away in thin air, and the rolling back of 10-year exemptions promised on income tax for developers and entrepreneurs will lead to closure of working units, leading to massive unemployment. *The new IMF condition has also resulted in a severe difference of opinion between the federation and provinces, and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa has refused to accept the ban on setting up new economic zones. International lenders, it seems, are carried away with making their presence felt.* They must keep in mind that industrialisation is the way to go for backward states, and scuttling growth merely for the purpose of book-keeping in loans and subsidies is a misnomer. Pakistan has been on the receiving end in terms of terrorism,

⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2495450/bad-prescription>

and it needs a better deal to stay afloat in the region. Meddling with infrastructure and taxation policies is a bad prescription.

Taxation plan, Editorial, *Dawn*, 26 September⁹

At first glance, the new FBR ‘transformation plan’, which aims to broaden the tax net, scrap the category of ‘non-filers’, and improve compliance and enforcement through fresh punitive measures, might come across as a positive step. Yet, without addressing the deep-seated and long-standing issues of tax equity, policy reforms and institutional restructuring of the FBR, can it work? Indeed, the idea of making ‘dirty money’ redundant through imposing restrictions on asset purchases and investments by tax evaders and cheaters should be appreciated. But how will the plan be executed? The proposed plan shifts the entire burden of tax scrutiny of a spender on other regulators and sellers rather than building its own capacity to net the dodgers. It is also likely to create problems for tax-exempt segments, including those whose annual income is less than Rs 600,000 or housewives or Pakistanis abroad. Will they also be required to file annual tax statements? *The plan does not distinguish between tax evaders and middle-class taxpayers showing an annual income of less than Rs10m in their tax statements. They could also face the same spending curbs as articulated for non-filers when they try to purchase a vehicle or real estate or financial instruments or attempt to open bank accounts.* This is not the first time the tax bureaucracy has come up with a plan to boost tax revenues. But previous efforts have, for the most part, only made the taxation system more complex and expensive for taxpayers, providing a ‘reason’ for others to stay out of the net. *That inflation-adjusted real tax revenue growth has stood at a mere 2pc a year since 2018 confirms the futility of past FBR plans. Little wonder, Pakistan’s tax-to-GDP ratio has grown to just 9.5pc from 8pc in 2000. In comparison, India has improved its taxes to 18.5pc of its GDP from 13.4pc and Nepal to 17.5pc from 8.7pc in the same period.*

⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1861206/taxation-plan>

Bailed out, Editorial, *The News*, 27 September¹⁰

The long wait for Pakistan's latest bailout has finally ended as the IMF Executive Board approved a \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) for Pakistan on Wednesday (September 25). *The first tranche of \$1.1 billion will likely be released by September 30 and the interest rate on the loan is reportedly less than 5.0 per cent. The approval of the loan follows the confirmation of \$12 billion in bilateral loans from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and China and external financing of \$2 billion.* The country had reached an agreement with the multilateral lender on a new 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) back in July, with some attributing the delay in the ratification of the programme to challenges in securing the needed external financing requirements. While the conclusion of the bailout will help inject some much needed stability into Pakistan's economic climate, staying on this course will require implementing tough and unpopular conditions. According to the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Asian Development Outlook (ADO) report, Pakistan's growth forecast still remains at a sluggish 2.8 per cent while inflation is expected to remain as high as 15 per cent for fiscal year 2025. *The ADB also highlights that Pakistan's large external financing needs make it highly vulnerable to any shortfall in external inflows and that the country's vulnerability to climate-induced disasters, such as the 2022 floods, also complicate its economic trajectory.*

URDU MEDIA

Pakistan, America and Taliban, Saleem Safi, *Jang*, 07 September¹¹

China and Russia had supported the United Nations Security Council's resolution according to which America had struck Afghanistan after 9/11. Pakistan had no choice but to support America. Yes, the support could have been offered by setting better conditions which General

¹⁰ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1234162-bailed-out>

¹¹ <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/752435>

Musharraf did not. At that time, the Taliban was dependent on Pakistan. When Pakistan raised its hands and shared intelligence information with America, it became easy for America to defeat the Taliban. The Taliban regime collapsed earlier than Americans had expected. In fact the day the Taliban were running away from Kabul, Pakistan's DG ISI was in Washington DC to consult with American officials on how to end the Taliban regime. On the other hand, *as a result of the Bonn Conference, Hamid Karzai's government was established. Afghanistan started moving towards stability. During all this and subsequent years, Pakistan's demand was that India should not be allowed to enter Afghanistan. But America allowed it and did not stop it from taking action against Pakistan. Some people started reviving the issue of Pashtunistan in Kabul. The biggest development, however, was that the United States (US) signed a civil nuclear deal with India. Pakistan demanded that a nuclear agreement be made with it in the same way. The Americans were not ready for it. So, Pakistan started supporting the Taliban again, and today if the Taliban are sitting victorious in Kabul and the United States is licking its wounds of defeat, then Iran, Russia and especially Pakistan have the main role in it.* Throughout this period, the Americans kept pressuring Pakistan to stop supporting the Taliban, but Pakistan did not agree. However, the drawback of the policy was that the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) also got a chance to flourish in Pakistan. Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani kept telling the Americans that the Taliban and Al-Qaeda are not in Afghanistan but in Pakistan and the Americans should take action there, but the Americans were not ready to take action in Pakistan except for drones. America's position was that Pakistan is important but India is fifty times more important. However, the day came *when despite the long war, the sacrifice of two and a half thousand American soldiers and the expenditure of billions of dollars, the United States had to leave Afghanistan in disgrace. In the Doha agreement, the United States made a condition from the Taliban that they would not give shelter to al-Qaeda again. When Pakistan demanded that the issue of TTP be included in the agreement, the Americans did not accept it.*

Balochistan: All Parties Conference proposed, Editorial, Roznama92 News, 06 September¹²

Under Mahmood Khan Achakzai's leadership, a united opposition meeting called for an All Parties Conference (APC) on Balochistan due to growing security concerns. Leaders including BNP-Mengal's Sajad Tareen and PTI's Asad Qaiser emphasized the urgent need for an APC to address the province's issues. Qaiser plans to meet with the National Assembly Speaker to push for the APC and criticized Akhtar Mengal's resignation as a setback. He warned that enemies are exploiting the situation and highlighted the need for serious discussion. PTI's Latif Khosa also criticized the government's economic policies and constitutional amendments, citing widespread public concern. Balochistan is facing significant unrest. Separatists and religious militant groups have escalated violence in Balochistan, affecting Iranian Sistan, Pakistani Balochistan, and southern Afghanistan. Balochistan, Pakistan's largest, least populated, and least developed province, is rich in natural resources. Armed groups seek more control over these resources and political autonomy, with backing from international powers pursuing regional interests. Baloch separatists have attacked people from other ethnicities, disrupting development and rendering the government's efforts to improve living standards ineffective. *During the Indian independence movement, public opinion in Balochistan, especially in Quetta and northern towns, was strongly in favour of Pakistan. The Congress Party, with Hindu and some Muslim support, encouraged separatist sentiments in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, exploiting nationalism to disrupt regional ties and spread prejudice.* The government's failure to address this led to ongoing issues in Pakistan. Although the Khan of Kalat initially supported Pakistan, later reports showed a conflicting stance. However, Lord Mountbatten emphasized that post-British states had to join either India or Pakistan based on geographical and demographic factors, which resulted in Balochistan's alignment with Pakistan. Recently, there have been reports of Baloch women being involved in crimes, with some claiming that a group initially advocating for people's rights has turned into one of oppression and abduction, including instances of local women being raped. *Due to government schemes, some Baloch militants have laid down*

¹² <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/752435>

their arms. In April 2016, four militant commanders and 144 militants surrendered under a reconciliation agreement.

Disrespect of democracy, Editorial, Daily Dunya, 11 September¹³

*A new series of serious accusations between the government and the opposition has started. The ruling faction is calling 8 September, the day Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) meeting was held at Sangjani, a black day for democracy; while the opposition is calling 9 September, the day when the Police entered the premises of the Parliament to make arrests of various PTI members who had attended the Sunday meeting for some legal violations as a dark day for democracy. Given the details of the events, there is no doubt that these two days were dark days for democracy in the country. The tone adopted by some of the PTI leaders in the Sangjani rally was undoubtedly deplorable. There is no room for such talk in civilized societies. But the surprising thing is that some of the politicians try to get concessions for themselves by declaring this kind of talk as political speech. Incidents of insulting opponents in political meetings are so many that they cannot even be counted. Even in the House of Parliament honourable members do not refrain from personal attacks on members of other parties. Even women members are not safe from this unparliamentarily language and personal attacks. **Political parties, whose job is to provide leadership to the people and take over and carry out government responsibilities, should be so authoritative in their language and speech that no light words are spoken by anyone. Special caution is necessary in the case of women, which is strongly emphasized in our culture and social ethics.** Politics has its place, but personal attacks cannot be allowed to be wrapped up in political speech. Perhaps the PTI leadership itself realized this. So before his arrest on Monday evening, PTI Chairman Barrister Gauhar appeared apologetic. The other aspect of this situation which is related to the arrest of MPs from the Parliamentary premises is equally sad. **Democracy in the country has seen many ups and downs. But this is perhaps the first time that opposition members have been arrested by the police from the parliamentary premises for violating rules of organizing a political meeting. The concern is that this type of transgression paves the way, becomes a precedent. Such an event does not cease to be an exceptional event but becomes a tradition.** Parliament is*

¹³ <https://dunya.com.pk/index.php/editorial/2024-09-11/9440>

considered to be the highest institution of the state. This concept maintains dignity of the state that should not be attacked. If the tradition of mass arrest of opposition members from the premises of Parliament is set, then the parliament will also lose the symbolic sanctity which is considered as the pillar of the power of the state. Democracy may not be ideal in our country. But there should be no compromise in the matter of the dignity of Parliament. In view of this idea, members of several political parties, including members of some coalition parties of the government, have condemned the arrest of opposition members from the parliamentary premises. Such incidents are destructive for the existence of democracy in the country. The orders issued by the Speaker of the National Assembly in this regard, if followed, can effectively defend the dignity of the parliamentary system in future.

Diamer-Bhasha Dam, Editorial, Jang, 15 September¹⁴

Nature has blessed Pakistan with vast water resources that can be harnessed to generate cheap electricity and make millions of acres of barren land cultivable. But no progress has been made in this direction after the construction of The Mangla Dam and Tarbela Dam a long time ago. The Kalabagh Dam was sacrificed to politics; if it was built, it would have been a great asset to the country. *Diamer-Bhasha Dam started with a lot of fanfare but it also fell victim to poor planning. In 2020, the previous government started its construction in a hurry but neglected the aspect of financing, increasing the issues. Thus the estimated cost, which was estimated at 479 billion rupees at the beginning and 120 billion rupees spent on the purchase of land, has now increased to 1400 billion rupees.* Due to the delay in the implementation of the project, its costs have increased enormously. It is a key project for the water and food security of Pakistan. Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal to review the progress on the dam held a high-level meeting the other day in which it was emphasized that the dam needs to be completed as soon as possible. The meeting was attended by federal secretaries of relevant departments and senior officials of institutions. *At a time when the country is suffering from a severe economic crisis and the burden of foreign debt is continuously increasing, the utility of this project has increased even more than before. It is not so easy to provide, but the*

¹⁴ <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/757346>

government has to take necessary steps in the national interest. Apart from irrigation and electricity, it can also become a great source of employment. In this regard, the decision to build 32 new small dams in the country is a welcome decision. Billions of rupees have been allocated for these projects. These dams will be built by the federal government.

Activation of Gwadar Port, Editorial, *Roznama Jang*, September¹⁵

Allah has blessed Pakistan with a magnificent geographical location and invaluable natural resources, including a coastline that stretches nearly 1,000 miles, of which 770 miles are located in Balochistan. Initially, Gwadar was a fishing village. Thanks to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), it has now transformed into a major port that, despite its vast capacity for international trade, has yet to become fully operational. *On Thursday, the federal cabinet approved a recommendation from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, directing all government institutions to arrange for 50% of their imports—including wheat, sugar, and fertilisers—to be transported domestically via Gwadar Port. They also instructed that the export rates through this port be increased in the future. A subcommittee has been formed to present a quarterly report on imports and exports from Gwadar to the cabinet.* Historically, Gwadar was part of Balochistan and was under the control of the Gulf state of Oman at the time of Pakistan's creation. In 1958, then-Prime Minister Malik Feroz Khan Noon purchased it and integrated it into Pakistan. For a long time, the city served as a livelihood for fishermen, but it had the potential to become a significant port. With the commencement of work under CPEC, it is now recognized globally not just for international trade but also as a strategic port.

Once fully operational, this port will create jobs for the people of Balochistan and stabilise the national economy while also relieving pressure on Karachi Port. It is essential to provide the local population of Gwadar with opportunities to fully benefit from these developments. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Gwadar is the economic future of Pakistan, and it should be activated to its full potential.

¹⁵ <https://e.jang.com.pk/karachi/14-09-2024/page6>

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) has adopted several policies which have been criticized not only within the country but also at the international level. One of these policies is the efforts of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Ali Amin Gandapur's announcement that his provincial government would negotiate directly with the Afghan Taliban. This step not only transgresses the constitutional limits but may also create threats to Pakistan's security and its foreign policy. Under the constitution of Pakistan, only the federal government has the right to make decisions on international affairs and foreign policy. No province has the right to take any independent foreign policy decision. The question is why Chief Minister Gandapur felt the need to negotiate directly with the Afghan Taliban? Was the federal government aware of this process? Was this step in accordance with the principles of Pakistan's foreign policy? *Not only PTI has to answer these questions, but also the people of the country must be informed about the facts behind these actions. The closeness between the leadership of the PTI and the Taliban is no longer a hidden issue. On various occasions, the PTI government has taken a soft approach towards the Taliban, which is proving has not only been detrimental to Pakistan's internal security, but is harming the country's image at the international level as well.* The presence of the Taliban in Pakistan and the softening of relations with them by the PTI leadership could further increase the threat of terrorism, especially in provinces like KP and Balochistan. Balochistan is already facing issues of terrorism and separatism. Any relations with the Afghan Taliban can deteriorate the situation further. With the support of the Afghan Taliban, the TTP can strengthen its roots in Balochistan. The PTI leadership should also understand that the policy to negotiate with the Afghan Taliban can also influence the domestic politics of the country. Question may arise in the minds of the public: why negotiations are being held with an organization that has targeted thousands of innocent people and promoted terrorism in the country?

¹⁶ <https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/762241>

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

11th Hour with Waseem Badami, **Arshad Sharif Case: PTI Jalsa in Islamabad, ARY News, 08 September**¹⁷

In this two part episode of the special transmission the host discuss the present politics of the country and the role of army in security and politics. It also discuss the politics of Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif and how the army play its part in bringing a party in power? The guests are senior analysts and Senator Faisal Vawda, he also exposes how the army intervened in his politics and ruined his politics. The PTI has marked its new jalsa in Islamabad, the question is how they got the permission? Also the episode talks about the investigation of Faiz Hamid. **Guests:** Senator Faisal Vawda Mohammad Malick-senior analyst and Rauf Klasra-senior analyst. **Faisal Vawda** talking about the politics of the PTI he talked about the planned murder of Arshad Sharif and the people who are involved laid low for some time. Talking about Ali Amin Gandapur and Murad Syed's closeness to Arshad Sharif, he added that he was murdered due to friendship and there was no intelligence. The letter due to which Arshad Sharif was killed was generated from KP, so we need to connect the dots. Murad Syed is hiding now and he was hiding in Arshad Sharifs house. He was hidden at a place where nobody could touch and that was only possible due to support of the army chief. Imran Khan had a fair idea at that point of time that something is going to happen and accordingly the long march was planned. There was a demand to remove Nadeem Anjum, and Faiz Hameed was to come back as DG-ISPR. When things did not happen as planned he said he told Imran Khan that he will be attacked but Arshad Sharif was murdered according to a plan. Talking about Amin Gandapur he added that the days of the KP CM are numbered, the fiery speech of him in the Jalsa is pre-emptive and now when the investigation of Faiz Hamid is on, he will go soon. Gandapur is planning something of an attack sorts to bring Khan out of jail, and the words he said that he can bring him out is indication of that.

Rauf Klasra added that the murder of Arshad Sharif is very sensitive and we are close to their family, we have always demanded a judicial commission of his murder and

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJxYk9IZmUM>

Supreme Court has to appoint a serving judge and Faisal Vawda should come forward and give his statement. Talking about Murad Syed he added that he cannot go to that extent to be part of the murder of Arshad Sharif. May be he wanted to warn Arshad Sharif about a conspiracy but he could not be part of the greater plan. There is a problem with Arshad Sharif's family they cannot get a lawyer, the PTI claims that they have lawyers why they are not giving them a lawyer? General Faiz Hamid should be asked about this case and may be in a military court things can be clear. Talking about the PTI Jalsa he added that Imran Khan pulled crowd, most of them was from KP, Punjab also had its crowd. Now that the government has allowed the Jalsa then why to put container and create fear, they have made Islamabad as a war zone. The PTI needed a big Jalsa and media coverage, both domestic and international and they think it will create pressure for Khan to come out of the jail. Amin Gandapur points out that he wants to have military trail of Imran Khan and today the establishment will be happy. **Mohammad Malick** underlined that we are talking on media today on this case because the institution is not working on the case, we have already written a petition. The government is saying that we cannot put much pressure on Kenyan government. The court is also not working in this case. He added that we agree that Murad Syed was very close to Arshad Sharif's family. One scenario is that Faiz could have told Murad Syed, the main alerts were from the KPK government. Talking about the *PTI Jalsa*, he added that the jalsa was irrelevant and every action has a consequence. This army is trying to control the PTI and this is done by bringing a leader used hard words like Amin Gandapur. Mehmood Achakzai set the tone first for talks, but Jalsa has destroyed things for talks. If Amin Gandapur is talking in a certain tone, he knows that there will be a certain reaction without a clear plan B. Can Imran Khan remove Ali Amin Gandapur after this speech, there is no chance and it looks like that PTI is going to a certain faction.

Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, Maulana Fazl Ur Rehman's speech in Parliament, Geo News, 04 September¹⁸

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman urged parliament on Wednesday to hold a dialogue with the “people of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa”

¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsnGRtFIGsI>

to address their security concerns. Fazl's suggestion comes amid a precarious security situation in Balochistan after the deadly terrorist attacks on August 26 and discontent over the enforced disappearances issue. Terrorist attacks across the country surged to 59 in the month of August, compared to July's 38, according to a digital database maintained by the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), an Islamabad-based think-tank. The majority of the attacks occurred in KP and Balochistan. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly today, Fazl said: "I still believe that if the parliament is requested to step forward and go and talk to the people of Balochistan and KP, then the situation can be reverted to normal." He said that the "government's writ in Balochistan and KP had ended due to unrest" and that "armed elements are ruling there and collecting taxes". "They are visiting the villages, patrolling the streets, and are armed with rocket launchers and special equipment," he added. Referring to the August 26 attacks, the JUI-F chief said the parliament was "not taking matters seriously" and went on to criticise the treasury and opposition benches for their frequent heated exchanges. Over the last two weeks, Fazl has met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari, and a PTI delegation as both sides attempt to curry favour with the senior politician. "One party (opposition) goes to the extent that they start talking about separation [from Parliament]. On the other side as well (government), they made statements such as 'we are ready to deal with them with force and we are ready to go to every extent for the state's protection'," Fazl said.

Dunya Meher Bokhari Kay Sath, Ali Amin Gandapur Speech; What Is the Next Step of PTI? *Dunya News*, 11 September¹⁹

The host informed that after remaining out of reach for seven hours and silence, Ali Amin Gandapur CM KP has made his first public statement in KP assembly saying that he is still standing on his views and is with Imran Khan. He addressed the establishment and said that they should talk to Imran Khan and added that my software was not updated and is still the same. He also added that the government and army should change his policy, and this comes at a time the government has invited debate in the Parliament and sign a *charter of Parliament* and also pointed that a special committee will be constituted to look into the arrest of the PTI leaders. She added that there is talks of saving the

¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6kVMKGEEeM>

constitution and save the Parliament. The defence Minister said that the arrest of leaders from inside the Parliament is condemnable but he added they should also condemn the vile speech of Ali Amin Gandapur? **Guests: Senior Analysts**-Kashif Abbasi, Muhammad Malick and Kamran Murtaza **Muhammad Malick** underlined that the KP CM in his speech has set a new low and we would have been discussing the issue now but the arrest of parliamentarians have diverted the issue, and the question is raised on the government and speaker. Now they have suspended some no body's to bring down the temperatures. There is no logic and point to arrest the leaders of PTI from outside Parliament, the government has got nothing out of it. If the CM was incommunicado for seven hours, he should talk about what has happened, where was he and with whom he was sitting, but there is a realpolitik at one side he is giving speech and on the other side he is trying to talk to the establishment. It is irony that one moment he was trying to bring revolution by his speech and on the other hand he is maintaining silence on where he was? He added that institutions behave like individuals and individuals behave like institutions, the personality is more important than institutions. All the power sectors in the country are today in a state of conflict and there is no neutral arbitrator. *Kashif Abbasi* the government is trying to save its government and has shot themselves in the foot. The speaker is also equally guilty and the cameras even if investigated will be of no use, it will all be cleaned. Although the speech of Gandapur was supposed to bring down the PTI and its leader, but the government has taken the arrow in their hand and is injured. Ali Amin Gandapur was taken by agency but he will not come out and say the real thing that has happened with him. There is a lot of mixed signalling from Ali Amin Gandapur, now PTI has to decide what the future is and after declaring war there is no escaping from the narrative. The FIR on the PTI leaders is very strange and the content is laugh worthy, the PTI. Especially Imran Khan has nothing to lose at this point of time, he is already behind bars and has so many cases on him so what more the government and army can do. The common enemy of army and government is Imran Khan, charter of parliament is no chance and nothing can be done.

Constitutional Amendment & Maulana Fazl's Double Game, Capital Talk with Hamid Mir, *Geo News*, 16 September²⁰

Hamid Mir informed that the government was too sure about the passing of 19th constitutional amendment and they called for the Parliament session on a weekend. They were also too sure about JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazl Rehman that he is going to side with the government on this, but things went downhill, there was no constitutional amendment and Fazl did not come in support of the government. Hamid Mir asked, if the government had not done its homework then why they were too sure? Will the government try again for the constitutional amendment in the future? **Guests:** Shahida Akhtar Ali, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry-PML-N & Barrister Ali Zafar-PTI. **Tariq Fazal Chaudhry** pointed out that for a constitutional amendment we need two half of the support, that 224, we have 211 right now and the most important was the support of the JUI-F chief. For that we tried to speak with him, the PM, PPP all had talked to Fazl Rehman, all other supporters were present in the assembly but JUI-F chief ditched at the last (earlier he was with us) but after the changes in the proposed amendment JUI-F chief had issues and he is taking his time but after two weeks we will try this again. This is the legal matter and the talks with JUI-F chief is taking time. Talking about the arrest of the PTI MNA's he added that they might have police cases, the party has nothing to do with the case. There is no proof that we have kept them in Sindh house. They should not compare this amendment to the last one, we have already formed committee to make the Parliament function properly. The Senate and Parliament was called in the day, it got delayed so it's not right to say we have brought the changes in the dark of night. **Shahida Akhtar Ali** informed that in our Parliamentary meeting we had talks on the draft and within us we had no internal consensus on the same as it is still a work on progress. Till now we are not sure if we will support the government on the amendment and it is true that we are open to talk and the government side is coming to talk with the party. Talking about the amendment she added that these kind of changes take time, last changes were made after much discussion and debate. We were roughly told and they said that the content will be verbally communicated to us, but the points on the bill are too long and we need time to read the points. JUI-F is part of the committee,

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8AqgByPSUE>

its true but even then to bring huge changes in less time, we are of the opinion that it is not good. We have not seen the draft and have just heard the draft verbally. We also want constitutional courts, but we also want parallel power to all courts including Supreme Court. **Barrister Ali Zafar** informed that when the session of the Parliament was called we were sure that the government was ready with its number to pass the amendment and we as opposition were ready to speak against the bill. But constitutional amendment is a big thing and they want to hush up the affair despite of the fact that they have no draft in written form. The last amendment was made after due deliberation and took nine long months to make changes. He added that the government was told to bring this amendment by the army, and want to snatch the power of judiciary but when Maulana said he has not read the whole draft there who game plan came tumbling down. The government was too over confident that they can pass the bill, but their own alliance were scared of the confidence of the government including PPP and JUI-F. The appointment of Judges in the SC should be transparent and the bar council supports this and underlined that he stands for this issue.

Who Will Be New Chief; Govt Vs judiciary, Sethi Se Sawal, SAMAA TV, 20 September²¹

In this show the host and Najam Sethi discussed the political developments in the country which is rapidly changing. Najam Sethi agreed that despite of his party having the lowest number of seats in assembly and parliament he is the most sougled politician at this moment in the country. Maulana who had become the most irrelevant has become the most relevant and every party is involved in “*Maulana manao movement.*” When asked has the government failed in the test, **Najam Sethi** pointed out that they have failed in the first attempt but we have to see how they make the next attempt and they will be careful, this time they might succeed. He added that why the government suddenly remembered Maulana and giving him importance, they need 2/3rd majority, before when they got the reserved seats and formed government, Maulana was side-lined. JUI-F and PTI cannot be strategic alliance, but temporary arrangement. But when the Supreme Court gave all the reserved seats to Sunni Ethadi, PTI, suddenly the government realized they are not getting

²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVLLaxgEC10>

the 2/3rd majority and therefore they hurriedly passed the act “election act” in July so that they can get half of the seats. But despite that their numbers were not making up (11 or 12), they had to go to Maulana for more votes. Now Maulana has become a king, everything depends on him and he suddenly became critical. Now they are lining up, starting Asif Zardari to President to PM. Maulana is playing politics, talking to all sides, government says JUI-F is with them. But the truth is Maulana has a list of demands and he has a long game to play, he will play from all sides, opposition, and government. Even the establishment is indirectly talking to him through Mohsin Naqvi, there are many speculations of his demands. Then suddenly he asked the government to show the draft of the constitutional amendment which was not supposed to be shown in public. Government did not want to leak the real draft, there were many drafts, and all of it came in the media which started a debate on the amendment. The government did not want to bring the draft in the public eyes but due to Maulana this time a debate has started and it will now take long time. The date of chief justice is coming near so the government has to hurry. There was one point regarding national security, that establishment will not be questioned, second the judges have politically compromised talking in favour of PTI. The government wants to extend the term of Qazi Faiz Esa’s term by increasing the age of the chief justice. The aim of the *constitutional court* is for the government to select its favourites, first chief will be senior most that is Qazi Faez Esa. In India it is not the senior most but through a college of lawyers and judges, and all over the World, nearly 40% are democratic, and 40 hybrid democratic and constitutional courts are present in these countries and sit on laws and bills of Parliament. This court will always have the upper hand of the party in power and running the government in Parliament.

SC detailed verdict on reserved seats; what is the ECP going to do now? Off The Record with Kashif Abbasi, ARY News, 23 September²²

The host talked about the latest detailed judgment of the Supreme Court on reserved seats, and has underlined that election commission has failed in doing its work in the last elections. The SC has noticed that the PTI has fought the election under Sunni Ethadi and stunned everyone. On the other hand justice Mansoor Ali Khan has disagreed to be part

²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4kBv2yBYHY>

of the new committee formed for practice and procedure bill and criticised it saying it's illegal. The host asked will the SC judgment will be obeyed or will the judiciary be continued blackmailing?

Guests: Zain Hussain Qureshi-PTI; Bilal Azhar Kayani-PMLN and Kanwar Dilshad Former-Secretary (ECP).

Kanwar Dilshad pointed out that the ECP will first ask about the intra party elections of PTI, also the party is delisted and does not exist, no symbol and it is under Sunni Ethad. The commission will take decision will give its view and say that it will obey but will ask does the PTI exist as a party? We have to see what the SC has to say about this. This detailed judgment may put some pressure on the commission and might be put contempt of court. *Bilal Azhar Kayani* pointed out that it is a detailed ordered of the last short order and in a way same content. The review petitions on the short orders by ECP and PML-N are pending in the SC. The other thing is the amendment that has been brought by the government and the practice and procedure, the said judgment is incapable of implementation. ECP is a constitutional body and has to follow the constitution. Talking about the practice and procedure bill, he said that the PTI wanted to stay this bill in the past but now they have changed its view and the changes we have made. There should be flexibility and the different judges to get chance, we have brought the change and the ordinance is not limited to this section. We want to limit the bench fixing of the judges in the cases by this bill. *Zain Hussain Qureshi* talking about the judgment he underlined that PTI has a stated position from day one that reserved seat has to be given over proposition and PTI deserved the seats and this detailed judgement has again proven that. The delisting of the PTI by speaker is questionable and illegal. The government is desperate to bring the number and Maulana to pass the amendment. The PTI will not kneel against anything and we are fighting for our ideology and right of the party. The practice and procedure is about the moral issue now, today among the three judges the senior most Mansoor Ali is not agreeing to sit in the bench, then there is some issues. The government has beautifully pre-loaded the three committee, why Justice Muneeb Akhtar was removed. Now it looks like that the handpicked by the government and there is no difference between the old and new.

Judiciary verses Government; Chief Justice's letter, Sethi Se Sawal, SAMAA TV, 27 September²³

In this latest episode Najam Sethi talks about the latest development in politics, judiciary, security and economic developments in Pakistan in the last week. It has to be noted that there are many developments in the judicial section and chief justice of Pakistan is due to retire in the last week of October but the government is trying to give extension to him by bringing new amendments. *Najam Sethi* pointed out that if the judiciary continue to support PTI and jumps in the politics then there will be new wars in all fronts. The to be new chief justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Qazi Faez Esa have openly come against each other and there is an all-out war. The government is supporting Esa in this war, Mansoor Shah can try to bring in a lawyers movement in the country. The opposing side to Mansoor Ali Shah is very powerful and they might be side-lined, but they will not be able to bring out the popular revolt. These issues will be solved within October and government will try best to bring constitutional amendment. Under no circumstances the army will allow judges to bring out this government as they know they are under pressure from the PTI leaders, every day PTI leaders including Imran Khan are giving statements in favour of *Mansoor Ali Shah* and against *Qazi Faez Esa*. He added the establishment, Parliament and government will win in the last round. All orders of the court are implemented by administration and administration is under control of the government, so Supreme Court has zero power. Everything has become political at this point of time. *Sethi* pointed out that although constitution should be followed and there should be no politics but the problem is that there is politics from all quarters including judiciary and establishment. The power is with government and in the game of politics those who have power will win the race. Talking about the constitutional courts and PPP's support he pointed out that the party has suffered a lot by the courts in the past, even the PML-N and therefore they are both serious about the constitutional court. Right now PTI is at the receiving end, politics is the art of the possible and not impossible. If someone tries for the impossible then they are revolutionary. The PTI wants establishment to talk to them and give them chance again but the army is not giving any chance to the PTI, once bitten twice cautious. About

²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1GjNK9ZAFY>

that letter of Mansoor Ali Shah and Muneeb Akhtar and the return letter of Qazi Faez Esa, he added that there can be a reference against Muneeb Akhtar but it would not be done. Esa pointed out that Shah gives every letter in the media, so Esa has also given an open letter through media addressed to him. It looks like Qazi is under pressure and have changed his stance. Sethi predicated there will be betrayals, power politics in the coming days. New DG ISI has been appointed and with him new policies and new team will come, there will be new plans. They will try to get control of the judiciary again. About PM Shehbaz Sharif and CM Maryam Nawaz and its governments to go down, PM has successfully brought in the IMF programme, he has obeyed the establishment. There can be questions on the Federal government's delivery on controlling the crisis, like order in the Parliament, so there will be questions. The government failed to convince the Maulana also. Maryam Nawaz Sharif is in close contact with army and she knows it is important to stay close, she has not done any controversial thing. She has higher marks with the establishment then Shehbaz Sharif.