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NEW PARTY POSITION IN PUNJAB PA



PTI

178



PML-Q

10



PML-N

167



PPP

7



PRHP

1



IND

6



Total:

369

Two seats in the house of 371 are vacant due to resignation of two PML-N MPAs days before the by-polls.

Supreme Court verdict on the no-trust motion against Imran Khan
PTI's return in Punjab: three takeaways and three implications

PAKISTAN IN BRIEF

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Daily Focus, 20 July 2022

Supreme Court verdict on the no-trust motion against Imran Khan

The Supreme Court's verdict on Qasim Khan Suri's ruling on the no-trust move highlights the cracks in Pakistan's parliament

Abigail Miriam Fernandez



Image Source: Dawn

On 13 July, the Supreme Court issued a detailed judgment explaining the reasons behind its decision to set aside a ruling by former National Assembly speaker Qasim Khan Suri on 3 April which dismissed the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. The ruling held that Suri's ruling and the subsequent actions of then PM Imran Khan and President prima facie infringed the fundamental rights of the opposition parties and the public at large.

What does the judgment say?

The 87-page unanimous judgment issued by a five-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail observed that the summary dismissal of the Resolution of No Confidence (RNC) by the Deputy Speaker on 3 April 2022 on which basis the President, whilst following the advice of the PM, dissolved the NA prima facie contravened not only the express command of Article 95 of the Constitution but also repudiated the rule of law which is an indispensable foundation of parliamentary democracy envisaged by the

Constitution. The judgment added that, in the result, the Deputy Speaker's ruling and the actions of the PM and the President defeated the right of the Opposition Parties to test their voting strength in support of the RNC and if successful, to form the next Government in exercise of their fundamental right under Article 17(2) of the Constitution. It added that rather than following the constitutional course prescribed in Article 91(4) of the Constitution for the election of a new Prime Minister, the people were unlawfully forced into an election due to the prima facie unconstitutional dissolution of the NA at the hands of the Deputy Speaker and the PM. As a result, a constitutional crisis was, therefore, created in the country on 3 April 2022.

Justice Bandial observed that the 3 April ruling failed to qualify for the protection of the internal proceedings of parliament under Article 69(1) as it was "not the outcome of a vote in the national assembly instead, it was a unilateral decision."

Further, the court observed that no observation was made to the effect that the RNC was moved by the opposition parties or by persons in Pakistan in conspiracy with a foreign state; and no inquiry/investigation was ordered into the matter to ascertain the nature or extent of involvement of any person in Pakistan to seek or receive the support of a foreign state to move the RNC.

What does the ruling mean for Imran Khan?

Following the judgement, Imran Khan expressed his disappointment and stated that

the Supreme Court should have probed the issue after President Arif Alvi shared it with the chief justice. He said, “I feel deeply hurt” by the remarks made by the court that there was no investigation regarding the threat letter, adding, “I produced the cipher before the federal cabinet. We have the minutes of the meeting. I took this letter to the meeting of the National Security Committee and even tabled it in parliament.” Additionally, Fawad Chaudhry has termed the decision ‘political’, questioning the timing of its release just before the Punjab by-elections. However, through the judgement, Imran Khan’s narrative of foreign interference has been invalidated. This means Imran Khan’s argument that foreign hand would cease to become a rallying point through which he can target the opposition.

What does the ruling mean for the ruling coalition government?

The government welcomed the Supreme Court’s decision with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stating that it had exposed the “lies and propaganda” of Imran Khan and his government. He said, “Utterly shameful how Imran Khan tried to undermine the Constitution and manufactured the lie of regime change,” adding that the judgment was a “must read” for everyone. Similarly, Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar also welcomed the verdict stating that it would serve as an example in the future. Further, the government went on to call for the resignation of President Alvi with PML-N Senator Dr Afnanullah Khan submitting a resolution in the Senate, urging the government to initiate impeachment proceedings against President Alvi. Thus, for the ruling coalition, the judgment acts as a means of validating their actions as well as justifying their move for a no-trust motion against Imran Khan.

Where does the question of Article 6 lie in the judgment?

Justice Mazahar Alam Khan Miankhel noted that the exercise of authority was a sacred trust which was violated by the president, then PM, the then speaker, the then deputy speaker and the then law minister. He said, “Whether these acts attract Article 6 of the Constitution (high treason) is also left open to be determined by the parliamentarians to ponder should they leave open the doors for such unconstitutional acts or take suitable measures to stop such like mess in future.” According to Article 6 of the Constitution, “Any person who abrogates or subverts or suspends or holds in abeyance, or attempts or conspires to abrogate or subvert or suspend or hold in abeyance, the constitution by use of force or show of force or by any other unconstitutional means shall be guilty of high treason.”

According to legal experts, the events of 3 April cannot be termed as treason as they are not tantamount to abrogation or subversion. Experts warn that the gravity of such an offence is cheapened when it is used so casually. Additionally, they argue that it would not be wise for one elected government to charge another with treason against the state as this would set a bad precedent. Further, on the calls for the President’s resignation, experts cite Article 248(2) of the Constitution which states, “no criminal proceedings whatsoever shall be instituted or continued against the President [...] in any court during his term of office.”

What does the judgment say about parliamentary proceedings?

Pakistan’s history is checkered with instances in which the Constitution was subverted, violated and held in abeyance by military rulers while the judiciary comes in to take extra-constitutional steps under the doctrine of necessity. The first hit to the Constitution comes from Pakistan’s parliamentary politics. Often elected

representatives defy the political process leading to constitutional and political crises. To strengthen parliament, there needs to be a discussion on policy issues and reach a consensus despite competing interests. However, parliament proceedings have been taken over by heated confrontations and blame games. Thus, the parliament in Pakistan has become a weak institution unable to carry out its responsibilities. The solution lies however in allowing the parliament to reign supreme. The events that unfolded on 3 April could have been avoided had lawmakers respected parliamentary proceedings and the constitution.

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Daily Focus, 19 July 2022

PTI's return in Punjab: three takeaways and three implications

Pakistan is not yet done with Imran Khan and the urge for change

Ankit Singh

NEW PARTY POSITION IN PUNJAB PA						
						
PTI	PML-Q	PML-N	PPP	PRHP	IND	Total:
178	10	167	7	1	6	369
Two seats in the house of 371 are vacant due to resignation of two PML-N MPAs days before the by-polls.						

Image Source: Dawn

On 17 July, by-elections were conducted in Punjab for 20 seats of which PTI won 15 seats. The seats became vacant when 25 members of the provincial assembly of Punjab, who had won on PTI tickets, had defected on instructions of PTI leadership in the Punjab Assembly and were disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan. The exit polls did not exhibit a victory for

PTI, and national dailies as well were indifferent to plausible outcomes of result in a by-election. The results have stunned political opponents of PTI and Imran Khan is jubilant.

Three takeaways on the changed political equation in Punjab

First, PTI and its tech-enabled strategy for political communication. Social media is the new medium to remain updated on current affairs for a common man. PTI did not give up on this despite backlash during previous months when Imran Khan-led federal government was taken down. Imran Khan had systematic propaganda against his traditional allies, who he termed as thieves

and corrupt, and presented himself as the alternative. The reliance of PML-N on the cadre-based voting pattern was not acquainted with the influence of digital platforms in revolutionizing the meaning of politics and identity.

Second, divisions within PML-N. PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif who was against bringing no confidence against the Imran Khan government has conceded that difficult decisions in economic policies turned the tide against PML-N. The upcoming re-election of CM in Punjab province will be a struggle to hold on to the majority as PTI has now a strength of 190 out of 371 seats in the provincial assembly. The decision of PML-Q to side with PTI will also integrate into increased representation in Punjab.

Third, establishment's neural role. The temporary political control in Punjab after PTI chief minister Usman Buzdar resigned, enabled a holistic control by PML-N over police and revenue departments. Many PTI stalwarts, including Shireen Mazari, were manhandled and vindicated on social media platforms. The Punjab assembly had to run parallel sessions to pass budgets and speaker Parvez Elahi was leading the fight from the official assembly building of Punjab. The prevailing anarchy in the past months hints that the establishment has taken a backfoot for the time being at least.

Three implications of the by-elections

First, political instability versus economic instability. On 5 June, PM Shehbaz Sharif called for a 'grand national dialogue' for national reconciliation and have a common framework and objective to deal with multiple crises the nation is going through. The market at least has become prone to political uncertainty in Pakistan. After the

PTI victory in by-polls, the PKR went to an all-time low at PKR 216 per USD. It will be interesting to observe how Imran Khan takes the proposal now. As per the latest updates, Imran Khan has demanded a fresh general election in Pakistan. While PML-N leaders have stressed that the government will complete the term and will seek a fresh election on time.

Second, Article 63-A. ECP had disqualified 25 PTI MPAs and that disqualification brought support to Hamza Sharif from 197 to 172. After winning the four in recent by-polls the number is at 176. A periodical U-turn of electables has been nullified this time. Yet, the Supreme Court in its verdict on disqualification went as far as nullifying the votes polled by party members who vote contrary to the direction given to them. The disqualification debate will gain momentum and is likely to refine the political tactics employed by one and all in Pakistan.

Third, transparent elections. PTI in its estimates was not expecting more than 10 votes in the by-polls and exit polls also showed PML-N winning the maximum seats. The support and inclination towards PTI and evidence of that in the by-poll results is a healthy sign of transparent elections. The average turnout in Punjab for by-polls has been between 20-25 per cent, but in the latest by-polls in Punjab, the turnout was 40 per cent. The number of seats may be small to oversee rigging yet the mandate has the potential to speak for itself and that has given a dream of transparent elections to politicians and people alike.

Opinions on the by-elections

Shahid Javed Burki in his article titled [Political development: which way is Pakistan headed?](#), discusses the Glorious Revolution that occurred in the late 17th

century in Britain. He sees the current political development in that direction and believes that it is a crucial formative stage.

Arifa Noor in her article titled [Reading the room](#) stresses that economy in Pakistan is the real reason for such political trends. She adds that PML-N politicking is getting out of date as the youth demographic bulge moves to cities and is more aware and expressive in the lands of the feudal landlords.

Rashed Rahman in his article [An unexpected victory](#), explains two factors behind PTI's clean sweep. First, he explains the tactics of Imran Khan whose campaign was laden with conspiracy theories, biased institutions and the propensity of Pakistanis to vote for the underdog. The second reason he explains is the PML-N taking all the heat for tough economic decisions and how PML-N is itself in some soul searching to bring back consensus in PML-N.

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PAKISTAN IN BRIEF

POLITICS

Imran Khan postpones Karachi visit ahead of Punjab's chief minister election

On 21 July, Dawn reported that Imran Khan postponed his Karachi visit ahead of Punjab's chief minister election. Previously, a PTI spokesperson said that the party decided that Imran Khan should focus more on Punjab because of which he could not visit Karachi and Hyderabad. In response to the decision, a PTI MNA from Sindh said, "It definitely hurts the momentum," adding, "It obviously dents the campaign. It's not only about workers and leaders at Karachi level. It's more about millions of people who were expecting him to be here among them just days before the voting. We were expecting that back-to-back rallies and addresses by the chairman would turn this momentum into votes and bring an easy win for the party." (Imran Ayub, "[Punjab 'takes precedence' as Imran puts off Karachi visit](#)," *Dawn*, 21 July 2022)

Horse trading before Punjab CM election, says Imran Khan

On 20 July, Imran Khan claimed that horse trading took place in Lahore with MPAs being offered Rs500 million to sell their loyalties before the Punjab CM's election. He alleged that Asif Ali Zardari who gets NRO for his "corruption and purchased people with his looted wealth" and asked the Supreme Court to take action as it is an attack on democracy and the moral fabric of the society. He also said to debar the turncoats for a lifetime and it would act as a deterrent. ("[Imran Khan claims horse-trading happening in Lahore ahead of Punjab CM election](#)," *The News International*, 21 July 2022)

Ruling coalition vows to save the Punjab government

On 19 July, the nine-party ruling coalition met in Lahore to discuss the current state of affairs. The coalition decided to save the Punjab government at any cost and

announce the next general elections after completing the current assembly's term till August 2023. Further, the coalition unanimously agreed that Centre should complete its tenure for one major reason, harsh economic decisions and paid the price by facing defeat in the Punjab by-polls. Meanwhile, the coalition also decided that early elections were not a good option. (Zulqernain Tahir, "[Coalition vows to do all it takes to 'salvage' Punjab govt](#)," *Dawn*, 20 July 2022; "[Coalition govt rejects Imran Khan's call for early elections](#)," *Dawn*, 20 July 2022)

PTI allegations as entirely baseless on withholding the telegram from the foreign minister and prime minister, says FO

On 19 July, the foreign office spokesperson clarified the foreign office's commitment to the well-established working protocol. The statement read, "Such a question simply does not arise. The Foreign Office operates on a professional basis and it would be detrimental to cast aspersions on its working." On 19 July, PTI leader Shahbaz Gill had claimed that that 'cypher' was initially withheld from Imran and then foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. (Kamran Yousaf, "[FO rubbishes claims ex-PM, FM kept in dark about 'cypher'](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 20 July 2022)

Imran questions the capability of Sharifs to run the economy

On 19 July, Imran Khan blamed the Sharifs and their inability in handling the prevailing economic crises and went on to add that the only expertise they had was in money laundering. Imran said, "Today it is Rs224 & in freefall despite IMF agreement. The economic meltdown shows Sharifs never had any expertise in running the economy or administration. Their only expertise is looting, money laundering & getting NROs." ("[Economic meltdown shows Sharifs only expertise is 'money laundering': Imran](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 20 July 2022)

INTERNAL

Military high command discusses peace talks with TTP

On 22 July, ISPR released a statement on the national security meeting, chaired by Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Gen Nadeem Raza, was attended by all three services chiefs along with ISI Director General Lt Gen Nadeem Anjum, Peshawar Corps Commander Lt Gen Faiz Hamid, and other senior officials. Statement by ISPR said: “The forum was given a detailed briefing on review of national security situation specific to Western Border, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.” The participants, the ISPR said, resolved to respond to “entire spectrum of threats” in accordance with the “comprehensive security strategy.” (Baqir Sajjad Syed, [“Military huddle discusses ‘peace talks’ with TTP,”](#) *Dawn*, 23 July 2022)

Single National Curriculum renamed to National Curriculum of Pakistan

On 21 July, the Federal Education Ministry decided to rename the single national curriculum the National Curriculum of Pakistan. Addressing the two-day national curriculum workshop in Islamabad, the Federal Education Minister said, “The National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) is the new name of the curriculum reforms,” adding, “the word single used confusion and excluded the diversity education that is an asset to the country’s rich heritage. We are now ready to get back on track.” The minister added that NCP will be a comprehensive exercise, covering all four aspects of a quality curriculum, including standards, textbooks, teachers’ training, and examination reforms. The purpose of the reform was to ensure minimum standards of quality education for all children in Pakistan where there was no education policy till 2009. ([“Education ministry renames Single National Curriculum,”](#) *Dawn*, 22 July 2022)

COAS orders additional manpower and resources to polio workers in sensitive locations

On 20 July, COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa ordered additional manpower and resources in sensitive locations to ensure a safe and secure environment for polio teams to ensure the effectiveness of polio campaigns. He made this statement during his visit to the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) where he was briefed on the immunisation campaign and challenges being faced by the polio teams. ([“Army chief orders more manpower, resources for polio teams,”](#) *The News International*, 21 July 2022)

Demand for early execution of Zahir Jaffer by Noor’s parents and activists

On 20 July, F-9 Park saw a gathering of family and friends of Noor Mukadam, who was shot dead and decapitated on 20 July 2021, in Islamabad by Zahir Jaffer. There was a demand for early execution of Jaffer who was handed a death sentence in February this year. Further, rights activists urged the government and judiciary to ensure early execution of the death sentence to Jaffer. (Kashif Abbasi [“Noor’s parents, activists demand execution of Zahir Jaffer at earliest,”](#) *Dawn*, 21 July 2022)

Country’s ‘biggest political party’ doesn’t trust ECP chief, says Imran Khan; PTI nominates Elahi for Punjab chief minister

On 18 July, Imran Khan called for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, stating that “the biggest party of Pakistan [PTI] does not trust” the head of the commission. He said, CEC was “incompetent” and “dishonest” and reiterated that he had joined hands with the PML-N. He said, “We don’t trust the ECP head and he has been imposed on us,” adding, “We don’t have confidence in you. ... you are a biased person in cahoots with a political party.” Meanwhile, the PTI’s committee nominated Chaudhry Parvez Elahi as the candidate for the office of chief minister of Punjab. ([“Imran wants CEC](#)

[gone](#),” *Dawn*, 19 July 2022)

PML-N and PPP insist on completing term and going to polls after fixing the economy

On 18 July, the PML-N and PPP insisted the National Assembly will complete its term until mid-next year, and general elections be held after the government carries out electoral reforms and fixes the economy. Additionally, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif invited the leadership of all coalition parties to Lahore to discuss the option of fresh polls. (Zulqernain Tahir, Imran Ayub [“Undeterred coalition resolves not to rush into election](#),” *Dawn*, 19 July 2022)

PM asks ECP to announce “long-delayed judgment” in PTI prohibited funding case

On 18 July, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce its “long-delayed judgment” in the PTI prohibited funding case. PM Shehbaz via Twitter said that Imran Khan has “been given a free pass despite his repeated and shameless attacks on state institutions,” adding, that the “impunity given to him has hurt the country.” (“[PM Shehbaz urges ECP to announce verdict in PTI prohibited funding case](#),” *The Express Tribune*, 19 July 2022)

PROVINCES

Hamza Sharif takes oath as chief minister of Punjab

On 23 July, Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman administered the oath to newly re-elected Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz. This comes after provincial assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Mazari decided not to count the votes of PML-Q lawmakers on the pretext that they had violated the orders of their party chief, a blow to Chaudhry Parvez Elahi.

PA deputy speaker’s ruling; Supreme Court calls on Dost Mazari

The re-election for the position of chief minister as per the Supreme Court's

directives. After counting the polled votes, the deputy speaker had announced that Elahi bagged 186 votes, while Hamza got 179 votes. However, he had refrained from declaring Elahi the chief minister and indicated that Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain instructed to PML-Q members to vote for Hamza instead of Elahi. Further, speaking about a letter he received from the Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain he said, “I called Shujaat Hussain myself and asked whether he had written the letter regarding instructions to party MPAs, and he confirmed it thrice,” adding that in light of this conversation he decided to disregard all 10 votes polled by PML-Q MPAs as they violated the party president’s instructions.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has called on Mazari and issued notice to Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz in a petition filed by PML-Q.

Article 6 applies to Dost Mazari’, says Pervez Elahi

Elahi has challenged the controversial ruling of the deputy speaker, rejecting 10 votes polled by the PML-Q MPAs in his favour during the chief minister election. He said, “Article 6 of the Constitution applies to Dost Mazari,” adding, “Deputy speaker says that neither I nor my party can vote for me,” he added. Criticising Mazari, the PML-Q leader said, “Even traitors can’t do what he [Deputy speaker PA] has done and no one has ever done such things in history.”

Imran Khan calls for peaceful protests
Following Mazari’s decision, Imran Khan called on the PTI party workers and supporters to register “peaceful” protests across the country. He said, “I am in shock at what happened in the Punjab Assembly.” He said, “This circus that we are seeing, it first happened in the Sindh House,” adding, “The way goats and sheep are sold ... the same way members of the parliament were being sold. Even there, the biggest culprit was the biggest dacoit Asif Zardari. He has gone to jail and still rules over Sindh. He became the part of an imported conspiracy.”

([“Punjab governor administers oath to CM Hamza,” Dawn, 22 July 2022](#); [“Punjab CM election: Imran urges supporters to stage ‘peaceful protests’, says all eyes on SC,” Dawn, 22 July 2022](#); [“PA deputy speaker's ruling case: SC summons Dost Mazari at 2pm, issues notice to CM Hamza” The News International, 23 July 2022](#); [“Punjab CM election: ‘Article 6 applies to Dost Mazari’, says Pervez Elahi,” The News International, 23 July 2022](#); [“PTI supporters take to streets,” Dawn, 23 July 2022](#))

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Pakistan reports its 13th polio case

On 22 July, Pakistan reported its 13th case of polio again from North Waziristan. The victim is an 18-month-old child in Lakki Marwat, North Waziristan. Federal Health Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam Irfan while speaking to Dawn said, “We have successfully managed to prevent the virus from spreading elsewhere despite the frequent movement of people between KP and other parts of the country. If we can contain and eliminate the virus from this area, we can win the fight against polio.” (Ikram Junaidi, [“13th polio case from KP puts question mark on vaccination,” Dawn, 23 July 2022](#))

Sindh: Opposition holds protests against ECP’s decision to delay Sindh LG polls

On 22 July, several opposition parties held protests in Karachi and Hyderabad against the ECP’s decision to delay Sindh LG polls, terming it a ‘blow to democracy.’ JI Karachi chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman alleged that the ECP was playing a “dubious and rather dirty game.” Similarly, the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) continued its protest sit-in outside the ECP regional office and demanded that the commission review its decision. Meanwhile, the Sindh United Party “condemned” the decision and announced that they would move the court while the Grand Democratic Alliance called for re-election in all four divisions. ([“Parties take](#)

[to streets against ECP decision to delay Sindh LG polls,” Dawn, 23 July 2022](#))

Punjab: CM elections scheduled to take place as per court order

On 22 July, the re-election for the slot of Punjab chief minister is scheduled to take place as per court order. With a clear majority in the Punjab Assembly the ruling PML-N, the PTI-PML-Q alliance should have no problem getting its candidate, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, elected to the CM’s office. Currently, in the provincial house of 368, the opposition alliance (PTI-PML-Q) has 187 lawmakers and the PML-N-led ruling coalition 179. Meanwhile, Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari called for security cover from the provincial chief secretary and the inspector general of police to ensure a “free and fair” election for the office. ([“Tally in Parvez Elahi’s favour as Punjab elects CM today,” Dawn, 22 July 2022](#); [“Dost Mazari seeks police cover for Punjab CM re-poll,” Dawn, 22 July 2022](#))

Balochistan: Advisor to CM on home affairs orders stricter action against terrorists

On 21 July, taking cognizant of increased terrorist attacks in the province, Adviser to the Balochistan Chief Minister on Home presiding over a meeting asked the authorities concerned to review the law-and-order situation, to review the security of sensitive installations, places of worship and educational institutions. He asked the CTD and Special Branch to speed up intelligence-based and combing operations while closely monitoring the movement of persons on Fourth Schedule. (Saleem Shahid, [“Balochistan orders stricter action against terrorists,” Dawn, 22 July 2022](#))

Punjab: ECP notifies PML-N as victorious in PP-7 Rawalpindi

On 22 July, ECP notified Raja Sagheer Ahmed as the winning candidate from PP-7 Rawalpindi after the scrutiny of rejected votes in the by-polls happened last week. The PML-N candidate got an increase in

vote number by 12, taking the total of votes to 68,918 from 68, 906, while the PTI votes increased by 6. Led to a challenge where the result was rejected by the ECP. Sikandar Sultan Raja who headed the bench that heard the case said the petitioner could neither prove any fraud nor irregularity during the by-poll Nausheen Yusuf, "[PP-7 Rawalpindi: ECP notifies PML-N's victory](#)," *The News International*, 22 July 2022)

Sindh: ECP decided to reschedule LG-polls to August

On 21 July, the ECP decided to reschedule the second phase of the Sindh local government elections from 24 July to 28 August on the pretext of "possible rains and bad weather" in the province. An ECP spokesperson said the decision was taken based on the report of Sindh's chief secretary and provincial election commissioner, the public's request and data from the meteorological department. Meanwhile, the PTI leader Ali Zaidi has announced that the party would file a petition in the Sindh High Court against the postponement of the second phase of local government elections in the province. (Fahad Chaudhry, "[Sindh LG polls' second phase rescheduled for August 28 due to 'expected rains, bad weather'](#)," *Dawn*, 21 July 2022; "[PTI to move SHC against postponement of LG polls in Sindh](#)," *The News International*, 21 July 2022)

Punjab: Torture against Iftikhar Khan Baloch in Jhang

On 20 July, Iftikhar Khan Baloch was tortured by a group of 10 people in Jhang. Eyewitnesses stated that Baloch was attacked along with his driver while traveling in his car by a group of men, who pulled him out of his vehicle, stripped him after tearing away his clothes, and clubbed him with rods. On information, a police team reached, prompting the suspects to flee. When asked to file a complaint he said he knew the assailants and would tackle them on his own. The Jhang police station

has released a press release that Hamza Shehbaz had taken notice of the torture and asked for a report from the IGP and to arrest the culprits immediately. (Tariq Saeed, "[Former MPA Iftikhar Khan Baloch tortured in broad daylight in Jhang](#)," *Dawn*, 21 July 2022)

Punjab: MPAs are being threatened and pressurised by the government, says Opposition

On 19 July, in a resolution tabled by PTI leader Raja Basharat the opposition alleged that 'the terrorism' by both the federal and provincial governments is at its peak as complaints are being received from members of the house that intelligence agencies and police to 'manipulate' the voting for the chief minister. Basharat added, "The July 22 election is being held on the Supreme Court order. There are clear directions from the Supreme Court that any attempt to sabotage the election process will be considered as contempt of court," adding, "Therefore, it is requested that this resolution is adopted and the relevant agencies are warned to refrain from illegal intervention." ("[Govt pressurising MPAs ahead of voting for Punjab CM, says opposition](#)," *Dawn*, 20 July 2022)

Punjab: '49.7 per cent' turnout augurs well for democracy, says Report

On 19 July, Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) said that an impressive turnout of 49.7 per cent in the by-elections for 20 Punjab Assembly constituencies on 17 July augurs well for "an otherwise struggling democracy in Pakistan." FAFEN also emphasised that PTI's claims about rigging and the allegations of partisanship against the ECP as well as other government institutions must be probed independently by a parliamentary committee. It noted that the by-elections reinforced the need for a proper monitoring and enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance with the code of conduct for parties and candidates and check any misuse of government resources, and alleged cases of vote-buying

and other inducements through tightening the laws, rules, and limits for election expenses. Women's turnout was recorded at 45.5 per cent – relatively lower compared to 54 per cent in 2018's general elections. Over 60,000 more voters cast their votes in these by-elections as compared to their number in 2018, of which more than half (37,271) were women, the report shared. ("[Punjab by-polls: '49.7%' turnout augurs well for democracy](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 20 July 2022)

Balochistan: Reko Diq project works to start in August

On 19 July, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and Mark Bristow speaking at a joint press conference at the Chief Minister secretariat announced the development work on the Reko Diq gold and mining project will begin on 14 August. They said the project will be a partnership among the company, the provincial government, and Pakistan's state-owned enterprises. Bristow expects employment of 7,500 people and the province gets the dividends, royalties, and other benefits of its 25 per cent ownership without contributing financially to the construction and operation of the mine. ("[Work on Reko Diq project to start in Aug](#)," *Dawn*, 20 July 2022)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Demonstrations at Imran Khan's residence by teachers

On 19 July, Imran Khan's residence saw hundreds of teachers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to get their demands accepted. The teachers demanded removing the contributory provident fund and the general provident fund and pension should be restored. The demand for their president and office bearers was also put forward. Ali Amin Gandapur appeared and assured the protestors their demands will be fulfilled at the earliest. (Munawer Azeem, "[Protesting teachers reach Imran's Banigala house despite high alert](#)," *Dawn*, 20 July 2022)

Punjab: Police file case against TLP members for hooliganism in Bahawalnagar

polling station

On 20 July, Dawn reported that the district police have filed a case against a member of the TLP for quarrelling with polling staffers, forcefully taking ballot papers away from them and creating obstructions for government functionaries. According to the FIR, the polling process ran smoothly until some TLP men entered the polling station and started quarrelling with Senior Assistant Presiding. ("[Case against TLP men for 'hooliganism' at Bahawalnagar polling station](#)," *Dawn*, 20 July 2022)

Landslide victory for PTI over PML-N

On 18 July, The Dawn reported that in the crucial by-elections, the PTI overturned the PML-N by winning 15 of the 20 seats that were vacated after the disqualification of PTI members who voted for Hamza Shehbaz for the Punjab CM's office. The by-elections in Punjab was so important that the people vented out their anger at the "imported government" and were seen as an acceptance of Imran Khan. PML-N managed to win four seats. Imran Khan has thanked the supporters, voters and their allies in a tweet, for defeating the entire state machinery in which he alleges of a "totally biased election commission of Pakistan". Mr Khan said, "the only way forward is to hold free and fair elections under a credible ECP. Any other path will only lead to greater political uncertainty and further economic chaos". The By-polls were conducted peacefully and no serious law and order situation was reported according to the PML-N Home Minister. ("[PTI stuns PML-N with thumping win](#)," *Dawn*, 18 July 2022)

Sindh: Spillway doors opened after heavy rains in Karachi

On 18 July, The Hub Dam which supplies 100 gallons of water for the city, recorded 339.5 feet in the morning and it rose to 340 leading to the opening of the spillway of the reservoir. The dam's water level being 332 before the monsoon and the rising to its capacity of 340 feet will make enough water

supply to the west district and adjoining areas. Earlier the spillway was opened after thirteen years in 2020. The WAPDA had already issued an alert to the residents of the nearby areas warning them to take extra precautions. The water is being discharged by the spillways of waterworks of Hub River. ("[Rainwater causes Hub Dam to overflow; spillways open after water reaches 339 feet.](#)" *Dawn*, 18 July 2022)

ECONOMY

Reduced LNG prices to give relief to financing and electricity generation

On 22 July, Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) released a report on drop in average basket price of LNG by 15-16 per cent due to long term contracts with Qatar. As such, the RLNG consumer price at the distribution stage is down by USD 3.31 per mmBtu for Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) and USD 4.65 per mmBtu for Sui Southern Gas Pipeline Limited (SSGCL) in July when compared to June. Pakistan has two long-term contracts with Qatar, one involving six cargoes at 13.37 per cent of Brent signed by the previous PML-N government and two to three cargoes contracted by the PTI government at 10.2 per cent of Brent. (Khaleeq Kiani, "[Tight spot market comes as blessing after Qatar LNG deals save the day.](#)" *Dawn*, 23 July 2022)

Uniform national tariff to be increased by PKR 7.91 over three months

On 22 July, National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) approved a for notification PKR 7.91 per unit increase in 'uniform national tariff to meet a pre-condition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for an economic bailout. No increase has been proposed for lifeline (up to 100 units) and protected category of consumers (101-200 units per month), it added. The government would still be providing PKR 234 billion subsidy, PKR 220 billion for distribution companies of ex-

Wapda and Rs14bn for K-Electric finance the tariff rebasing cost of poor consumers. The tariff increase would generate additional revenue of PKR 893 billion in 2022-23 to meet the annual revenue requirement of about PKR 2.52 trillion to power companies, excluding KE besides providing a general sales tax of more than PKR 425bn to the government. (Khaleeq Kiani, "[Electricity base tariff increased by Rs7.91 a unit.](#)" *Dawn*, 23 July 2022)

Tax gap stands at USD 15 billion: FBR chief

On 22 July, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) chairman said, "We have found that the total tax potential under the jurisdiction of the federal government stands at Rs9,000 billion out of which the FBR collected Rs6,000 billion so the tax gap was assessed at Rs3,000 billion on a per annum basis." On the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on eve of the budget-making exercise for 2022-23, the FBR has been assigned to conduct the first-ever formal study to assess the 'tax gap' keeping in view jurisdictions of the federal government under the 1973 Constitution for the imposition of taxes. He said that there was a tax gap of PKR 3,000 billion out of which PKR 1,800 billion (USD 9 billion) was a policy gap, as it occurred mainly because of tax exemptions/incentives provided by the FBR to different sectors. He said that the tax to GDP ratio was the lowest in the country but if full tax potential was collected to the tune of PKR 9,000 billion even then tax to GDP did not cross 14 per cent mark. He said that the FBR surpassed its upward revised target of PKR 6,100 billion despite facing a negative revenue impact of PKR 45 billion per month owing to zero GST on POL products. The achieving of FBR's target was paramount to continuing the IMF programme. ("[Tax gap stands at USD 15 billion: FBR chief.](#)" *The News International*, 23 July 2022)

FDI up to USD 271 million was recorded in June 2022

On 21 July, SBP released its monthly

statement which showed that investment in June 2022 was 92 per cent higher compared to USD 141.2 million in the prior month of May 2022 and compared to USD 141.3 million in June 2021. With this, the cumulative foreign direct investment (FDI) amounted to USD 1.87 billion in the previous fiscal year 2021-22, which was 2.6 per cent (or USD 43.7 million) higher compared to USD 1.82 billion in 2020-21. China, the United States, Switzerland, the UAE, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and Singapore were the top investors during the year. Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) Secretary said: “We from the platform of OICCI keep building Pakistan’s positive image and convince global investors that it is not only Pakistan that is facing such grave issues, but almost every economy is passing through critical times.” (Salman Siddiqui, [“FDI hits 20-month high in June.”](#) *The Express Tribune*, 22 July 2022)

Import approved for USD 222 million worth of urea and wheat

On 20 July, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet presided over by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail approved the import of 300,000 tonnes of wheat and 200,000 tonnes of urea at eight per cent and 17pc cheaper rates, respectively, at a total foreign exchange cost of about USD 222 million. ECC also approved PKR 1.56 quarterly tariff hike for Karachi Electric (KE) to bring it on a par with the national uniform power tariff. The wheat import worth USD 121.5 million would be contracted with Vittera B, a Netherland based grain contractor. Urea import worth USD 100 million has been contacted with Chinese M/s Sinochem Fertiliser and M/s CNAMPGC. (Khaleeq Kiani, [“ECC okays wheat, urea imports at cheaper rates.”](#) *Dawn*, 21 July 2022)

Planning Minister seeks early approval of IMF staff agreement

On 19 July, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal met with IMF

Deputy Managing Director Antoinette M. Sayeh and other officials in Washington and stressed for early approval of staff agreement. The planning minister is on a US tour to meet UN officials and representatives of key member states to seek support for the country’s failing economy. The minister also sought the IMF’s assistance to the country’s agriculture sector, especially to mitigate the impact of climate change. Minister in his interaction with the US administration stressed that current political setup in Pakistan was there to stay. (Anwar Iqbal, [“Ahsan Iqbal seeks early approval of IMF staff agreement.”](#) *Dawn*, 20 July 2022)

Remittance records in June

On 19 July, Dawn reported that remittance in the June FY22 was 18.4 per cent higher than the previous month showing a positive trend, despite the serious problems in the external account caused by rising trade and current account deficits of the nationals. The country received more remittances than exports that accounting for USD 31.761 billion. Reports say the country’s export has increased by 27 per cent and remained at USD 31.85 billion in FY 22 compared to USD 25.16 billion recorded in the same period of FY 21. (Shahid Iqbal, [“Pakistanis remit record \\$31.2bn.”](#) *Dawn*, 19 July 2022)

EXTERNAL

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister meets US secretary of state to seek support in reviving economy

On 21 July, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Tariq Fatemi met with US secretary of state to enhance and advance the US-Pakistan relationship by advancing our economic and commercial ties. A Pakistan Embassy press release, “Pakistan seeks close and cordial relations with the US on the basis of equality, mutual cooperation and mutual benefit.” The embassy’s statement said Mr Fatemi underscored Pakistan’s desire for “enhanced bilateral cooperation” in trade, investment,

agriculture, textile, and IT sectors, calling it Pakistan's "key priority". (Anwar Iqbal, "[Pakistan seeks US support for reviving economy](#)," *Dawn*, 22 July 2022)

Brotherly relations with Turkiye, says General Qamar

On 22 July, The Express Tribune reported that COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa during a meeting with Mehmet Pacaci said that Pakistan highly values brotherly ties with Turkiye which are deeply rooted in history. During the meeting, they discussed matters of the regional security situation and mutual and professional interests with special emphasis on defence and security collaboration between the two countries. Further, they agreed to further optimize military-to-military ties, particularly in training and counter-terrorism domains. ("[Pakistan values brotherly ties with Turkiye: Gen Bajwa](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 22 July 2022)

Luxury Bus Service connecting Pak-Afghan from next month

On 20 July, Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to launch a luxury bus service between the two countries by next month's end and increase the operational timings to all crossing points. This decision came following the three-day bilateral talks in Kabul led by Pakistan's commerce secretary and Afghanistan's acting foreign minister and commerce minister. During the meeting, the two sides agreed to ensure early clearance, improve efficiency, and free movement of trade. The visit by the Pakistan delegation was meant to discuss mutual actions for enhancing bilateral trade, transit, and connectivity to take necessary trade facilitation measures to address the problems faced by imports and exports of both sides. ("[Pak-Afghan luxury bus service from next month](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 21 July 2022)

Pakistan and China exchange views on the political and security situation in Afghanistan

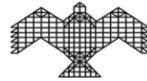
On 18 July, China's special envoy on Afghanistan Yue Xiaoyong met with Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood at the Foreign Office in Islamabad. Following the meeting, a press release said, "In the context of regional connectivity, both sides exchanged views on extension of CPEC to Afghanistan to promote economic development and prosperity." The idea to extend the flagship programme of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was discussed. Chinese Ambassador Yue Xiaoyong appreciated the important and constructive role played by Pakistan in the context of Afghanistan. Both sides agreed that only a peaceful, stable and connected Afghanistan could act as a fulcrum for enhanced regional trade and connectivity. (Kamran Yousaf, "[Pakistan, China discuss extending CPEC to Afghanistan](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 19 July 2022)

Bilateral agreements for Pakistan and Afghanistan on Coal and power

On 18 July, Business Recorder reported that a 12-member Pakistani delegation including the commerce and power secretaries leaves for Kabul for a three-day visit for the talks on the import of coal and power generation besides the bilateral and transit trade matters. During the third border management committee, it was decided under Khwaja Asif that engagements with the Afghanistan government are a necessity to streamline the border management issues for speedy trade flow and for the cross border trade of coal. Mushtaq Ghumman, "[Coal import, bilateral, transit trade](#)," *Business Recorder*, 18 July 2022)



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