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Daily Focus, 21 May 2022

Remittances and their importance for the Pakistan

Three takeaways on current trends and scope ahead

Ankit Singh



Image Source: Dawn

The ISPR statement over Peshawar Corps Commander On 13 May, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) released a monthly report on remittances. For the first time, remittances crossed the figure of USD three billion in a month, which gave hope that the country would achieve its annual remittance target of USD 30 billion. The average inflow per account was USD 10,095 by March-end and the toll is USD 10,320 in April. For the financial year 2020-21, Pakistan received USD 29.4 billion, a 27 per cent year-on-year growth, improving the country's external sector position despite the challenging global economic conditions. It started increasing substantially during the pandemic, which discouraged mobility and non-resident Pakistanis resorted to online transfers and that opportunity was catapulted by technocrats in Pakistan to create scope for more dollar-denominated currency flow into the country. The remittances are an important asset for the nation due to its diversified diasporic networks. It is important to understand how such a feat was achieved and what is sustaining it.

First, Roshan Digital Accounts (RDA) were launched in September 2020 and as the name says, a digitally operated platform which enabled investment in government

bonds directly through Naya Pakistan Certificates (NPC) as well. Other services like Roshan car loans and Roshan home loans have been provided on one platform for 9 million non-resident Pakistanis (NRPs). The NPC can be invested in four currencies, PKR, USD, GBP and EURO, with investment under PKR providing returns as high as 11 per cent. This has provided the nation with additional revenues and enhanced liquidity, which is very crucial for cash crunched forex reserves of Pakistan.

Second, regarding the profile of account holders, the government amended the definition of overseas Pakistanis which earlier included only those Pakistanis working abroad and sending remittances back to Pakistan, to now also include those Pakistanis born and living abroad. Therefore, the need to tap the collective strength of middle-class NRPs will ensure that the Pakistani Diaspora integrates themselves with the Banking and Financial System of Pakistan. The embassies and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) have collaborated in spreading awareness and benefits for NRPs who are looking to monetize their saving and serve the country as well. The fact that Saudi Arabia leads in remittances at home followed by UAE, UK and USA proves that expatriates with the family network still based in Pakistan find it favourable over informal channels. The FATF mandate to crackdown on hawala and hundi transactions has also made RDA a preferred medium to transfer savings in Pakistan.

Third, is the flip side of RDA due to more liabilities. Savings instruments and bonds are not debts, they are liabilities. And that means, they will have to be cleared and serviced before debt servicing, which makes RDA susceptible to economic crises and the repayment capacity of the government. Especially when the PKR has crossed the 200 mark per USD, it would inflate the size of liabilities. To maintain this flow of finance, another flow would be needed to avoid any stopgap and loss of credibility. Forex reserves would be supplemented with RDA savings and keep the wheel of micromanagement function but the macro

impact on payback is another wait and watch the game for international lenders to the country.

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Daily Focus, 19 May 2022

Reviving Pakistan-US ties: A distraction or strategy?

The engagement between the US and Pakistan is likely to remain transactional

Abigail Miriam Fernandez



Image Source: Dawn

Since April 2022, there has been a positive and increased engagement between Pakistan and the United States. This renewed engagement came amid Imran Khan's accusation that the Biden administration was behind the removal of his government through a no-confidence motion. Imran Khan based his allegation on a cable received from Pakistan's ambassador in Washington in which State Department official Donald Lu had said that bilateral ties could suffer if Imran Khan survived the no-trust move. Additionally, during the PTI

government's rule, Pakistan and the US shared a cold relationship with both the Biden and Trump administration. While the Trump administration maintained a transactional approach to Pakistan, the relations with the Biden administration got off to a rocky start as the US denounced the Supreme Court acquitting Omar Saeed Sheikh, downplaying Pakistan's efforts in Afghanistan and the controversy over the much-awaited phone call among other issues. However, cut to the new government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, there have been several engagements at various levels between the two countries. It began with the US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar's maiden visit to Pakistan during which she emphasized on expanding bilateral cooperation based on mutual respect, trust and equality. Similarly, the US State Department over the last two months has reiterated its interest in not only strengthening ties with Pakistan but also to expand and assist the Pakistan economy through trade and investments. Additionally, the State Department has

made it clear that the US will not let "lies get in the way" of its bilateral ties with Pakistan. Meanwhile, Pakistan and US have also completed security level talks, as DG ISI Lt-Gen Nadeem Anjum spent three days in Washington meeting with senior security officials, including US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and CIA Director William J. Burns. Further, the US has appointed a full-time Ambassador to Pakistan after nearly four years. The latest engagement comes as Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari attends a US-initiated UN meeting on food security in New York and his meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations, regional situations, and cooperation in various sectors between the two countries.

Deciphering the interactions

The new government led by PM Shehbaz Sharif has had more engagement with the US than Imran Khan's government did in three years. However, this does not necessarily imply that relations between Pakistan and the US are going to witness any substantial change. The relations are likely to remain transactional for the following reasons. First, the US covering up the allegations. The recent engagement comes amid allegations of US involvement in Pakistan's internal politics. These allegations do not bode well for the Americans who are trying to remove the assumption that they meddle in the internal politics of other countries. Thus, the recent efforts could be a means to reiterate that they are not interested in the domestic politics of countries.

Second, the unlikely move beyond counterterrorism. Despite Pakistan's desire to expand the ties beyond security and the US's claims on the same, the relations between the two are still primarily focusing on counterterrorism and security cooperation concerning Afghanistan. This is the case because both Pakistan and the US

have not taken efforts to engage with each other beyond security.

Third, the Russia-China factors. Given the close relations Pakistan shares with both China and Russia, engaging with the US might not be a priority. Although the US has clarified that Pakistan does not need to strain its relations with China to maintain ties with them, engagement will likely remain transactional rather than deepen like in the case of China and Russia.

In conclusion, the recent interactions between Pakistan and the US must be seen in the light of the larger developments both internally and external. These interactions are unlikely to result in substantial gains unless both sides formulate a strategy and take efforts to move beyond the security prism. However, at the same time, these engagements highlight Pakistan and the US's desire to maintain ties, even if they remain transactional.

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Daily Focus, 18 May 2022

Effects of Climate Change: Problems of groundwater depletion and beyond

Decreasing groundwater and desertification, Himalayan floods and inter-provincial risk sharing will become climate change-induced problems

Ankit Singh



Image Source: Dawn

On 17 May, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif set up a task force on climate change to develop a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the effects of climate change on Pakistan. He was informed that climate change was the main reason for the intense heat-wave and Pakistan being the fifth most vulnerable country in the world in terms of climate change.

Pakistan faces multifaceted effects of climate change ranging from seasonal variations to conflicts over water resources. The following three main issues are likely to aggravate forcing adaptation rather than mitigation as the only way forward in the short term.

The problem of water scarcity According to World Bank (WB), Indus Basin Irrigation System (IBIS) is the largest contiguous surface water irrigation system in the world. IBIS is critical to recharging the groundwater due to seepage through canals and barrages, it provides 70 per cent of domestic water nationally. According to the WB report titled, 'Groundwater in Pakistan's Indus Basin: Present and Future Prospects', groundwater has transitioned over the 20th century, from being barely considered at the beginning of the century, to becoming a nuisance mid-century, and

now forming the backbone of Pakistan's domestic water supply and agriculture.

Various reports by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) also warn of an absolute water scarcity by 2025. Being one of the most water-intensive countries, the per capita water availability from 1500 cubic meters in 2009 to 1038 cubic meters in 2021. The problem, according to IMF, lies in underpricing of canal water, recovering only a quarter of annual operating and maintenance costs.

Agriculture, which consumes almost all annual available surface water, is largely untaxed. With increasing population, urbanization and pesticide-intensive farming, the affluents will be a more saline and increased towards soil desertification. Also, there is a bigger threat of damage to the ecosystem of IBIS, which is home to the ancient Indus dolphin.

Floods and melting of glaciers According to projections by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in a report, 'Sixth Assessment Report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability', the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra River basins, will see an increase in river 'runoff' by 2050 and 2100. The Indus River 'runoff' will increase by 7-12 per cent by 2050 as the Himalayan glaciers have lost more mass since 2000 than in the entire twentieth century. This means rapid flooding in downstream areas.

Recently on 11 May, the Hassanabad bridge in Gilgit-Baltistan on Karakoram Highway

collapsed after a heatwave caused a glacial lake to release large amounts of water into a stream. Similar Himalayan floods in past years have claimed lives and further caused infrastructure damage in Pakistan's remote areas. According to the meteorological department of Pakistan, April was the hottest place on earth and in the history with 50.2 Celsius. April is unusual for such high temperatures in Pakistan and the effect was felt across the Punjab plains which come under the watershed of the Indus River. According to Global Food Policy Report 2022, summer heatwaves are projected to increase at a rate of 0.71 days per decade in the country. In India, it is estimated to triple or quadruple by 2100. The poor of the subcontinent needs to brace themselves for tumultuous and scorching times ahead, and therein lies conflict-prone tendencies due to the shared geography between Pakistan and the Asian subcontinent.

The interprovincial conflicts due to lack of water resources

On 15 May, a joint team led by the federal Water Resources Ministry reported at least 13,000 cusecs of water released from the Taunsa barrage for Sindh didn't reach Guddu contrary to a claim by the Indus River System Authority (IRSA). A member of the team explained that the claim of 60,000 cusecs of flows being released from Taunsa for Sindh was not correct either due to two reasons, either there is misreporting at Taunsa or the water is being drawn in Punjab. This vindication by Sindh seeps into more mistrust within provinces and broadens the lack of trust between Punjab and Sindh in Pakistan. However, no media has given adequate coverage already in the drought-ridden province of Balochistan. The lack of representation and expression for Balochistan will increase dissent within the masses of Balochistan province. Pakistan has over time blamed India for building new dams on the Indus river and contesting Indus

Water Treaty.

In conclusion, the climate change-induced socio-environmental problems are common in the subcontinent and there is an urgent requirement for regional governance on environmental conservation and accountability. India and Pakistan stand at a juncture where they can leapfrog towards a common framework on mitigation and adaptation to climate change with or without historical anchorage. The Indus Water Treaty was a moment of acknowledgement to rise above the partition. The time is now ripe for one more mutually conserving policy vis a vis watershed governance in the subcontinent.

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Daily Focus, 16 May 2022

Kabul River Agreement: Three reasons why there is no treaty

Pakistan and Afghanistan would benefit from a treaty to manage the Kabul River

Abigail Miriam Fernandez



Image Source: Dawn

A recent article republished by *Dawn* reported that Pakistan has been seeking an agreement with Afghanistan on the Kabul River; however, a treaty on the management and allocation of water between the two countries remains dim. The article, initially published by The Third Pole highlights the several attempts made by Pakistan to work together on the Kabul River with Afghanistan; it also reports Pakistani experts claiming in the past that the ideal would be for the two countries to reach an agreement on sustainably developing all these river basins together.

The Kabul River: A profile

The Kabul River is a 700-kilometre-long river that starts in the Sanglakh Range of the Hindu Kush mountains in Afghanistan. It joins the Indus River near Attock, Pakistan. The Kabul River passes through the cities of Kabul and Jalalabad in Afghanistan and then flows into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan 25 kilometres north of the Durand Line border crossing at Torkham. Logar, Panjshir, Kunar, Alingar, Bara and Swat are major tributaries of the Kabul River.

The Kabul River is a source of drinking water, irrigation, hydropower, livelihoods and recreational activities to over 20 million

people in Afghanistan and Pakistan. While the Kabul River is impounded by several dams, no water agreement exists between upper riparian Afghanistan and lower riparian Pakistan.

Attempts to reach an agreement: The case so far

At present, Pakistan and Afghanistan do not share any bilateral treaties or agreements on the Kabul River. However, both countries have continued to build dams and use the river for various activities. According to an audit report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, both Afghanistan and Pakistan are working in isolation and developing isolated projects in the Kabul River basin. However, these projects are short-term, non-synergistic, non-integrated and environmentally unsustainable, thereby not fulfilling their socioeconomic goals.

The 1921 treaty signed between Afghanistan and Great Britain is the only water-sharing treaty that exists between the two. The treaty allows for water withdrawal for residents in Torkham, Afghanistan, and for using the Kabul River for navigation and irrigation rights in Pakistan.

Over the years, Pakistan has tried to initiate talks on an agreement to share water.

According to a study, Pakistan and the World Bank incentivized cooperation by initiating discussions on a water treaty similar to the Indus Water Treaty to build utilitarian and normative compliance and institutional capacity to promote greater cooperation to avoid a dispute over water issues between 2003 and 2011. However,

none of these initiatives was successful. Later in 2014, Pakistan attempted to launch joint projects on the Kabul River and share environmental, societal and economic data on the river basin. However, the Afghanistan government did not reciprocate the interest. In the recent past, the two countries have only discussed the matter once during the August 2013 visit of the then Afghan Finance Minister Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, however, there was nothing substantial achieved from the discussion.

Lack of agreement: Three reasons

The lack of an agreement between the two countries stems from several factors including the long-standing mistrust, political difference, unstable governments and the lack of data among others.

First, the lack of a stable government in Kabul. Stability has always been an unfamiliar matter when it comes to Afghanistan. The years of prolonged conflict have resulted in an unstable government that has not only failed to govern the country adequately but also build ties. Although Pakistan and Afghanistan have shared close relations depending on who is in power, the instability has resulted in the two countries being unable to reach an agreement on crucial matters such as the Kabul River.

Second, the political differences. Political animosity has been a prominent characteristic of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. The bilateral tension dates back to 1947 and Kabul's continued refusal to accept the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Additionally, long-standing tensions over other land disputes and borderlines have impacted disputes over water and the Kabul River. These differences have thus resulted in non-cooperation over the Kabul River.

Third, the lack of data on the Kabul River. There is both a lack of data and

understanding of the available water resources in the Kabul River. According to a study, the knowledge deficits in the water sector in the Kabul Basin have also been reflected in a 2010 report by IUCN which reveals that the most reliable data for irrigated areas in Afghanistan dates back to 1967. Additionally, collecting data in the region is not an easy task due to mutual mistrust. This lack of data on the river curbs the prospects of formulating an agreement to govern the water.

In conclusion, the Kabul River and its resources are highly under-developed and under-utilized an agreement would help tap into these aspects. Additionally, a water treaty would help address the issues of abusive threats and riparian control. An agreement would also help stabilise the distribution of water given the current challenges posed due to climate change. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are highly dependent on the Kabul River an agreement to govern the water body is essential.

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PAKISTAN IN BRIEF

POLITICS

Fazlur Rehman demanded “solid and full support” of the state institutions for new government

On 19 May, Maulana Fazlur Rehman while addressing a gathering at Taqaddus Haram-i-Nabwi Conference at main Preedy Street demanded “solid and full support” of the state institutions for the newly placed coalition government to bring the country out of crises “created under the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf rule.” Further, he criticised Imran Khan for deliberately “creating a chaos” through fake narratives and propaganda. (“[Fazlur Rehman seeks state institutions’ support for nascent government](#),” *Dawn*, 20 May 2022)

Absenteeism spoils the National Assembly sessions to remain functional

On 17 May, Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali, the lone Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) member in the National Assembly (NA) pointed out empty treasury benches and questioned the intention of the government, he said: “There was a great enthusiasm when you people were bringing the no-confidence motion [against the then prime minister Imran Khan]. Where has that passion gone now?” The NA needs a quorum to begin the session and has been running without a quorum since new government took over. Having no serious business to do, both Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and his deputy have been running the house by allowing the members to deliver lengthy speeches and speak on issues of their choice on points of order. (Amir Wasim, “[Coalition govt fails to run NA despite no clear opposition](#),” *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

Allies repose faith in coalition government and wish to finish the term

On 17 May, chairing a meeting with allies, PM Shehbaz Sharif, discussed important issues plaguing the country. According to sources, there was discussion on the need to carry out, legal, constitutional and electoral

reforms before going into the phase of the general election. The federal cabinet decided to get rid of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Javed Iqbal by amending its “draconian laws”. A report on the review of Civil Servants (Directory Retirement from Service) Rule 2020 was discussed and cabinet annulled the Civil Servants (Directory Retirement from Service) Rules 2020, and approved the withdrawal of proceedings against the government officers under the said rules. Discussing the ongoing heatwave in the country, the cabinet also formed a special task force under the ministry of climate change. The commerce ministry briefed the federal cabinet on the detailed analysis of exports, imports and balance of payment. It was told that export volume during fiscal 2021-22 was USD 31.2 billion and the import stood at USD 76.7 billion. During this period, exports increased by USD 4.95 billion and imports by USD 11.16 billion. The committee also approved import of 200,000 metric tonnes of urea on government to government basis by the Trading Corporation of Pakistan for the Kharif season. (Syed Irfan Raza, “[Allies want govt to stay in power till Aug next year](#),” *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

Next election would be held when Nawaz Sharif decides, says Maryam Nawaz

On 15 May, Maryam Nawaz while addressing a rally in Kotla town of Gujrat stated that election would be held when Nawaz Sharif would decide on it. She said, “Imran Khan, don’t wait for any tragedy to take place although I am sure that the talk of video is yet another lie and let me guarantee you (Khan) that Nawaz Sharif has a big heart and he will ensure provision of security for you more than Shehbaz Sharif’s.” Further, she asked Imran Khan to produce the video regarding assassination bid saying, “I will ask Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah to get that video from Imran Khan and tell the latter to not to wait for any tragedy to happen.” (Waseem Ashraf Butt, “[Nawaz to decide next election timing](#):

[Maryam](#),” Dawn, 16 May 2022)

Imran Khan reveals ill intentions of his assassination by political opponents

On 15 May, during his campaign rally in Faisalabad, as part of ‘Azadi March’, Imran Khan mentioned that he had possession of a recorded video of all those elements involved in the alleged United States-backed conspiracy against and added: “so that if anything happens to me people should know about them (conspirators)”. He took an analogy of Liaquat Ali Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Ziaul Haq and questioned the incapacity to bring the culprits to justice. Lashing out at his opponents to seek advice from Nawaz Sharif in London, he said: “An absconder and thief sitting in London making decisions of Pakistan”. (“[Imran says people will take revenge if he is assassinated](#),” The Express Tribune, 16 May 2022)

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to consultative session with government allies on future line of action

On 16 May, Dawn reported that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would hold a consultative session with government allies regarding the decisions taken during his meeting with Nawaz Sharif in London. (Syed Irfan Raza, “[PM to consult allies on future line of action](#),” Dawn, 16 May 2022)

INTERNAL

Islamabad long march to begin between May 25 to 29, says Imran Khan

On 20 May, Imran Khan stated that the PTI would begin its Islamabad long between 25th to 29th May due to some “new developments.” He said, “There have been some new developments recently and all the dissenting members have been disqualified. On Sunday in Peshawar, I have called the PTI’s core committee meeting [to choose a final date of the long march].” (“[Islamabad long march to begin between May 25 to 29: Imran](#),” Dawn, 21 May 2022)

FM Bilawal defends Imran Khan’s Moscow visit

On 19 May, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari defended Imran Khan’s visit to Russia stating, “As far the former prime minister’s trip to Russia, I would absolutely defend the former prime minister of Pakistan. He conducted that trip as part of his foreign policy and without knowing that — no one is psychic, no one has a sixth sense — there’s no way we could have possibly known that that would be the time [when] the current conflict will start,” adding, “And I believe it is very unfair to punish Pakistan for such an innocent action.” (Anwar Iqbal, “[In US, Bilawal defends Imran’s Moscow visit](#),” Dawn, 20 May 2022)

PTI terms ECP scrutiny panel’s report ‘flawed, inaccurate’

On 19 May, a financial expert of PTI, Najmul Saqib Shah, while arguing before a bench of the Election Commission of Pakistan headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, said the party had submitted its standard audit report but the scrutiny committee ignored it and misperceived the audit accounts. Questioning the ability of scrutiny committee to function properly, the counsellor said: “Large amounts were deposited in some accounts, others are small accounts. There was duplication of depositing amounts.” (Iftikhar A Khan, “[PTI terms ECP scrutiny panel’s report ‘flawed, inaccurate’](#),” Dawn, 20 May 2022)

Zardari calls on PML-Q’s Chaudhry Shujaat

On 19 May, former president Asif Ali Zardari called on PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence to discuss the prevailing economic and political situation in the country. Terming PML-Q a pivotal ally of the government, the former president maintained that that the party will be taken on board for consultations for all key affairs and decisions. (“[Zardari calls on PML-Q’s Chaudhry Shujaat](#),” The Express Tribune, 20

May 2022)

Petition against Hamza submitted after SC ruling on Article 63A

On 19 May, Sibtain Khan and four other MPAs of the PTI filed a joint petition, saying the Punjab chief minister's election held on 16 April under the supervision of the provincial assembly deputy speaker whereby Hamza was declared a returned candidate was held without lawful authority. It asked the court to declare the PML-N leader's election unlawful in view of the opinion given by the Supreme Court about Article 63A of the Constitution. Separately, on 19 May, former Punjab governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema has sought his reinstatement and filed a petition before the Islamabad High Court (IHC). IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah will hear the petition today. (Malik Asad, Wajih Ahmad Sheikh, "[PTI moves court against Hamza; Cheema seeks reinstatement](#)," *Dawn*, 20 May 2022)

PTI questions the authenticity of a report by the ECP scrutiny committee on foreign funding

On 18 May, a financial expert of PTI, while arguing before a bench of the Election Commission of Pakistan headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, said the party had submitted its standard audit report but the scrutiny committee ignored it and misperceived the audit accounts. Questioning the ability of scrutiny committee to function properly, the counsellor said: "Large amounts were deposited in some accounts, others are small accounts. There was duplication of depositing amounts." (Saqib Virk, "[Foreign funding case: PTI says ECP scrutiny panel 'ignored' its audits](#)," *Dawn*, 19 May 2022)

ECP postpones announcement of verdict on disqualification references against 25 dissident PTI MPAs

On 17 May, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) delisted the case without any reason explained. The development becomes important after Supreme Court in its verdict

announced that votes cast against party direction "cannot be counted and must be disregarded, and this is so regardless of whether the party head, subsequent to such vote, proceeds to take, or refrains from taking, action that would result in a declaration of defection". (Fahad Chaudhry, "[ECP postpones announcement of verdict on disqualification references against 25 dissident PTI MPAs](#)," *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

Separately, according to Article 63-A of the Constitution, a parliamentarian can be disqualified on grounds of defection. In the Presidential reference to Supreme Court, the apex court was asked to clarify four questions, first, should Article 63-A have a limited or a broad, purpose-oriented interpretation? Second, Will the defecting members' vote be counted, given equal weightage? Third, Will the defectors be disqualified for life? And fourth, on measures that can be taken to prevent defection, floor crossing and vote-buying. The verdict given on the first question was that if there is a conflict between the fundamental rights of the collectivity [political party] and an individual member, the former must prevail, to the second question, votes casted against party direction "cannot be counted and must be disregarded, to the third question, a declaration of defection could result in disqualification under Article 63 if parliament passed an appropriate law and the fourth question, was returned due to its broadness and constitutional authority in interpreting it. (Haseeb Bhatti, "[Article 63-A: SC decides defecting lawmakers' votes will not be counted](#)," *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

PM Shehbaz Sharif downsizes ECC composition

On 17 May, a notification was issued by the Cabinet Division to cut down the size the coalition government's Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet by drastically reducing its strength from 12 to five. A senior government official remarked, "It is better to have

professional input from professionals in the ECC for making recommendations to the all-inclusive federal cabinet for collective wisdom.” The five members besides the finance minister now include Commerce Minister, Industries Minister, National Food Security Minister and Planning Minister. The ECC is also responsible for maintaining vigilance on the monetary and credit situation, and make proposals for the regulation of credit in order to maximise production and exports and to prevent inflation and determine the future pattern of growth of agriculture and industries. (Khaleeq Kiani, “[PM Shehbaz cuts all-important ECC down to size](#),” *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

National polio programme decides to launch a campaign across the country

On 17 May, Dawn reported that an official of the Ministry of National Health Services (NHS) said a nationwide polio campaign will be conducted from 23 to 27 May to boost the immunity level of 43.3 million children up to the age of five years. Previously, the campaign was to be held at the sub-national level or in selected union councils but after detection of the recent cases it has been decided to conduct it across the country. (Ikram Junaidi, “[National polio drive announced after detection of three cases](#),” *Dawn*, 17 May 2022)

Allies assure support for PM in taking tough decisions

On 16 May, three main ruling coalition partners, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The PM discussed with allies that the expected crisis when the government is likely to take is the withdrawal of subsidy on petrol and its price is likely to jump by PKR 50 per litre. An MQM-P leader also gave in his support for stabilizing the economy but said an early election would channel people’s anger against the current coalition parties. (Syed Irfan Raza, “[Key allies encourage PM](#)

[Shehbaz to take ‘tough’ decisions](#),” *Dawn*, 17 May 2022)

Third case of polio reported in Pakistan

On 16 May, The News International reported that the third case of polio was reported in the country after a one-year-old boy in North Waziristan has been paralysed by wild poliovirus. Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel said, “Another child will live with a lifelong physical disability because of this preventable disease. As a country, we must understand the human cost of not finishing polio in Pakistan. Every polio case is a huge tragedy.” (“[Pakistan reports third polio case of the year](#),” The News International, 16 May 2022)

Federal team affirms to Sindh’s claim on ‘missing flows’

On 15 May, a joint team led by the federal Water Resources Ministry reported at least 13,000 cusecs of water released from Taunsa barrage for Sindh did not reach Guddu contrary to a claim by the Indus River System Authority (IRSA). A member of the team explained that the claim 60,000 cusecs of flows being released from Taunsa for Sindh was not correct either due two reasons, either there is misreporting at Taunsa or the water is being drawn in Punjab. (Muhammad Hussain Khan, “[Sindh claim of ‘missing flows’ found to be correct](#),” *Dawn*, 16 May 2022)

PROVINCES

Punjab: Hamza Shehbaz to play till last ball after ECP de-seats 25 PTI MNAs

On 20 May, CM Hamza Sharif refused to step down as Election Commission of Pakistan de-seated 25 PTI member of provincial assemblies (MPA). Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer said: ““Either a governor can ask the CM to take a vote of confidence or the opposition can bring a no-trust motion against him. Both options do not seem workable as the governor’s office is vacant, and the opposition needs 186

votes to oust the CM, which it does not have. Similarly, the acting governor cannot ask the CM to take a vote of confidence.” After ECP’s decision Punjab Assembly’s current strength is 346 members: the PTI has 158 lawmakers, its ally PML-Q 10, the PML-N 165, PPP seven, five independents and one Rah-i-Haq Party. Out of 25 de-seated MPA, five were elected on reserve seats and the allocation of five vacant reserved seats will assume an important role if the run-off election is held. (Zulqernain Tahir, “[Hamza to stay put as PTI moves court for his removal](#),” *Dawn*, 2 May 2022)

Balochistan: Ready to face the no-confidence motion, says CM Mir Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo

On 20 May, Dawn reported that Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo stated that he is ready to face the no-confidence motion against him, terming it as a part of politics and democracy. He stated that he is willing to hold discussion with those who have moved the no-confidence motion, stating that if they had issues, these could be resolved through dialogue, adding that it is the responsibility of the government to solve people’s problems. (“[No-trust motions part of democracy: Balochistan CM Bizenjo](#),” *Dawn*, 20 May 2022)

Balochistan: Forest fire claims three lives

On 19 May, three people were burnt to death and four injured while battling the violent fire at Koh-e-Sulaiman Mountain range in Balochistan. The fire started last week and reduced thousands of valuable pine trees to ashes. Located at the juncture of Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the wildfire started on the K-P side but due to strong winds, it spread to other areas, including Sherani and Musakhail. Despite the passage of nine days, the fire has not been brought under control. The locals are trying unsuccessfully to put out the blaze. Koh-e-Sulaiman is also known for being the world’s largest chilghoza (pine nut) forest on higher elevations. The 26,000-hectare forest produces around 640,000

kilogrammes of chilghozas annually. (Syed Ali Shah, “[3 burnt to death in Balochistan forest fire](#),” *The Express Tribune*, 20 May 2022)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Medics threaten to boycott polio drive over abduction

On 19 May, addressing a crowded news conference at Swat Press Conference, senior and young doctors demanded immediate recovery of Dr Zeeshan, a resident of Swat, and threatened to boycott anti-polio campaign and launch protest if their demand was not met. A statement expressed during conference said: “At present, three cases of polio have been reported in Pakistan while only one case has been registered in Afghanistan. The abduction of the doctor working for polio eradication will convey a negative message to the world.” (“[Swat medics threaten to boycott polio drive over abduction](#),” *Dawn*, 20 May 2022)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Gunmen kill a station house officer in Peshawar

On 19 May, a station house officer was killed by on the Northern Bypass. The police claimed that the Shahpur police station’s SHO was targeted after being chased by two attackers in a car. The police while speaking to Dawn stated that the condition of anonymity that the incident appeared to be linked with the attack on Intelligence Bureau officials in Sarki area of Peshawar city. (Manzoor Ali, “[SHO martyred in Peshawar attack](#),” *Dawn*, 20 May 2022)

Balochistan: Foreign terror cells active in the province, says government official

On 18 May, Balochistan government spokesperson Farah Azeem Shah said the Counterterrorism Department (CTD) stated that cells operating from the Gulf region and Europe were sponsoring terrorist networks in the province, especially by recruiting women. Further, the spokesperson stated that anti-state elements were operating from abroad, not only to sponsor subversive activities in Pakistan but also to train terrorists and supervise terror acts in the

country. (Kalbe Ali, "[Foreign terror cells active in Balochistan: official](#)," *Dawn*, 19 May 2022)

Balochistan: 14 lawmakers submit a no-confidence motion against Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo

On 18 May, 14 lawmakers from the ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and the Awami National Party (ANP) claimed that the coalition government had failed to bring any improvement in the conditions of the province, which forced lawmakers of the BAP and other parties to move no-trust motion against him. A spokesperson for the CM Bizenjo said the vote of no-confidence would be defeated. He claimed they had been anticipating the move for quite some time and were prepared to "defeat it easily". (Saleem Shahid, "[Political crisis hits Balochistan yet again](#)," *Dawn*, 19 May 2022)

Sindh: Suspects 'linked to Saddar IED blast' killed in encounter

On 18 May, a Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) official while speaking to Dawn stated that two suspected militants involved in the recent blast in Saddar, were gunned down in an alleged encounter. The two militants are said to be associated with the proscribed Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA). ("[Suspects 'linked to Saddar IED blast' in killed in encounter](#)," *Dawn*, 19 May 2022)

Punjab: Ahmadiyya community member killed in Okara district

On 19 May, Dawn reported that a young man belonging to the Ahmadiyya community was killed by a seminary student when he was on his way back home. Okara District Police Officer stated that the suspect was taken into custody and was being interrogated. Meanwhile, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said, "The brutal murder of an Ahmadi man in Okara, who was reportedly stabbed to death by a seminary student, serves to remind us just how precarious the lives of religious

minorities have become. Until the rising tide of religiosity is stemmed and better protection mechanisms put in place, they will remain lesser citizens. This is unacceptable and the perpetrators must be brought to book." ("[Ahmadiyya community member killed in Okara](#)," *Dawn*, 19 May 2022)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Two people abducted in North Waziristan

On 17 May, two people including a doctor affiliated with the anti-polio programme were abducted by unidentified men in Mirali area of North Waziristan. On the same day, unknown gunmen killed a man in Shera Tala area. However, no group has claimed responsibility for these attacks. ("[Two including doctor abducted in North Waziristan](#)," *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

Punjab: Court overrules registrar office objections to intra court appeals by PTI

On 17 May, a Lahore High Court larger bench consisting of Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan, Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry, Justice Shahid Jamil Khan, Justice Sajid Mahmood Sethi and Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh took up an intra court appeal by PTI against the decisions of two different single benches regarding oath taking of Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz. The arguments were heard from governments side and the hearing was adjourned till 19 May. ("[Punjab CM-elect oath: Court overrules registrar office objections to intra court appeals](#)," *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

Sindh: IED blast claims life of a woman and injured eight others

On 16 May night, a police van was set as a target of an IED bomb which was planted in Boulton market in Kharadar area of Karachi. This was the third terror incident in the metropolis since 26 April when a suicide bombing at Karachi University claimed the life of three Chinese teachers and a local driver. The responsibility of the deadly attack was later claimed by the banned Baloch Liberation Army. Later on, 12 May,

a young passerby was killed and 10 others suffered injuries in a bicycle blast targeting an official vehicle of Pakistan Coast Guards in Saddar whose responsibility was claimed by the outlawed Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army. (Imtiaz Ali, "[Kharadar blast claims woman's life, leaves 12 injured](#)," *Dawn*, 17 May 2022)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Imran Khan vows to celebrate a collective funeral of main parties in current coalition government

On 16 May, former PM Imran Khan during his rally in Swabi demanded that the government hold transparent and free elections immediately. He attacked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of shielding turncoats and compared the PTI leaders from the province of KP as ethical, faithful and principled. He also attacked MQM-P which was involved in targeted killing of police officers in 1996. ("[Imran vows to bury, PML-N, PPP, JUI-F with nation's help](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 17 May 2022)

Sindh: SCA urges government to declare the province 'calamity-hit'

On 15 May, the Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) raised concern over an acute shortage of water in the province and urged government to declare Sindh as 'calamity-hit'. Additionally, the SCA rejected the water flows figures shared by Punjab and called for the installation of telemetry system at barrages to ascertain a true picture. ("[Sindh be declared 'calamity-hit' due to water shortage: SCA](#)," *Dawn*, 16 May 2022)

Sindh: Mustafa Kamal proposes PSP as fourth alternative for Karachi after blaming PPP, MQM and PTI for their vested interests

On 15 May, accusing the three parties of selling Karachi's mandate, Pakistan Sarzameen Party chairman Mustafa vowed to grab than a million votes in the next elections for his party. He put blame on duo of PPP and MQM-P of looting Sindh and dividing the capital on ethnic lines. He

showed on the large screen installed behind the rostrum some videos clips of leaders from PTI, PPP and MQM-P. He was addressing a women-only rally, he asked each female party worker to turn at least 10 women into PSP voters in the next local bodies and general elections. ("[Only PSP can solve Karachi's problems, Kamal tells women rally](#)," *Dawn*, 16 May 2022)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Over 15,000 more schools needed for 4.7m out-of-school children

On 16 May, *Dawn* reported on the need to establish over 15,000 additional government schools for the enrolment of total 4.7 million out-of-school children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Officials at Elementary and Secondary Education (E&SE) Department informed *Dawn*, currently around 35,000 government schools were functioning in KP where 5.5 million children were getting education. As per Article 25(A) of the Constitution, the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to 16 years in such manner as may be determined by law. (Mohammad Ashfaq, "[Over 15,000 more schools needed for 4.7m out-of-school children in KP](#)," *Dawn*, 16 May 2022)

ECONOMY

On Government to present budget on 10 June

On 20 May, Secretary Finance informed that meeting of the National Economic Council is being contemplated for 7 June, followed by a special cabinet meeting on the budget on 10 June. Sources said the talks with the IMF mission in Doha had discussed the fiscal framework for the next year based on which the next year's federal development programme could not afford more than Rs700bn, otherwise the burden of taxation would have to be increased. A special budget meeting of the federal cabinet is also being speculated for the consideration of the budgetary proposals. (Khaleeq Kiani,

[“Budget to be presented on June 10, says official,” Dawn, 21 May 2022\)](#)

Reduction in import bill and remittance lowers monthly CAD for April by USD 392 million

On 19 May, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) tweeted about 39 per cent reduction in month on month reduction in current account deficit (CAD). On a month-on-month basis, April is the second consecutive month when the current account deficit has contracted. The aggregate CAD for July-April FY22 reached at USD 13.78 billion. However, in the first 10 months (July-April) of the current fiscal year, the cumulative current account deficit soared 27 times to USD 13.78 billion compared to a mere USD 543 million in the same period last year. On 18 government banned import of luxury items which will save up to USD 500 million, however, the government would have to forego proportional lucrative revenue by cutting down import of luxury imports. (Salman Siddiqui, [“Current account deficit narrows 39%,” The Express Tribune, 20 May 2022\)](#)

NAC announces GDP growth rate for the current year at 5.97 per cent

On 18 May, Planning Ministry after a meeting of the National Accounts Committee announced provisional GDP growth rate for the current year at 5.97 per cent which is higher than the growth estimated by SBP and even IMF. As per the estimate, the overall size of the economy has ballooned to USD 383 billion and jacked up the per capita income to USD 1,798. The agriculture sector is provisionally estimated to grow by 4.4 per cent, nearly one per cent better than the previous year. On the back of the large-scale manufacturing sector, the industrial sector grew at the rate of 7.2 per cent, lower than the previous fiscal year. The growth in the services sector was slightly better than the previous fiscal year, standing at 6.2 per cent. The mining sector witnessed contraction. (Shahbaz Rana, [“With 6% growth rate, Pakistan’s economic](#)

[size jumps to \\$383 billion,” The Express Tribune, 19 May 2022\)](#)

PKR breaches 200 per USD mark

On 18 May, for the first in the history of Pakistan, the US dollar crossed the 200-mark in interbank trade. As the dollar busts all the previous records today, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took notice of the continuous surge in the value of the greenback in the country and convened a high-level meeting to discuss the country’s economic situation. ([“In a first, Pakistani rupee storms past 200-mark against US dollar in interbank,” The News International, 19 May 2022\)](#)

Pakistan ready to remove subsidies in a phased manner

On 19 May, The News International reported on the status of 7th Economic Review Talks being held in Doha and it is learned that Pakistan has conveyed its willingness to the IMF negotiation team that it will take 'tough measures' such as hike in the POL products and electricity prices but in a phase-wise approach for reviving the stalled USD six billion fund programme. Both sides showed keen interest to complete the review successfully. ([“Ready for ‘reforms’, Pakistan tells IMF,” The News International, 19 May 2022\)](#)

Government places curb on import of essential and luxury items

On 18 May, PM Shehbaz Sharif allowed a temporary ban on the import of around three dozen goods which are going to create additional space of around USD 300 million on a monthly basis. The PM did not accept the proposals to increase regulatory duties on imported goods and also rejected recommendations to ban import of cheese, chocolates and other foods largely imported from Europe. The government may face pressure from old car importer dealers. About 35,000 cars are imported every year in Pakistan. In addition, around 250,000 completely knocked down (CKD) vehicles are also imported every year. (Shahbaz

Rana, "[Govt bans import of essential & luxury items.](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 19 May 2022)

PSX nosedives to two month low on Monday opening

On 16 May, the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) dropped by over 1,000 points immediately after opening as the government's inaction over the growing economic crisis mounted selling pressure on the bourse. Finance Minister Miftah Ismail announced on 15 May that the PML-N coalition government "is not increasing petroleum product prices for the time being." The development comes amid IMF demand on reversing the food and fuel subsidies which is likely going to take the nation on risk of default on its international payments for the first time if the country's reserves are not improved. (Salman Siddiqui, "[PSX drops by over 1,000 points as govt inaction rattles confidence.](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 16 May 2022)

EXTERNAL

FM Bilawal scheduled to arrive in China

On 21 May, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is scheduled to arrive in China for a two-day visit on the invitation of State Counsellor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. According to the Foreign Office, the minister of state for foreign affairs and senior officials would be part of the foreign minister's delegation. The two sides are to hold discussion on bilateral relations with particular focus on stronger trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. ("[Bilawal arrives in China today.](#)" *Dawn*, 21 May 2022)

PM proposes including Turkey in CPEC

On 20 May, PM while addressing a ceremony marking the launch of PNS Badr - the third ship inducted under the framework of Turkey's National Ship Project (MILGEM) added that Pakistan was committed to expanding multifarious infrastructure to ensure economic

connectivity in the country and emphasised that cooperation with Turkey would yield positive results. According to Turkish news agency Anadolu, the MILGEM vessels are 99 meters (325 feet) long with a displacement capacity of 24,00 tons and can move at a speed of 29 nautical miles. The anti-submarine combat frigates can be hidden from the radar. ("[Turkey's inclusion in CPEC to benefit region: PM Shehbaz.](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 21 May 2022)

PM offers opportunity for Karachi businessmen to facilitate Saudi investment

On 20 May, while addressing a ceremony at the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry during a one-day trip to the metropolitan city, PM said: "One billion dollars is available, it is a gift of investment from Saudi Arabia. As the prime minister, I am laying this in front of you. Sit together and brainstorm and make a feasibility plan. Set up a desalination plant and I believe that clean water will be available at every home within five years." ("[PM Shehbaz asks Karachi businessmen to devise plan for \\$1bn Saudi investment.](#)" *Dawn*, 21 May 2022)

Islamabad is looking to the Taliban to help check terrorism, says FM Bilawal

On 19 May, Dawn reported that Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari in an interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour stated that Pakistan is looking to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to play its role in discouraging the increase in terrorist activity on Pakistan's side of the border. He said, "We continue to not only monitor this situation, but work on our side to ensure that we can try to tackle the threat of terrorism and hope that the regime in Afghanistan lives up to their international commitment to not allow their soil to be used for terrorism." ("[Islamabad looking to Kabul to help check terror, says Bilawal.](#)" *Dawn*, 19 May 2022)

Taliban claims talks were held in Kabul between Pakistan and TTP

On 18 May, the Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid stated that they were hosting peace talks between Pakistan officials and a Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant group that has battled Islamabad for over a decade. He said, "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, in good faith, strives for a successful negotiation process and expects both sides to be tolerant and flexible," adding that the group also confirmed that "negotiations are underway" under the guidance of the Afghan Taliban. ("[Kabul brokers peace talks between Islamabad, TTP](#)," *The News International*, 19 May 2022)

PM Shehbaz Sharif stresses on the importance of Pakistan-EU cooperative ties

On 18 May, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a telephonic conversation with European Council President Charles Michel emphasised on the importance Pakistan attaches to its relationship with the European Union. Further, he reiterated his desire to deepen bilateral cooperative ties with the bloc. Additionally, he stated that the Pakistan-EU Strategic Engagement Plan would help deepen bilateral engagement between the two sides, especially in the realms of trade, development and climate change. ("[PM desires enhanced Pakistan-EU cooperative ties](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 19 May 2022)

Sinovac expresses interest to invest in Pakistan's health sector

On 17 May, a delegation of Chinese company Sinovac held a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during which representatives of the Chinese company, Sinovac expressed an interest in forming partnerships for the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases through investment in the health sector of Pakistan. Additionally, it was decided that the Ministry of National Health Services (NHS) would form a task force for the projects proposed by Sinovac to accelerated the

process of implementation of the work. (Ikram Junaidi, "[Sinovac ready to invest in Pakistan's health sector](#)," *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

US keen on building ways to improve trade with Pakistan, says State Department spokesperson

On 17 May, State Department spokesperson said that the United States "will continue to work bilaterally on ways to grow investment and trade opportunities to build a prosperous and stable Pakistan." Additionally, the spokesperson also stated that the US "welcomes the ongoing International Monetary Fund (IMF) deliberations with Pakistan."

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken besides participate in a ministerial meeting and debate at the United Nations Security Council on food security. ("[US offers strong support to rebuild Pakistan's economy](#)," *Dawn*, 18 May 2022; ("[Bilawal meets Blinken today to reset ties](#)," *Dawn*, 18 May 2022)

FM Bilawal reaches US to attend UN meeting on food security

On 17 May, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari arrived in New York to attend a US-initiated UN meeting on food security and for a bilateral meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The Foreign Office said, "The meeting will bring together a regionally diverse group of countries including those most affected by food insecurity and those in a position to take action to address it. Ministers will be invited to speak on humanitarian needs and longer-term development efforts required to save lives and build resilience for the future." ("[Pakistan, US resume efforts to rebuild ties](#)," *Dawn*, 17 May 2022)

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assures Premier Li Keqiang of foolproof security for Chinese living in Pakistan

On 16 May, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during a telephonic conversation with Premier Li Keqiang assured that his government was determined to take all necessary measures for the enhanced security and safety of all Chinese nationals working in Pakistan. Conversely, Premier Li expressed China's readiness to enhance bilateral economic cooperation, expand trade and encourage greater investments from China to Pakistan. ("[PM assures foolproof security for Chinese](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 17 May 2022)

US appoint full-time Ambassador to Pakistan

On 16 May, The Express Tribune reported a full-time Ambassador of the US would take charge on 23 May after nearly four years. The appointment of Doland Armin Blome as US ambassador to Pakistan comes at a time when the two sides are seeking a reset in their troubled relationship. Prior to that, Ambassador Blome was chargé d'affaires at the Libya External Office in Tunis, Tunisia, consul general at the American Consulate in Jerusalem, and director of the Office of Arabian Peninsula Affairs at the US State Department. (Kamran Yousaf, "[New US envoy set for 'daunting task'](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 16 May 2022)

JUDICIARY

Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Women's assets cannot be sold without their consent, says Supreme Court

On 21 May, Dawn reported that the Supreme Court held that depriving an illiterate 'parda-nashin' (covered) woman of a large proportion of her property without professional or independent advice, or without making her understand the deed, was not sustainable in law. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar said, "The real point is that the disposition of property must

be substantially understood." (Nasir Iqbal, "[Women's assets can't be sold sans their consent, says SC](#)," *Dawn*, 21 May 2022)

IHC seeks performance report from the COIED

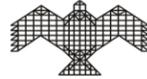
On 17 May, the Islamabad High Court sought a detailed report from the Commission for Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance regarding its performance and standard operating procedures to address the issue of missing persons. IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah asked the commission to inform the court on how it was formed, what its terms of reference (TORs) were and how they were implemented. ("[IHC seeks performance report from missing persons body](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 18 May 2022)

Pakistan government releases 30 Taliban inmates

On 18 May, The News International reported that according to Geo News sources, the Pakistan government has released 30 Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) inmates as talks with the group resumed. However, official sources have not yet confirmed the news regarding the release of TTP inmates. ("[30 militants released as govt-TTP talks resume](#)," *The News International*, 18 May 2022)



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