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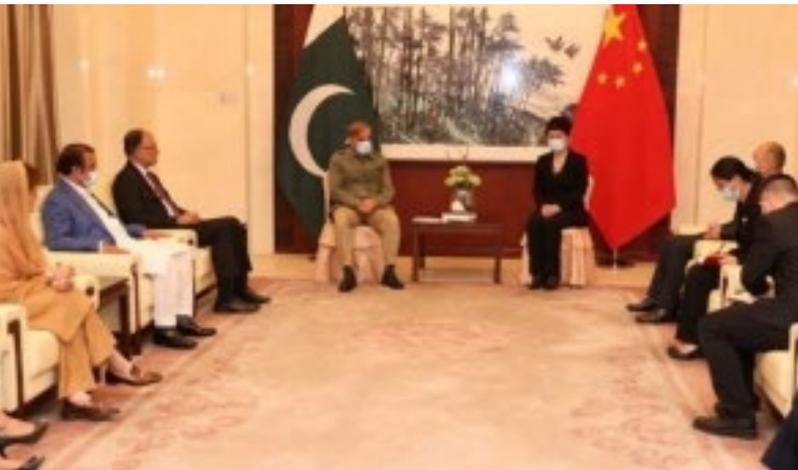
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**Climate Change and more:
Three takeaways from PM Shehbaz Sharif's UNGA address**

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Daily Focus, 27 September 2022

Climate Change and more: Three takeaways from PM Shehbaz Sharif's UNGA address

PM Shehbaz Sharif emphasis on climate change, Kashmir and islamophobia during his UNGA address

Abigail Miriam Fernandez



Image Source: Dawn

On 23 September, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif while addressing the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly urged the world to undo the 'climate injustice' done to countries like Pakistan that hardly contribute to global warming but face its worst consequences. He said, "Why are my people paying the price of such high global warming through no fault of their own?" adding, "Nature has unleashed her fury on Pakistan without looking at our carbon footprint, which is next to nothing. Our actions did not contribute to this." He added, "The undeniable and inconvenient truth is that this calamity has not been triggered by anything we have done," warning, "Now, we live through an unprecedented monster monsoon. It is literally a monsoon on steroids, as the UN secretary-general described it most befittingly. One thing is very clear: what happened in Pakistan will not stay in Pakistan." Further, he emphasized on the impact of climate change on the health and wealth of Pakistan stating that the dual costs of global inaction and climate injustice were having a crippling effect on the government and the people. He said, "So my real worry, is about the next

stage of this challenge. When the cameras leave, and the story just shifts away to conflicts like the Ukraine, my question is, will we be left alone, to cope with a crisis we did not create?" He added that the future was "dimmed by new fragility, lost homes, decimated livelihoods, deluged croplands, permanent food insecurity and exposure to uncertain futures." He concluded, "It is high time we took a pause from the preoccupations of the 20th century to return to the challenges of the 21st. The entire definition of national security has changed today, and unless the leaders of the world come together to act now behind minimum agreed agenda, there will be no earth to fight wars over. Nature will be fighting back, and for that humanity is no match."

Calls for peace in South Asia

Apart from the emphasis on climate change, PM Shehbaz Sharif spoke about the regional situation. He claimed that Pakistan was seeking peace with all its neighbours, including India. He said, "We look for peace with all our neighbours, including India. Sustainable peace and stability in South Asia, however, remains contingent upon a just and lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute." He alleged that India's decision to abrogate Article 370 undermined the prospects of peace and inflamed regional tensions. He claimed that India should take credible steps to create enabling environment for constructive engagement. Concerning Afghanistan, he urged the international community to respond to the UN secretary-general's appeal for USD 4.2 billion in humanitarian and economic assistance to Afghanistan and the release of

Afghan's frozen assets. Additionally, he raised concerns over the threat from regional terrorist groups, namely ISIL-K and TTP, Al-Qaida, ETIM and IMU. He said, "They all need to be dealt with comprehensively, with the support and cooperation of the Interim Afghan authorities."

Calls for action against Islamophobia

Lastly, PM Shehbaz Sharif called on the UN to take 'concrete measures' against Islamophobia, saying it was a "global phenomenon." He concluded, "We must restore peace in Europe, avoid a war in Asia and resolve festering conflicts across the world. We must revive the vision which created the United Nations, a vision which is often blurred by national interests and hegemonic designs."

Three takeaways from PM Shehbaz Sharif's UNGA address

First, Pakistan's emphasis on the impact of climate change. The leaders of Pakistan have become vocal about the devastating impacts of climate change at all international forums. While former Prime Minister Imran Khan has advocated for this cause in the past, PM Shehbaz Sharif has not taken the lead in this effort. However, what is clear from PM Shehbaz Sharif's address is that Pakistan cannot tackle the effects of climate change on its own. Thus, it is significant for countries like Pakistan to not only shed light on the impact of climate change to hold nations responsible for heavy pollution accountable but also to gather international assistance to tackle the issue. Second, rallying for the 'Kashmir cause.' Pakistan has raised the Kashmir dispute,

however, in the recent past, the rallying has become a part of all diplomatic and international engagements. The Kashmir dispute has been raised in several international forums and organizations by Pakistan with a stance of bringing regional peace. Following his predecessors, PM Shehbaz Sharif's mention of the issue during his UNGA address reveals Pakistan's agenda of raising the issue at all levels. Third, spearheading the end of Islamophobia. Since 2019, Pakistan has taken substantial efforts to emphasise the issues of Islamophobia. The culmination of this was in March of 2022 when Pakistan presented a resolution in the UN General Assembly that called for designating 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. The resolution was adopted by consensus by the 193-member world body. Apart from this, Pakistan has raised the issue at several international forums to be seen as the proponent of the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief. PM Shehbaz Sharif's address highlights the efforts Pakistan wishes to take when it comes to Islamophobia.

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PAKISTAN IN BRIEF

INTERNAL

'Cablegate' cypher missing from PM house records

On 30 September, PM chaired a meeting of federal cabinet and accused former prime minister Imran Khan of sacrificing key national interests for political gains by giving fictitious meaning to a diplomatic cypher, saying the ex-premier has violated his oath and the "Official Secrets Act". PM also noted that the copy of the diplomatic cypher was missing from the records of the Prime Minister's House, saying that the copy was the property of the PM House. The meeting also discussed the issue of audio leaks in detail and endorsed the decision of the National Security Committee (NSC) to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter. The meeting declared that "theft of diplomatic cypher" from records was a serious matter. (Rizwan Shehzad, "[Cypher copy 'missing' from PM House records,](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 1 October, 2022)

7 October set as deadline for action on transgender bill by religious parties

On 1 October, The Express tribune reported that Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Sirajul Haq has called protest against the government if the transgender bill is not be withdrawn. Religious parties including the JI have termed the bill as a wedge of western practices, adding that the agenda would lead to the faltering of the family system in Pakistan. Stating that he is not against transgender persons but rather that the bill would be 'controversial.' The chief also mentioned that all the religious parties will hold an objection on 7 October, while also rejecting it in the same place. He said that the bill was "more dangerous than the atomic bomb dropped by the US on Japan in 1945." Other parties have challenged the Transgender Protection Act of 2018 in the

Federal Shariat Court (FSC) on 30 September. The complaint was against the discreditation of the Quran in light of the transgender bill, which led to the FSC fixing a preliminary hearing on 3 October. ("[Religious parties set Oct 7 deadline to trans act,](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 1 October, 2022)

Pakistan Railways ask for PKR 5 trillion for rehabilitation of the railway tracks and services

On 1 October, The Express tribune reported that the Civil engineering department have asked for PKR 5 trillion from the Railway ministry for revitalisation of the railway infrastructure which have been damaged by floods. The funds would cover the costs of restoring the signal system, stations in Lahore, Multan, Karachi, Sukkur, Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Quetta, the communications tower and other functional equipment. The railway system has seen extensive damage in signal systems, mainly with the "green signals" as they were deemed impossible to work with. Funds are requested mainly to deploy work evenly within the destroyed regions, including construction and support for new bridges and other divisions. Experts have added that deployment of labour has been relentless since the floods have hit the country. ("[Pakistan Railways seeks Rs5tr for track rehabilitation,](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 1 October 2022)

Maryam's acquittal and the vexation of Imran Khan

On 29 September, PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz and her husband Captain Muhammad Safdar were absolved of their involvement in the Avenue field Apartments corruption defamation by the Islamabad High Court (IHC). A division bench heard the appeals of the two and acquitted them of their charges. The IHC exonerated them and PML-N president Nawaz Shariff from their

sentence and released them on bail on 18 September, 2018. Following the ruling, the IHC have found no exterminating evidence against the two, and questioned the prosecuting authority on the credibility of their statements. The bench asked the prosecution to prove the involvement of Sharifs in the properties, if there was any, to which their response deemed to hold up in court. The court also pointed out the ownership of the properties belonged to the companies and clarified its position on the arrest of Nawaz Shariff, Maryam and Captain Safdar. (Terence J Sigamony, [“Maryam acquitted, much to embittered IK’s chagrin.”](#) *Business Recorder*, 30 September 2022)

Indefinite conversations with the government create apprehension with the farmers

On 29 September, farmers engaged in protest continued to sit in for a second day after talks with the officials stood at a standstill. A deputation led by Kissan Ittehad Pakistan (KIP) met Interior Minister and carried a discussion regarding the demands put by them before the government. The Blue Area saw bustling with farmers as they denied to put an end to the protests if the government would not budge with their decision. Citing that the administration is the “enemy” of the farmers, the KIP chairman urged the farmers to stage further protests if their requests are not complied. The farmers have forced blockades in many parts of the country, and have the federal capital as their central point of dissent. The farmers’ demand to the government includes the reduction of price of fertilisers and provision of electricity at a subsidised rate. (Fazal Sher, [“Farmers continue sit-in as talks with govt remain inconclusive.”](#) *Business Recorder*, 30 September 2022)

Floods to increase vulnerability of pregnant women in immunisation and nutritional care

On 29 September, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue alarmed that 600,000 pregnant women in flood affected areas lack maternal health services and have no safe place to deliver. She said that over 5 million children have no immunisation or nutritional care and suggested that Pakistan must fast track efforts to restore reproductive health services for women and children. She urged that the international community should channel funds into priorities that support climate-hit countries like Pakistan. (Ikram Junaidi, [“600,000 pregnant women in flood-hit areas lack facilities: minister.”](#) *Dawn*, 30 September 2022)

Imran Khan alleges the government in engaging with India for business interests

On 29 September, during a public rally in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan accused the federal government of “secretly establishing relations” with India, allegedly, for its own “business interests” and in complete “disregard of the sacrifices” of the people of India-held Jammu and Kashmir. Terming the Kashmiris “special people” for their ceaseless freedom struggle and at least “100,000 sacrifices over the past 33 years”, the PTI chief assured them that he would not let their struggle be for naught. (Tariq Naqash, [“Govt secretly mending fences with India: Imran.”](#) *Dawn*, 30 September 2022)

Chinese national targeted in Karachi, one person killed

On 28 September, a Chinese national was killed after an unidentified person opened fire in a private dental clinic of Dr Richard Hu on Preedy Street. According to the Counter-Terrorism Department, the motive for the incident is unclear. The CTD also said that the Chinese dentists have been living in the country since past 50 years and

they have obtained Pakistani citizenship. (Imtiaz Ali, "[Chinese dentists living in Karachi for decades targeted; cashier killed](#)," *Dawn*, 30 September 2022)

Redistribution of climate resilience funds to flood relief activities

On 28 September, Sherry Rahman while speaking to reporters said that a severe shortage of funds is posed by devastating floods, compelling the government to divert climate resilience funds to meet immediate relief requirements of flood-hit people. She said that floodwaters were still standing in large parts of Sindh, where many parts of the land were below sea level, while funds and resources to save lives and provide shelter were still in short supply. Ms. Rahman said that thousands of people were still seeking shelters, and there were worries about people spending the entire winter this way. The country will need much more to service the 33 million people affected by the unprecedented disaster. The minister said there was no immediate basket of accessible funds for climate resilient recovery, let alone disaster assistance. Since both are triggered by climate impacts, the economic buffer for countries already in debt-stress should be clearly appropriated and disbursed as climate funds that are easy to access, with predictable transfers. (Ifthikar A Khan, "[Minister sounds alarm over repurposing of climate fund](#)," *Dawn*, 29 September 2022)

PML-N leader Ishaq Dar returns to Pakistan

On 26 September, PML-N leader Ishaq Dar returned to Pakistan after five years of self-exile. He is to take as Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Affairs, a position he has previously held on three occasions. On his arrival, he said, "I will try my best to fulfil all the responsibilities. We will try to take the country out of the economic swamp it is stuck in [...] the way we did in 1998-1999 and 2013-2014." Meanwhile, The News International reported that will

become Leader of the House in the Senate as the members of the ruling alliance have accepted the proposal proposed by the incumbent leader of House Senator Azam Nazir Tarrar who is also federal minister for Law and Justice.

Additionally, a plea seeking the disqualification of Dar was withdrawn from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) after the petitioner said that a higher forum to pursue the case would be approached. (Muhammad Saleh Zaafer, "[Dar to become Leader of House in Senate today](#)," *The News International*, 27 September 2022; Fahad Chaudhry, "[Plea seeking Ishaq Dar's disqualification withdrawn from ECP](#)," *Dawn*, 27 September 2022; Khaleeq Kiani, "[Assurances from PM's trip may 'smooth over' Dar's return](#)," *Dawn*, 27 September 2022)

NSC to probe into audio leak controversy

On 26 September, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for a meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) to determine how informal conversations in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) were leaked. Additionally, a joint investigation team (JIT) has been constituted to investigate this security breach as the Intelligence Bureau and Inter-Services Intelligence complete their initial inquiry into the matter, the finding of which will be presented to the prime minister in the NSC meeting. (Syed Irfan Raza, "[NSC to hear from agencies on audio leak fiasco](#)," *Dawn*, 27 September 2022)

Flood damages estimated by the planning commission reach USD 28 billion

On 26 September, the Planning Commission of Pakistan estimated the cost of flood damages and losses at USD 28 billion, the fourth figure pitched by any Pakistani authority since devastating floods, as it also sees the reconstruction period spanning over 10 long years. This came at a time when a

comprehensive post-damage and need assessment is underway in collaboration with the international financial institutions including the EU and UN. The development took place the day the PML-N brought back Ishaq Dar to steer the country out of the economic crisis, particularly by restoring the value of the rupee which recovered by Rs3 to a dollar on the news of Dar's return. (Shahbaz Rana, "[Planning Commission puts flood damages at \\$28b](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 27 September 2022)

No passport required from Maryam, NAB tells LHC

On 27 September, the National Accountability Bureau told the Lahore High Court that it did not require Maryam Nawaz's passport that she had surrendered to the court for getting bail in a case. The bench had sought the NAB's reply in the case at the last hearing after Maryam's counsel had contended that she had remained in the bureau's custody for 48 days but the anti-graft watchdog had failed to complete the investigation or file a reference before the trial court despite. He had also argued that Maryam willingly returned to Pakistan from the United Kingdom to serve her sentence in other NAB cases and had asked the court to return her passport so she could visit Nawaz Sharif, in London. The court then adjourned the hearing on Maryam's plea till 3 October. (Rana Bilal, "[Maryam's passport not required, NAB tells LHC](#)," *Dawn*, 27 September 2022)

Transgender rights Law seeks amendments to be more effective in the society

On 27 September, Dawn reported that the transgender rights law, a bill seeking amendments to the 2018 legislation landed in the upper house of parliament. The bill moved by PTI sought amendments to the definitions of "gender expression" and "gender identity". It also proposes to remove sub-section 4 of Section 3 that says "a transgender person already issued an identity card by Nadra shall be allowed to change the name and gender

according to his or her self-perceived identity on the CNIC, CRC, driving license and passport in accordance with the provisions of the NADRA Ordinance, 2000." The bill further claimed various lacunae and loopholes were observed in the law that needed to be addressed to transfer its benefits to the transgender community on priority. Moreover, it stated, the law did not conform to the principles and rules developed under Shariah for dealing with issues related to transgender persons in a Muslim society. (Iftikar A Khan, "[Changes sought to make transgender rights law 'more effective, worthwhile'](#)," *Dawn*, 27 September 2022)

Audio clips surface of informal conversations between PM and cabinet officials

On 26 September, Dawn reported that a series of audio leaks that went viral on social media over the weekend has raised concerns over the security at the PM office. The audio leaks allegedly included conversations between key government figures including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz and other members of the federal cabinet. Following the leak, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb denied these allegations and stated that these only showed that "nothing illegal had happened." Meanwhile, the Intelligence Bureau (IB) has been ordered to investigate the issues. (Syed Irfan Raza, "[Leaks reveal massive breach in security at PM Office](#)," *Dawn*, 26 September 2022; Umar Cheema, "[IB investigates spying on PM House](#)," *The News International*, 26 September 2022)

UN satellite centres indicate the rise of flood waters in several districts

On 25 September, a preliminary assessment by the UN Satellite Centre indicated that floodwaters are increasing in some districts eight in Sindh, two in Balochistan, and one in Punjab. The situation report released by the UN Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) compared the satellite data of 8-21 September. However, floodwaters appear to be receding or stagnating in other parts of the country. OCHA said that standing floodwaters and other impacts resulted in an increase in waterborne diseases, unsanitary conditions, and rising malnutrition in the flood-affected areas. (Amin Ahmed, "[Floodwaters rising in some districts: UN](#)," *Dawn*, 26 September 2022)

PROVINCES

Political deadlock between Centre-Punjab continues

On 30 September, the Punjab Planning and Development Board Chairman was provided an extended role as an acting chief secretary of Punjab. The government has decided to extend his tenure as acting chief secretary for smooth functioning of the provincial administration. The point of this admission was to further exert the provincial government's authority on Punjab, which has strained relations between the Centre and the province. On the ground, the federal government has increasingly tried to impede the working of the Punjab province, where the chief secretary incessantly is a part of controversial matters. The secretary is known for employing oppressive measures against children and women, including vandalization and protests from the government. (Rameez Khan, "[Punjab-Centre standoff prevails](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 1 October 2022)

Balochistan: BHC rules on not barring women in public service commission jobs

On 29 September, Balochistan High Court ruled that female candidates could not be barred from applying for the posts of tehsildar and naib tehsildar. The verdict was announced by a division bench of the BHC comprising Justice Hashim Khan Kakar and Justice Gul Hassan Tareen. The petition was filed by Nargis Samalani against the Revenue Department's advertisement for the

posts of tehsildar and naib tehsildar inviting applications only from male candidates. (Saleem Shahid, "[Women eligible to apply for post of tehsildar, declares BHC](#)," *Dawn*, 30 September 2022)

Balochistan: Four terrorists killed in Quetta

On 27 September, four suspected terrorists of the banned Jamaatul Ahrar were killed in a gun battle with a team of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) police in the Hazar-Ganji area of Quetta. The CTD personnel intercepted a truck, on a tip-off about drugs being smuggled to Karachi, at the Gulzarabad checkpoint on the outskirts of Quetta, a CTD spokesperson said. Instead of stopping, the men traveling in the truck opened fire on the CTD personnel, triggering an exchange of fire that continued for half an hour, leaving four terrorists dead. Upon searching the truck, 27 kilograms of fine quality heroin were recovered from secret compartments meant to hide drugs for smuggling. (Saleem Shahid, "[Four 'terrorists' of banned outfit killed in gun battle with CTD in Quetta](#)," *Dawn*, 29 September 2022)

Balochistan: JUI-F to decide on joining provincial coalition government or not in 24 hours, says provincial head

On 25 September, JUI-F provincial head Maulana Abdul Wasay stated that the party would take a decision to join the provincial coalition government or not in the next 24 hours. This comes as the party's central leadership gave the go-ahead to its provincial chapter on the grounds that the conditions are met. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo stated that the JUI-F had conveyed its stance and conditions to Balochistan for joining the six-party cabinet and that the decision would be made in two days. (Saleem Shahid, "[JUI-F position on Balochistan cabinet to be clear in 24 hours: Maulana Abdul Wasay](#)," *Dawn*, 26 September 2022)

Balochistan: Six soldiers killed in a helicopter crash

On 26 September, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) stated that six Pakistan Army officials, were killed in a helicopter crash during a flying mission near Khost in Harnai, Balochistan. Previously, in August a Pakistan Army helicopter with six people on board lost contact with the air traffic control in Balochistan's Lasbela district following which the wreckage was found a day later. On the incidents, PTI's Fawad Chaudhry said that the helicopter flying was getting dangerous, adding that this required "engineering evaluation." (Naveed Siddiqui, "[6 Pakistan Army officials martyred in Harnai helicopter crash: ISPR](#)," *Dawn*, 26 September 2022)

Islamabad: Wildlife in Margalla Hills begin to reclaim the preservation area in the hills

On 25 September, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWM) Chairperson Rina Saeed Khan while speaking to Dawn stated that the wildlife in Margalla Hills has started to reclaim the preservation area in the hills. He said, "Porcupines, Khalij pheasants, foxes, and wild boars roam freely, which used to be unusual because under 'normal circumstances' there would be traffic [in the area] that pushed the wildlife into the bushes." (Jamal Shahid, "[Wildlife reclaiming preservation area in Margalla Hills](#)," *Dawn*, 26 September 2022)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Two soldiers killed in IED blast in North Waziristan

On 25 September, two soldiers of the Pakistan Army were killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) explosion in the General Area Esham of the North Waziristan District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), a statement of ISPR said. Last week, a Pakistan Army soldier was killed while thwarting a terrorist attack from Afghanistan in the bordering Dwatoi area of North Waziristan district. In a separate operation on 22-23 September, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation over the suspected presence of a high-profile terrorist in the Charbagh area of the Swat district. ("[Two soldiers martyred in IED](#)

[blast](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 26 September 2022)

ECONOMY

Ishaq Dar reduces petroleum products by PKR 12.63

On 30 September, newly appointed Federal Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar announced significant reduction of up to Rs12.63 per litre in petroleum products prices to pass on the benefit of decreasing crude rates in the international market. He also announced that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has achieved the revenue collection targets for September as well as first quarter of current fiscal year, and announced a one-month extension in the deadline for filing of income tax returns. The FBR has collected net revenue of PKR 685 billion during the month of September against the target of PKR 684 billion which is 27 per cent higher than the collection of September last year. Similarly, the target of the first quarter of the current financial year has also been surpassed by achieving PKR 1635 billion against the target of PKR 1609 billion and the growth is more than 17% per cent for the quarter. This impressive growth is primarily based on the 41% growth in direct taxes in the first quarter which is in line with the policy of the government to tax the rich and affluent. (Tahir Amin, "[Dar cuts fuel prices](#)," *Business Recorder*, 1 October 2022)

Finance Ministry Monthly outlook report indicates halt in spiking inflation

On 30 September, in its monthly economic outlook report, the finance ministry said: "September may show a halt to the recent drastic accelerations of the year-on-year inflation rate." The inflation rate had spiked to 27.3% in August, which according to an internal assessment by the World Bank might further increase in the coming months. The finance ministry said the inflation had started reverting as the month-on-month price increases have been on a declining path during the last two months. The ministry said since the start of the

current fiscal year, economic activity seemed to have fallen to a lower growth path. While commenting on the budget, the finance ministry said the fiscal deficit was budgeted to reduce to 4.9 per cent of the GDP, while the primary balance was a surplus of PKR 153 billion. (Shahbaz Rana, "[Finance ministry releases 'ambiguous' outlook report.](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 1 October 2022)

Brick kilns closing down due to staggering coal costs

On 1 October, The Express Tribune reported that the consistent increase in coal prices and the rapid rise in the wages of labourers have led to a widespread shut down of a huge number of brick kilns in the Rawalpindi district. Due to this, the prices of bricks have soared substantially. Moreover, these brick kilns pose a massive threat to the labour force of the district as their stoppage would lead to approximately 5,000 persons losing their jobs. With production on the low at 60 brick kilns functioning in the region, experts say that the price of coal has risen from PKR 20,000 to PKR 40,000 in the last four months. Leading to a massive shutdown of these kilns, experts also add that the devastation of the floods have caused a serious crisis of bricks production in the region, and claimed that this would lead to a rise in construction costs of urban and rural structures as well. Regarding this crisis, the kiln union has demanded the reduction of coal prices as quickly as possible. ("[Rising coal costs force closure of brick kilns.](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 1 October 2022.)

Unavailability of line of credit coerce automakers to close plants

On 1 October, The Express Tribune reported that the restriction on Letters of Credit (LC) have caused the auto sector to shut down their plants in a bid to deal with the production issues the sector is currently facing. In a dissipating decline of imports, the quota on LC have led to the reduction in auto production, and have pointed out that the industry was bearing the brunt of rising

production costs, lesser demand for auto financing, and the destruction caused by floods. Original equipment manufacturers are rapidly disappearing and are going to have a hard time recovering from their current programs. (Shahram Haq, "[LC curbs force automakers to shut plants.](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 1 October)

Innovation vs economic development: Pakistan precedes expectations

On 29 September, The UN's World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) noted the boom in Pakistan's innovative endeavours due to the rise in research and development investments. It maintained that Covid-19 caused an upliftment in innovation spending in new sectors and in regions that receive a lesser portion of such allocations. Citing that the report was unexpected to the WIPO, the agency also pointed the previous downturns of Pakistan's spending patterns in areas of investment, and lauded the country for its significant growth of nearly 10 per cent in 2021 in investment. Pakistan saw this upsurge in sectors of IT and communications, including pharmaceuticals. ("[Innovation index relative to level of economic development: Pakistan performed 'above expectation': UN.](#)" *Business recorder*, 29 September 2022)

Imported coal to be blended with 10 per cent Thar coal

On 30 September, Business Recorder reported that Power Division has approved M/s Port Qasim Electric Power Company Limited (PQEPCL) proposal for onsite testing of 10 percent Thar coal blending with imported coal as a first step towards conversion of 1,320 MW imported coal project. According to Managing Director PPIB, his organization approached government of Sindh to conduct a bankable feasibility study on the conversion of imported coal-based independent power producers (IPPs) to Thar coal. blending of Thar coal will increase burden of desulfurization system including but not limited to increase in auxiliary power

consumption, O&M cost, reduce system service life and such costs shall be borne by GoP. (Mustaq Ghumman, "[PQEPCL's Thar coal blending proposal approved by PD,](#)" *Business Recorder*, 30 September 2022)

Newly sworn in Finance Minister Ishaq Dar favors currency market intervention

On 28 September, nearly five years after declaring Ishaq Dar a proclaimed offender, an accountability court reversed its order when the newly inducted finance minister appeared before the court and gave an undertaking to face trial in the NAB reference pertaining to assets beyond means. Dar appeared in court and his counsel requested the court to allow Dar to furnish bonds under Section 91 of the criminal procedure code instead of applying for bail. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar after the verdict said that some changes would be made in the central bank law at "an appropriate time," advocating intervention in the currency market that signaled a needed shift in the IMF-backed policies. In his first media talk after taking oath as the finance minister, Dar said that the exchange rate regime could not be left to speculators, sending a strong message to the people and the banks that had been playing with the value of the local currency for their vested interests. He said, "Intervention in the foreign exchange market for the sake of the country is not bad but obviously the approach should be realistic." He added that all the central banks around the world, including the United States and the United Kingdom, intervene in the exchange market, only when the value of their currencies go above or below a certain band. (Malik Asad, "[Ishaq Dar no longer a proclaimed offender,](#)" *Dawn*, 29 September 2022; Shahbaz Rana, "[Dar favours currency market intervention,](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 29 September 2022)

PKR holds out against the dollar in interbank

On 29 September, Dawn reported that the PKR appreciated by 1.26% from the

previous day and increased its trade value to Rs.2.92. Recovering well after a fatal low of Rs.232.2, the PKR has shown an uptick since Friday, with its value raising consistently over the last few trade sessions in the interbank. The Foreign Minister credited the change in Pakistan's economic positioning due to the IMF's current programme, where Pakistan has agreed to a market-based currency exchange system. Citing that the uptrend has decreased Pakistan's debt by Rs 1 trillion, the report also stated that country was confronting a deficit in foreign exchange in the long run, adding that Pakistan was only equipped for payments up to \$10 bn. Experts also suggested that a reduction in imports and revitalising trade and immigration policies with Afghanistan and Iran would improve the deficit in a substantial manner. (Talqeen Zubairi, "[PKR strengthens by Rs2.92 against dollar in interbank,](#)" *Dawn*, 29 September 2022)

Concerns over raise in steel bars expressed by Senate Panel

On 23 September, the Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production expressed concern over the increase in the prices of steel bars used in the construction industry, with its members recommending allowing its import to end cartelisation. The committee meeting, headed by its chairperson Khalida Ateeb, was informed that the price of steel bars increased from Rs100, 000 to Rs230, 000 per tonne. The members stressed the need for allowing the import of steel bars to end its cartelisation. During the meeting, the committee members raised the issue of an increase in own money on vehicles, pointing out unnecessary delays in the delivery of vehicles. The secretary said the NFMCL had sustained Rs73 million losses in the last financial year 2021-22, while another Rs140 million losses were sustained in the year before that. ("[Senate panel expresses concern over raise in steel bars prices,](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 27 September 2022)

Ishaq Dar to replace Miftah Ismail as the finance minister

On 25 September, Miftah Ismail resigned as the finance minister in line with the party's decision, and Ishaq Dar is set to step into his shoes. Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif discussed the country's ongoing situation and measures taken by the sitting coalition government in a huddle in London. Former finance minister Ishaq Dar, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Miftah Ismail, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, and Ahad Cheema attended the meeting. On the occasion, Miftah Ismail tendered his resignation to Nawaz Sharif and thanked the party leadership for providing him with the opportunity to serve the country as finance minister and said that he diligently served the country during his four-month brief tenure. ("[Dar set to be finance minister as Miftah bows out](#)," *The News International*, 26 September 2022)

Rupee gains PKR 4.15 against USD

On 26 September, the Pakistani rupee recovered strongly against the dollar in the interbank market as being traded at Rs235.5 per dollar. Financial analysts have linked the pushback against the US dollar in the recent announcement of PML-N leader Ishaq Dar's return to Pakistan and to take over as finance minister. Another reason was a decline in international crude oil prices which had led to expectations of a dip in the import bill, and consequently, the trade deficit. Analysts also pointed that spirited support and call from international financial institutions to help Pakistan to deal with the floods. (Talqeen Zubairi, "[PKR surges by Rs4.15 against dollar in interbank](#)," *Dawn*, 26 September 2022)

World Bank advises Pakistan to transition from AC to DC fans

On 26 September, Dawn reported that the World Bank advised the government to transition towards DC fans, gradually phase out AC fans, and conduct a thorough assessment of the industry to determine market impacts caused by the move. In its

report, titled "Supporting the manufacturing in Pakistan of high-quality DC fans", the report said DC space-cooling fans are widely recognized for their superior energy efficiency and better overall performance than AC fans. The energy efficiency advantage is especially relevant for Pakistan, where electric fans are the prevalent technology for space cooling. This will provide the technical basis for the government to adopt national standards through the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority and the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority. (Amin Ahmed, "[WB wants Pakistan to shift to DC fans](#)," *Dawn*, 26 September 2022)

PKR holds out against the dollar in interbank

On 29 September, Dawn reported that the PKR appreciated by 1.26% from the previous day and increased its trade value to Rs.2.92. Recovering well after a fatal low of Rs.232.2, the PKR has shown an uptick since Friday, with its value raising consistently over the last few trade sessions in the interbank. The Foreign Minister credited the change in Pakistan's economic positioning due to the IMF's current programme, where Pakistan has agreed to a market-based currency exchange system. Citing that the uptrend has decreased Pakistan's debt by Rs 1 trillion, the report also stated that country was confronting a deficit in foreign exchange in the long run, adding that Pakistan was only equipped for payments up to \$10 bn. Experts also suggested that a reduction in imports and revitalising trade and immigration policies with Afghanistan and Iran would improve the deficit in a substantial manner. (Talqeen Zubairi, "[PKR strengthens by Rs2.92 against dollar in interbank](#)," *Dawn*, 29 September 2022)

EXTERNAL

Rollover of SAFE deposits sought from China again

On 30 September, ambassador of the People's Republic of China called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue at the finance division. The finance minister appreciated the support extended by the Chinese leadership in the refinancing of syndicate facility of RMB 15 billion (USD 2.24 billion) to Pakistan and further sought the support of the ambassador in facilitating rollover of SAFE China deposits of USD 2 billion in March 2023. Earlier in March this year, China had rolled over USD 2 billion SAFE deposits and USD 2.3 billion syndicate facility. The minister expressed gratitude to the Government of China for extending all-out support to the government and people of Pakistan in this hour of need. (Tahir Amin, "[March 2023: \\$2bn SAFE China deposits rollover sought](#)," *Business Recorder*, 1 October 2022)

Standing on its own: PM on US-Pakistan relations and irrelevance to other countries

On 29 September, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated, "let bygones be bygones" as he stood at the diplomatic reception held at the US embassy in Islamabad to celebrate the 75 years of relations between Pakistan and the US. Stressing on the future impact of US-Pakistan relations, the PM said that it was about time that the two states cited friendship and reform ways to form better friendships. He mentioned support and aid from the US, and expressed the disdainful manner in which the allocated funds have been used in the past. He added that Pakistan would like to stand on its own feet now, remembering his visit to the US where he met US president Biden who ensured him assistance with the floods in the country. He urged that the government was extending its plea for reformation of the country in infrastructure, jobs and livelihood. US Ambassador also reemphasized the rehabilitation of flood deprived areas, and mentioned that the strength of US-Pakistan friendship laid in mutual respect, values and goals. ("[Let bygones be bygones': PM Shehbaz says US-Pakistan relations should](#)

[not be tied with other countries](#)," *Dawn*, 30 September 2022)

No 'debt swap' talks with Beijing yet, says Bilawal

On 29 September, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said that Islamabad had so far not requested a restructuring, deferment or swap of debt owed to China in the wake of the catastrophic floods that hit the country. He said: "What China does, whether it's with Sri Lanka or Pakistan, that's totally China's decision. Just like it's 100 per cent America's decision in either of these circumstances." ("[No 'debt swap' talks with Beijing yet, says Bilawal](#)," *Dawn*, 30 September 2022)

FM Bilawal cautioned against creating "parallel governance" in Afghanistan

On 29 September, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in an interview with AFP stated that he wants the world to engage the Taliban, warning of dangerous consequences if the Taliban are again isolated. He said, "We've learned from the past that when we wash our hands and turn our backs, we end up creating unintended consequences and more problems for ourselves," adding, "I believe that our concerns of an economic collapse, of an exodus of refugees, of a threat of new recruits for organisations such as ISIS-K and others, outweigh concerns that there may be about their financial institutions." ("[FM Bilawal warns of consequences to Taliban isolation](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 29 September 2022)

New Pak envoy for France consented by the French government

On 29 September, The News International reported that the French government has consented to the appointment of Additional Foreign Secretary Asim Iftikhar Ahmad as Pakistan's new ambassador to France. Ahmad's posting has taken place after two-year started with blasphemous caricatures in a French journal. Pakistan's Ambassador to France Moeen ul Haq was first posted as

high commissioner in New Delhi in 2019 but later he moved to China. Since then, the Paris Embassy has been without an ambassador. ([“France govt okays appointment of new Pak envoy,”](#) *The News International*, 29 September 2022)

US envoy impels Pakistan to adhere to IMF terms

On 29 September, US Ambassador Donald Armin Blome conveyed sincere hope in Pakistan obeying IMF’s terms and conditions and led that he was optimistic that Pakistan would revel in the promises that it has made to the finance agency. Emphasising the imperativeness of paying dues and the legacy of trade between the US and Pakistan, the Ambassador expressed his intentions to strengthen the bilateral transactions as well. He also explained the volume of Pakistan’s economical strengths lay in its private businesses and stated that the country is on the verge of an aggressive shift in the world’s supply chain. (Haq, Shahram. [“US envoy urges Pakistan to comply with IMF terms.”](#) *The Express Tribune*, 29 September 2022)

Pakistan to assent to the ILO conventions on health and safety

On 27 September, Dawn reported that Pakistan is considering ratifying two occupational safety and health conventions of International Labour Organisation (ILO) as part of its obligations to meet international standards. The agenda of ratifying according to a senior official in the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development is to have a national tripartite workshop on occupational safety and health that safe and healthy working conditions were fundamental to decent work and thus creating safe, healthy, and productive working environments were an increasingly important agenda for the socio-economic development in Pakistan. The workshop particularly discussed the ILO Fundamental Conventions on Occupational Safety and Health Convention No 155 and the Promotional Framework for

Occupational Safety and Health Convention No 187. (Amin Ahmed, [“Pakistan mulls assent to ILO conventions on health, safety,”](#) *Dawn*, 27 September 2022)

Resources are lacking compared to the 2010 situation, says US State Department Counsellor

On 26 September, The News International reported that US State Department Counsellor Derek Chollet speaking to the BBC said the reason for the reduction in US aid during the recent floods in contrast to the 2010 floods is not Pakistan-US relations but a lack of resources. He explained, “At the time, the US Congress had allocated billions of dollars for the welfare of the people in Pakistan in recognition of the efforts made in the context of the Afghan war. But we don’t have those resources now.” Chollet said the UN Secretary-General was also in Pakistan during his presence and he had also made it clear that more assistance would be provided. “In the coming days, the World Bank will present its analysis of the floods in Pakistan, which will indicate what Pakistan especially needed.”([“We lack 2010-like resources to help Pakistan: US State Dept,”](#) *The News International*, 26 September 2022)

Dubai Port Chief donates USD 2.5 million to Army Relief Fund

On 25 September, the Dubai Port World Sheikh Ahmed Sultan Bin Sulayem during a meeting with Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa discussed relief efforts in the wake of devastating floods and all that can be done on the road to recovery for Pakistan. The officials committed to raising the issue of climate justice for Pakistan at the world forums. The COAS thanked Sheikh Sultan for his valuable and timely support and discussed matters of economic development in Pakistan. ([“Dubai Port chief meets COAS, donates \\$2.5m to relief fund,”](#) *Dawn*, 26 September 2022)

Pakistan assures maximum support to Qatari businessmen investing in Pakistan

On 26 September, The Express Tribune reported on the meeting between Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Qatari envoy to Pakistan. Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan Sheikh Saud bin Abdul Rahman bin Faisal Al-Thani met Chairman Ahmed at the FBR Headquarters and discussed matters of mutual interest related to customs, trade facilitation and taxation. The FBR chief assured him that maximum facilities will be provided to Qatari businessmen investing in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan values Qatar's cooperation, especially in the fields of education and health, and is keen on bilateral cooperation. ("[Qatar investors promised 'maximum facilities'](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 26 September 2022)

ON FLOOD

Data not revealing the true magnitude of flood devastation

On 28 September, UN Resident Coordinator revealed that the assessment of the floods that are managed by the government of Pakistan, the UN and the humanitarian aid partners have shown that a large number of people are in requirement of life saving assisting services in the aftermath of the floods. The revised version of the Pakistan Floods Response Plan 2022 which will be launched in Geneva on 4 October will be focussing on life support needs ranging from USD 600 million to USD 800 million. The UN report however, shows that at least 25,993 schools have been damaged, 2,000 facilities are under serious problems, causing a public health emergency. The US has suspended service payments on the USD 132m to Pakistan, in light of their promise to "redirect critical resources" to the country. (Amin Ahmed, "[Data not showing true extent of flood catastrophe'](#)," *Dawn*, 1 October.)

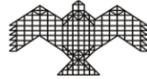
ON MILITARY

Resurgence will be not tolerated by the terrorists, says COAS

On 28 September, General Qamar Javed Bajwa at the 251st Corps Commanders' Conference held at the General Headquarters said that the resurgence of terrorism will not be tolerated and stressed that no stone should be left unturned in taking action against terrorists. The commanders were briefed in detail about the external and internal security situation with a particular focus on the flood situation and ongoing relief efforts being undertaken by army formations across the country. The forum under Bajwa undertook a comprehensive review of the security environment with a special focus on situations along the borders, internal security, and other professional matters of the army. (Naveed Siddiqui, "[Resurgence of terrorism will not be tolerated: Army chief](#)," *Dawn*, 29 September 2022)



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