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Daily Focus, 31 August 2022

Pakistan at 75: Civil-Military Relations

Is the internal power dynamics being redefined?

Dr Shalini Chawla



Image Source: Dawn

Pakistan is struggling with a serious political and economic crisis and the state is showing some unprecedented trends which invariably indicate that the crisis is far from settling anytime soon. The image of the all-powerful military seems to be tarnished with blatant and relentless targeting by former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Political leadership turning against the military is not new in Pakistan, and historical evidence suggests a classic cycle of events in Pakistan's political landscape. A promising and confident civilian leadership comes to power with full-fledged support of the military, but typically the civil-military bonhomie has a short-term expiry date. The civilian leadership overestimates its capacity to dictate terms in 'strategic areas' and loses the support of the deep state. In case the military has a choice of appointing another political face, the ruling party takes a blow and political leaders land behind bars on charges of corruption and money laundering. No political leader has managed to come into power, or for that matter, sustain its position of power, without the support of the army. Democratic regimes between 1988-1999 changed frequently, especially if the agenda of the elected governments challenged the power and functioning of the army. During this period, there were four elections, and

both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif returned to power twice.

Imran Khan's tenure was no different. After winning the general elections in 2018, which were termed "Selection 2018," Imran Khan enjoyed his position till he breached the 'unwritten red lines' and started to assert his independence in decision-making in the areas that remain sacrosanct to the military. Khan's equation with the military started to change given his anti-American position, his antagonistic statements towards the Muslim world on raising the issue of Kashmir in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and his inability to handle the economic crisis. However, the turning point in the relationship was Imran's closeness with the former Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed. The whispers about Faiz Hameed being appointed as the next army chief and an unprecedented delay from Imran in giving a nod to the military's decision to replace Faiz Hameed with Lt Gen Nadeem Ahmed Anjum as the ISI chief did not go well with the military.

The question that arises is, if there is a predictable cycle of civil-military amity and rancour in Pakistan, then how is the ongoing crisis different?

The military's experiment with Imran Khan has clearly backfired, and there is strong anti-establishment sentiment dominating the public opinion in the country. Anti-establishment slogans were raised in the province of Punjab, Pakistan's most important province. Khan's narrative of the military being submissive to foreign powers (Washington) and supporting corrupt

political leaders (PPP and PML-N) has intensified since his ouster from office in April 2022 after a close no-confidence motion. While Khan tried to balance his narratives by issuing some pro-military statements when his tiff with the army started, however, as he was clear about not having any support from the military, he upped the ante on the military generals. He compared the Army Chief to Mir Jafar, the treacherous Bengal General. The critical factor here is the lack of ample actions from the military to control this crisis, driven by Imran Khan's narratives. Reports published in the Pakistani media suggest that there is a strong lobby within the military (serving and retired) supporting Imran Khan. The establishment took punitive actions against the retired military officers and reportedly withdrew post-retirement benefits, including the pensions of five retired army officers who issued statements supporting Khan. For the first time, there is an apparent division within the army, and there is strong speculation that any strong action against Imran Khan could lead to a major upheaval within the military establishment. This could be a restraining factor for General Bajwa, who is about to finish his term in November. The General is eligible for another extension and the ruling party would benefit in the elections with Bajwa continuing in the position. Although the army's own media arm, the Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) made a statement that General Bajwa's term will not be extended. Pakistan's power play cannot be predicted and never fails to surprise us.

At present, seemingly revolutionary public opinion is challenging not only the military's image, but also its infallible ability and conviction to guard its position as the 'ultimate guardian and saviour of the nation's integrity.' The military in Pakistan has evolved as a highly organised and professional force, the power of which does

not flow only from the barrel of a gun but its deep involvement in all critical facets of the country. The Pakistan Army's strong political role stems from the national security paradigm of the state. It has managed to run the governance of the country for more than 30 years and, in fact, every single military regime was welcomed by the people of Pakistan. In all the phases of the transition from civilian to military rule, the masses were exhausted by the corrupt political leaders who managed to accumulate vast personal assets by misusing national resources. The military's deep engagement in the political structure facilitated its vast economic expansion, and today, the military operates a multi-billion dollar corporate empire across diverse sectors. The military managed to create and sustain an autonomous structure with financial freedom and flexibility for itself. The allocations for the defence budget remain high and unquestionable in Pakistan. The economic crisis does not impact or squeeze the military expenditure, and the military and nuclear build-up have continued at a constant rate. The deep state rationalises the military build-up as insurance to deal with Pakistan's implacable enemy, India.

The military has very cautiously but assertively maintained its dominance over some key areas: 1) Defence budget and spending; 2) Nuclear weapons and doctrine; 3) Pakistan's policy vis-à-vis India and Afghanistan; 4) Relations with the major powers- the US and China (are primarily conducted by the military).

Given the power dynamics so heavily tilted in favour of the military establishment, the current situation raises some serious questions: Is Imran's massive following indicative of a democratic revolution in Pakistan? Is the military losing its power

and the power dynamics in the country altering?

Although Imran's street power and his extensive presence on the social media cannot be ruled out as a beginning of some defining shifts, alterations in overall power dynamics are unlikely anytime soon in Pakistan. The military is too deeply entrenched in the politico-economic dynamics to lose control over the narratives that have emerged in the last few months. The lack of stringent actions by the military against Khan can be attributed to the fact that there is far too much at stake for the country at this point in time: much-awaited negotiations with the International Monetary Fund are going on; the Financial Action Task Force is scheduled to make a decisive visit to Pakistan soon; the nation is trying to revive its dented relationship with the United States; tensions with the Afghan Taliban have intensified over the fencing of the Durand Line; the Tehrik-Taliban Pakistan is holding its head high and the intensified Baloch resentment is manifesting in frequent attacks on the security establishment and Chinese nationals in

Pakistan. Taking any strong action against Khan would mean risking civil unrest in Pakistan, which the state cannot afford at the moment.

If one has to learn from past experience, it looks like the military will make serious efforts go the judicial way to restrain Khan at the appropriate time. There are already charges of terrorism and using foreign funding levied against him. Pakistan's history also provides ample evidence of the use of brute force to curb opposition voices, like rebellions in East Pakistan, resentment in Balochistan, and Pashtun grievances. While Khan's narratives are not likely to dent the military's power anytime soon, the political crisis has certainly added to the polarisation of Pakistani civil society between the political camps, and that would pose severe challenge for the state. In the past, polarisation of the society has worked in favour of the military establishment and allowed it to leverage the divisions for power expansion. Will the looming divisions further facilitate the establishment?

Daily Focus, 29 August 2022

Government declares ‘national emergency’ amid rain-induced floods

The rain-induced floods highlight the threat of climate change and Pakistan’s inability to tackle the problem

Abigail Miriam Fernandez



Image Source: Dawn

What happened?

On 25 August, the government declared a ‘national emergency’ amid the rain-induced floods terming it as a “climate-induced humanitarian crisis of epic proportions.” As of 29 August, the death toll from the floods reached 1,033, including 343 children, and at least 30 million without shelter.

According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Sindh reported the highest number of deaths as 306 people lost their lives due to floods and rain-related incidents from 14 June, while Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab recorded 234, 185 and 165 deaths, respectively.

On 28 August, the irrigation department stated that a “high” flow was reported in Kabul River at Warsak with 103,614 cusecs and “medium” flow at Adezai Bridge with 54,495 cusecs flowing. Moreover, high water level was also observed in the Indus River at Chashma, with inflow and outflow levels recorded at 525,362 cusecs and 519,362, respectively. However, the flood cell data showed that the rest of the rivers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were flowing at low, normal, and medium levels. Additionally,

the NDMA reported that Pakistan received 166.8mm of rain in August, as opposed to the average of 48mm which is an increase of 241 per cent. Additionally, the abnormal increase in rainfall generated flash floods across the country, particularly in the southern part of Pakistan leaving several parts inundated with 23 districts of Sindh being declared “calamity-hit.”

Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman during a press conference said: “Pakistan is going through its 8th cycle of monsoon; normally the country has only three to four cycles of [monsoon] rain.” She added that a “war room” has been established by the prime minister at NDMA, which would lead relief operations across the country and observed that the floods are “a humanitarian disaster of unprecedented proportions.” Later on 28 August, she stated that the number of population affected by floods is likely to increase to 33 million the rain-induced floods continue to cause destruction across the country.

Meanwhile, the government decided to deploy the army in all provinces to help the civilian authorities in rescue operations in the calamity-hit areas. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah stated that the Punjab government had requisitioned the army’s deployment in Dera Ghazi Khan, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa wanted the army’s assistance in Dera Ismail Khan. Meanwhile, Balochistan sought the deployment of the personnel in Nasirabad, Jhal Magsi, Sohbatpur, Jafarabad and Lasbela districts while Sindh also sought the military’s help in the flood-hit districts.

What is the background?

First, the cause of flooding. Since the start of the monsoon in mid-June, heavy rain has caused houses to collapse, flash floods, mudslides and landslides across Pakistan as the intensity of the 2022 floods surpass the super floods of 2010. According to the NDMA, Higher temperatures and heavy rain have caused Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) in mountainous areas of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while the Indus and Kabul rivers were above the flood mark in several locations, particularly in Punjab.

Second, preparedness to address the flooding. While the government was prompt in responding to the loss of lives, livestock, houses, and standing crops, no attention was given before the start of the monsoon season. The authorities failed to apply to disaster-proof subsequent infrastructural development by learning from past calamities. Many cities and villages in Pakistan do not have rainwater or floodwater channels putting excess pressure on sewerage lines and polluting drinking water supplies. Additionally, electricity poles remain exposed increasing the risk of electrocution, and roads and channels are often not planned resulting in unplanned clusters in urban areas that clash with the flood cycles.

Third, the impact of climate change. According to a 2021 World Bank report on climate change: “Pakistan faces some of the highest disaster risk levels in the world, ranked 18 out of 191 countries by the 2020 Inform Risk Index. Pakistan also has high exposure to flooding (ranked jointly 8th), including, riverine, flash, and coastal, as well as some exposure to tropical cyclones and their associated hazards (ranked jointly 40th) and drought (ranked jointly 43rd).”

The report adds that Pakistan faces a rate of warming considerably above the global average with a potential rise of 1.3°C–4.9°C by the 2090s over the 1986–2005 baseline. Further, the frequency and intensity of extreme climate events are projected to increase, particularly with an increasing number of people affected by flooding likely increase of around five million people exposed to extreme river floods by 2035–2044, and a potential increase of around one million annually exposed to coastal flooding by 2070–2100.

Fourth, the declaration of environmental emergency. In the recent past, Pakistan has been subject to severe weather-related and environmental incidents from landslides, glacier melts, heatwaves and flash floods. Prior to the emergency declared in 2022, the government declared a national emergency to tackle the locust attack which destroyed crops on a large scale in Punjab in 2020.

What does it mean?

First, climate change is fuelling flooding in Pakistan. The monsoon-related flooding has become the worst type of climate-induced disaster in Pakistan. The recent incidents of flooding reveal that change in the weather cycle seems to have added to the frequency and severity of floods causing them to be more disastrous. Second, the lack of preparedness. The high toll in casualties highlights the lack of preparedness by the relevant authorities and the government. Given that these rain-induced floodings are not a new phenomenon in Pakistan, the authorities are yet to learn from the past and implement measures to curb the situation. Third, the follow-up on the emergency declaration. While Pakistan has taken steps to achieve SDG-13 earlier, the term climate change has not been included in the formal definition of an “emergency” under the National Climate Change Policy 2012 and the Pakistan Climate Change Act 2017.

Unless this is implemented climate initiatives would not be successful

PAKISTAN IN BRIEF

INTERNAL

Imran Khan failed to appear in court despite the security, citing a life threat

On 31 August, Islamabad IG, Akbar Nasir revealed in the Senate Standing Committee on Interior that the government was spending Rs240 million annually on the security of Imran Khan. During the proceedings, IG Nasir was asked about the reasons for the withdrawal of Mr. Khan's security and revoking of private security companies' licenses that were deployed for his protection. The committee was told that licenses were revoked by the interior ministry but they are still performing security duties. Imran Khan had secured a pre-arrest bail in the terror case till 1 September and was asked by an Anti-terrorism court for threatening senior police officers during a public rally in Islamabad. Babar Awan, Imran Khan's counsel, apprised the court that his client's life was under threat, hence he did not appear before the court. He maintained that Islamabad police issued a threat alert about a possible attack on Imran Khan. During the proceedings, the lawyer pleaded with the court to grant interim bail to his client. The court remarked that only those who come to court get bail and summoned Imran Khan to start arguments on the bail plea. (Kashif Abbasi, "[Rs240m spent on Imran's security annually, says Islamabad police chief](#)"; "[Terror case: ATC summons Imran Khan at 12 noon](#)," *Dawn*; *The News International*, 1 September 2022)

ECC approves disbursement of Rs 103 billion for flood victims

On 30 August, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) approved the immediate disbursement of Rs25,000 each to 4.125 million families affected by the recent rains and floods, involving an additional fiscal impact of Rs103 billion. Additionally, the

ECC authorised the signing of agreements with a couple of G-20 countries under the Covid-19 debt relief initiative for the poor nations, announced in April 2020.

UN Secretary-General to visit the flood-affected areas

On 31 August, The News International reported that UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric announce UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres would visit areas most impacted by the rain-induced floods in Pakistan in efforts to express solidarity and stand with the people of Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), stated that 650,000 pregnant women, of whom 73,000 are expected to deliver next month are in dire need of maternal health service amid the devastating floods in Pakistan. Acting UNFPA Pakistan Representative said, "UNFPA is on the ground, working with partners, to ensure that pregnant women and new mothers continue receiving life-saving services even under the most challenging conditions." (Amin Ahmed, "[More than half million pregnant women among flood-hit in dire need of care: UNFPA](#)," *Dawn*, 31 August 2022; Khaleeq Kiani, "[Disbursement of Rs103bn to flood-hit families okayed](#)," *Dawn*, 31 August 2022; "[UN chief to arrive in flood-ravaged Pakistan next week on solidarity visit](#)," *The News International*, 31 August 2022)

PTI to take new challenges if voted to power again

On 30 August, Imran Khan admitted to having made blunders after coming to power in 2018 but vowed to take steps that have never been taken before to get the economy out of the crisis if his party gets another chance to rule the country. Imran Khan claimed that if his party came to power again, he will have better knowledge about economic challenges and their solutions, as he has decided to form an 'economic team'

to assess them beforehand. (Ikram Junaidi, [“PTI to take ‘unprecedented’ decisions if voted into power again,”](#) *Dawn*, 31 August 2022)

Tight security for Imran to appear in IHC
On 31 August, Imran Khan appears before the Islamabad High Court under tight security. As per the security orders issued by the government earlier today, only lawyers on the cause list will be allowed to enter the high court after security checks, and the court has been secured by barbed wire. At least a thousand junior rank officers and officials have been posted around the IHC, while the Security Division is responsible for providing security inside the court premises. (“Saqib Bashir, [“Imran to appear before IHC amidst strict security today,”](#) *The Express Tribune*, 31 August 2022)

Imran and three others charged with treason case

On 29 August, a complaint has been filed with Islamabad police to register a treason case against Imran Khan, Shaukat Tarin, Mohsin Khan Leghari and Taimur Khan Jhagra on the basis of two audio clips surfaced via TV channels and social media in which a man said to be Mr. Tarin can be heard guiding the two provincial ministers to tell the federal government and the IMF that they would not be able to commit to a provincial budget surplus in light of the recent floods that have wreaked havoc in Pakistan. The audios triggered criticism against PTI and the ruling coalition alleged that it was nothing but a conspiracy to derail the government’s deal with the IMF. The complainant said Imran Khan had already stated that Pakistan will default just like Sri Lanka. He alleged that such conspiracies were being hatched at the direction of foreign powers and it was treason. The complainant requested the police take legal action against all four suspects. (Ikram Junaidi, [“Treason case sought against Imran, three others,”](#) *Dawn*, 31 August 2022)

Demands to legislate the limits for state institutions over disappearances

On 30 August, during an event held to mark the International Day of Enforced Disappearances calls were made to introduce legislation to ensure that limits were imposed on state institutions, and former lawmakers and activists demanded that laws that lay down boundaries for the functioning of intelligence agencies should be introduced. A large number of human rights activists, politicians, and lawyers gathered outside the office of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) to demand that the state must act against those involved in enforced disappearances. Former PPP senator Farhatullah Babar said a new legal architecture was needed to tackle the problem of enforced disappearances, and bringing the intelligence apparatus under the ambit of the law should be its central pillar. He further said, “An inadequate Bill was moved in the National Assembly in June 2021 to address the issue, but even that bill seems to have disappeared.” (Ikram Junaidi, [“Call to legislate limits for state institutions over disappearances,”](#) *Dawn*, 31 August 2022)

UN to launch USD 161 million ‘flash appeal’ for Pakistan

On 30 August, Dawn reported that the United Nations is scheduled to launch a USD 161 million ‘flash appeal’ on 30 August in efforts to provide food and cash assistance to Pakistan amid the devastating rain-induced floods. According to Dawn, the United Nations urgently needs USD 34.28 million to scale up immediate relief efforts. Meanwhile, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan called for “burden-sharing and solidarity” in the wake of a “climate-change driven catastrophe” which is expected to worsen. (Amin Ahmed, [“UN’s flash appeal today as flood aid trickles in,”](#) *Dawn*, 30 August 2022)

2022)

"Literally a third" of Pakistan is under water, says Minister for Climate Change

On 29 August, Federal Minister for Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman termed the rain-induced floods as a "crisis of unimaginable proportions." She said that "literally a third" of Pakistan was under water, describing it as akin to a dystopian movie. Further, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said that Pakistan needs more than USD 10 billion to repair and rebuild infrastructure damaged by monsoon rains, Meanwhile, heavy flow of water coursing downstream from tributaries in the north continued to put pressure on the Indus River in Sindh, threatening to burst its banks after inundating millions of acres of rich farmland due to weeks of non-stop rain. (["Pakistan needs \\$10bn for flood repairs, rebuilding: Ahsan Iqbal," Dawn, 30 August 2022;](#) ["Heavy water flow threatens to burst Indus banks," The Express Tribune, 30 August 2022;](#) ["Sherry says 'literally a third' of country under water," The Express Tribune, 30 August 2022](#))

SHC admits a petition to lift the media ban on MQM leader

On 29 August, the Sindh High Court admitted a petition filed by former MPA Nisar Ahmad Panhwar requesting the lifting of the media ban on the founder of MQM. The court after hearing the arguments accepted the case and adjourned the hearing. The media ban on the founder of MQM is a violation of Articles 4, 17, 19, and 25 of the Constitution, the petition states, adding that the concerned authorities were approached to remove the ban but no action has been taken. The plea demands that the MQM founder should be given permission for political and welfare activities in the country, and the restrictions imposed on him should be removed. (["Court admits petition to lift media ban on MQM founder," The Express Tribune, 30 August](#)

Shahbaz Gill's Bail plea gets rejected

On 30 August, the district and sessions court of Islamabad rejected the bail plea of Shahbaz Gill in a sedition case. The court was apprised by Gill's lawyer that his client was ready to apologize for any misunderstanding in the case regarding inciting mutiny in the army. Special Prosecutor Raja Rizwan Abbasi had argued that sedition was committed 'clearly', adding that the words of the accused Gill were not excusable in any way. Defence lawyer Burhan Moazzam said that the statement of his client was twisted and an FIR was registered against him. (Saqib Bashir, ["Court rejects Gill's bail plea," The Express Tribune, 30 August 2022](#))

Delay in curriculum approval raises questions in the Education Ministry

On 30 August, Dawn reported that the Ministry of Education notified the national curriculum for classes fifth to eighth a few months ago. Subsequently, students started the new academic session with new books. However, no curriculum has been notified for students from minority communities. Without a notified curriculum, students belonging to seven religious communities Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Kalash, Bahai, Buddhist, and Parsi have been pursuing education without their religious books. The Joint Secretary of Education Waseem Jamal said that the content of the curriculum was being examined as some experts say the subject of ethics should be continued in schools for minorities while others say more religious education should be imparted to minority students. Further, he said the issue would be resolved within a week and it will be settled by the wishes and aspirations of religious minorities and the rules and regulations of the country. (Kashif Abbasi, ["Delay in approval of curriculum for minority students raises eyebrows," Dawn, 30 August 2022](#))

Imran Khan directed to submit his reply in the Toshakhana case by 7 September

On 29 August, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja heard the case and granted more time to Imran Khan in the case of appropriating Toshakhana gifts to him. The Toshakhana case was brought before the electoral watchdog last year after the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) accepted an application on the matter and directed the Cabinet Division to provide information about the gifts received by the then-prime minister Imran Khan from foreign dignitaries. (“[ECP asks Imran to submit reply in Toshakhana case on Sept 7.](#)” *The Express Tribune*, 29 August 2022)

Imran’s ban on live telecast to be moved to IHC

On 29 August, Imran Khan challenged the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority’s (PEMRA) notice, banning live telecast of his speeches, in the Islamabad High Court. The petition filed by Khan’s lawyers said, “While referring to the violence against party member Shahbaz Gill, Imran had requested to take legal action against those responsible.” It furthered that as a citizen the law has given the right to take legal action and that the PTI chief’s speech was mistaken as hate speech. The petition added that Imran’s stance to call for legal action against those responsible for Gill’s “torture” does not fall under hate speech. (“[Imran moves IHC against ban on live telecast of speeches.](#)” *The Express Tribune*, 29 August 2022)

Maintaining of contempt plea of Sharif brothers to be decided by IHC

On 29 August, the IHC reserved the decision on whether it will or will not hear the contempt of court petition against Shahbaz Sharif and Nawaz Sharif regarding the elder Sharif’s return to Pakistan. According to the petition against the Sharif brothers, Nawaz went abroad with the permission of the Lahore High Court due to illness and his

brother had submitted an affidavit that Nawaz Sharif would return after his recovery but did not, in fact, return. The petition requested that Nawaz be labelled an “offender” and contempt of court proceedings ensued against both brothers. The court maintained that the petition would have been dismissed with an exemplary fine and concluded that an appropriate order will be issued on the request. (“[IHC to decide on maintainability of contempt plea against Sharif brothers.](#)” *The Express Tribune*, 29 August 2022)

PROVINCES

Balochistan: Government declares 32 out of 34 districts as ‘calamity hit’; Neighboring countries and organizations extend support to the flood-hit country

On 31 August, the government declared 32 out of 34 provincial districts calamity hit as Sherry Rehman hinted that at least 10 billion USD would be required to rebuild climate-resilient infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of global warming. The torrential rains have killed at least 252 people and 1.3 million people have been forced to locate in Balochistan. At least 19 districts were particularly hit by unprecedented floods that leveled crops and damaged thousands of houses. The government has given compensation of Rs two million each to the heirs of 170 people who lost their lives. The ADB approved a grant of three million USD to support the relief and rehabilitation measures. Turkey, China and UAE aid the country through food and equipment. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) said that IFAD was ready to immediately adjust its activities in Pakistan to respond to the urgent needs of families affected by the floods. The NDMA and INGO’s extended support to carry out relief and rescue services in different areas. (Amin Ahmed; Saleem Shahid, Jamal Shahid; Kalbe Ali, “[ADB approves \\$3m to support relief efforts.](#)”; “[32 Balochistan districts declared ‘calamity-hit’.](#)”; “[NDMA](#)

[extends support to INGOs for flood-relief activities,](#)” *Dawn*, 1 September 2022)

Balochistan: Earthquakes followed by an IED blast affect Kalat

On 31 August, Militants detonated an improvised explosive device at the working site of Pakistan Petroleum Limited on the outskirts of Kalat, killing one local employee and inflicting injuries on another. The attack by unidentified men came on a day when a moderate earthquake affected the district and its surrounding area. According to the meteorological department, the quake intensity was 4.7 on the Richter scale and the epicenter was southeast of Kalat. (Abdul Wahid Shahwani, “[Kalat hit by IED blast, earthquake,](#)” *Dawn*, 1 September 2022)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: PM allocates USD 50 million for the flood battered province

On 31 August, PM Shehbaz visited flood-hit areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and announced Rs10 billion in funds to rehabilitate the calamity-hit areas, even as a report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) painted a grim picture of the health and humanitarian crises simmering across the country. According to the PM, the federal government had allocated an amount of PKR 28 billion which was being disbursed among the affected through the NDMA and the Benazir Income Support Programme. He added every affected family was being given a cash amount of PKR 25,000 whereas each family was entitled to PKR 1 million compensation if they had lost a loved one in the floods. In a meeting following his visit to KP, PM Sharif directed authorities concerned to restore the power supply and repair damaged roads in the flood-hit areas within two days with the help of the Frontier Works Organisation. (Fazal Khaliq, Nisar Ahmed, Ikram Junaidi, “[Shehbaz announces Rs10bn for KP as crises swirl,](#)” *Dawn*, 1 September 2022)

Balochistan: Gwadar safe city seeks revised PC-1

On 30 August, Ahsan Iqbal directed the government to revise its PC-1 before the next Central Working Development Party (CDWP) meeting in order to complete the Gwadar Safe City Project (GSCP) in six months. The minister issued the directives while chairing a steering committee meeting to review progress on the GSCP. The Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for providing technical and operational support to the Gwadar Safe City Project and to the government of Balochistan which is the main sponsoring agency of the project. During the meeting, the Balochistan chief secretary briefed the minister about the current status of the project. (“[Revised PC-1 sought for Gwadar safe city,](#)” *The Express Tribune*, 31 August 2022)

ECONOMY

SBP receives loan tranche from IMF

On 31 August, State Bank of Pakistan received USD 1.16 billion deposit from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), two days after the much-needed nod of the Fund to immediate disbursement on successful completion of the combined seventh and eighth reviews of a loan facility. Late night tweet by SBP said: “This will help improve SBP’s foreign exchange reserves and will also facilitate realization of other planned inflows from multilateral and bilateral sources.” Under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement, signed in July 2019, the IMF was to provide USD 6 billion to Pakistan during a 39-month period. (“[State Bank receives \\$1.16bn from IMF,](#)” *Dawn*, 1 September 2022)

Gas reserves discovered in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

On 31 August, Oil and gas exploration firms announced the discovery of gas reserves at

2.25 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscfd) at Tolanj's West-2 development, located in Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A notification to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) said: "This discovery will also help and contribute towards improving the energy security of the country from indigenous resources and add to the hydrocarbon reserves base of MOL, its joint venture partners and the country." The Tal joint venture comprised of MOL Pakistan (operator), OGDCL, Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), Pakistan Oilfields Limited (POL) and Government Holdings Private Limited (GHPL) While oil and gas reserves have been depleting at 10-15% per annum, new discoveries remain insufficient compared to the growing shortfall. Gas production has reduced to around 3,300 mmcfd compared to over 4,000 mmcfd some three years ago, while the demand for gas stands at over 8,000 mmcfd today. Similarly, crude oil output has dropped to slightly over 70,000 barrels per day at present compared to over 90,000 barrels per day some three years ago. (Salman Siddiqui, "[Gas reserves discovered in K-P.](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 01 September 2022)

Sugar Advisory board gets reconstituted by the government

On 31 August, The Express Tribune reported that the federal government has issued a notification that reconstituted the Sugar Advisory Board and appointed the federal minister for national food security as its chairman Trade minister, trade secretary, industries and production secretary and food security secretary have been appointed as the members of the board. The notification said that each provincial government will have a representative as a board member. Chairmen of the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association in Islamabad, Sindh, Punjab, and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa will be included as board members. ("[Govt reconstitutes Sugar Advisory Board.](#)" *The Express Tribune*, 31 August 2022)

IMF approves seventh and eighth review loan valuing at USD 1.1 billion

On 29 August, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail shared the news of the approval of a loan of USD 1.1 billion under the extended fund facility (EFF) signed between Pakistan and IMF in 2019. The statement from IMF pointed out that the disbursement "brings total purchases (money made available) for budget support under this arrangement to about USD 3.9 billion." It added, "It is also important to continue to expand social safety to protect the most vulnerable and accelerate structural reforms including to improve the performance of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and governance." IMF's Deputy Managing Director and Acting Chair Antoinette Sayeh advised on continuing a tight monetary policy, which she said, "would help to reduce inflation and help address external imbalances," adding that "maintaining proactive and data-driven monetary policy would support these objectives." The new coalition government has removed the price caps, with petrol and diesel prices going up by as much as 66 per cent and 92 per cent in over a month. On 21 June, Pakistani authorities and the IMF staff mission reached an understanding on the current federal budget to revive the stalled programme as the former committed to generating PKR 436bn more taxes and gradually increasing petroleum levy to PKR 50 per litre. An IMF staff review acknowledged that important progress had been made over the federal budget. (Anwar Iqbal, "[IMF approves much-needed \\$1.1bn payout.](#)" *Dawn*, 30 August 2022)

PKR strengthens against USD after IMF board approval of EFF

On 30 August, PKR began with a recovery of 2.92 PKR in the first hour of interbank trade after finance minister declared on the successful approval of Extended Fund Facility (EFF) by IMF. IMF's Executive Board completed the combined 7th and 8th reviews of a loan facility for Pakistan, allowing immediate disbursement of USD

1.1 billion to the country. PKR had started falling again from 17 August, losing PKR 8.02 till yesterday (29 August). (Talqeen Zubairi, "[PKR gains nearly Rs3 against dollar in interbank as IMF approves disbursement.](#)" *Dawn*, 30 August 2022)

PSX bearish due to flood-related damage to the economy

On 29 August, stock market posted a minor loss and closed down by almost losing 1000 points in a single day trading. First National Equities Limited Chief Executive Ali Malik said "The damage caused by the floods cannot be calculated yet [but it] is widespread. Inflation in Pakistan will rise very high because crops have been wasted and livestock killed. We will have to become a net importer of these, so foreign exchange will be involved. Secondly, our exports will be reduced and local consumption will rise." (Talqeen Zubairi, "[Floods drag down PSX despite IMF bailout.](#)" *Dawn*, 30 August 2022)

PKR slides by 1.34 against USD

On 29 August, PKR remained under pressure due to the destruction of crops which would lead to a higher current account deficit since Pakistan would have to import wheat. Data shared by the Forex Association of Pakistan showed the local currency was changing hands at PKR 222 per dollar at 11:45am, down 0.6 per cent. The United States dollar surged to a 20-year high against a basket of currencies today after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell signalled interest rates would be kept higher for longer to bring down soaring inflation. After reaching a record low of PKR 239.94 against the dollar on 28 July, the local currency had recovered to PKR 213.90 in the interbank by 16 August. However, it has since continued to fall, losing PKR 8.1 till Aug 26. (Talqeen Zubairi, "[PKR falls by Rs1.34 in interbank market.](#)" *Dawn*, 29 August 2022)

PSX opens the week in red, index slides by 652 points

On 29 August, the benchmark had lost 652.13 points, or 1.53 per cent, to reach 41,939.38 points. Head of Research at Intermarket Securities, Raza Jafri, said: Asian markets are sharply lower today, following the heavy 3pc decline in US markets on Friday. This is playing out at the KSE-100 also." Jafri said that while the resumption of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was imminent with its executive board set to meet today, the market was also wary because of the floods and the political situation. (Talqeen Zubairi, "[PSX mimics global markets, plunges 652 points in early trade.](#)" *Dawn*, 29 August 2022)

Executive Board of IMF to consider a bailout package for Pakistan

On 29 August, the executive board of the IMF met to consider a bailout package for Pakistan as Islamabad claims to tie up at least 37 billion USD in loans and investments. If the board approves the deal, the IMF will immediately disburse about 1.2 billion USD to Pakistan and may provide up to USD four billion over the remainder of the current fiscal year, which began on 1 July. Pakistan is likely to request emergency help from the IMF's Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI), which may bring additional funds of up to 500 million USD. (Anwar Iqbal, "[Crucial IMF meeting for renewal of loan plan today.](#)" *Dawn*, 29 August 2022)

EXTERNAL

Government to issue permits to facilitate onion and tomato imports from Iran and Afghanistan

On 30 August, the Ministry of National Food Security and Research announced that it would issue permits within 24 hours to facilitate onion and tomato imports from Iran and Afghanistan. Additionally, the ministry has also requested that the Federal Board of Revenue to waive taxes and levies on onion and tomato imports for the next

three months and expects that this will be made effective immediately. Meanwhile, on importing food items from India, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail stated that the government would take a decision after consulting its coalition partners and key stakeholders. (Amin Ahmed, "[Govt to allow onion, tomato imports from Iran, Afghanistan](#)," *Dawn*, 31 August 2022; "[Decision to import food items from India after consultation: Miftah Ismail](#)," *The News International*, 31 August 2022)

President Xi gets praise for people-centric development

On 30 August, The Express Tribune reported that President Xi Jinping was praised by speakers at an event organized by Pakistan China Institute. The panellists discussed the prospects of the 20th National Congress of the CPC, which will be held later in 2022. During the event, Pakistan-China Institute Executive Director introduced the "Friends of Silk Road Initiative" which has become a platform to understand China and bridge people-to-people connectivity between Pakistan and China. Further, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar claimed that China is a pillar of peace and stability in the region and a preserver, promotor, and protector of principles of peaceful coexistence in the region. Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong termed Pakistan-China relations as 'rock-solid'. ("[Xi lauded for 'people-centric development](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 30 August 2022)

46 Chinese passenger coaches to be received in December

On 28 August, The Pakistani Railways team reached China and after inspecting the prototypes of the coaches and modern high-capacity wagons and receiving training on manufacturing of such rolling stock, the railways will receive 46 coaches of 230 from China in December. The railway is working to upgrade the dilapidated track as the Khanpur-Kotri section is not fit for high-

speed train operation. Most of the ML-1 parts are fit for the 120km per hour train operation, and after the completion of the ML-1 project under the CPEC, the entire ML-1 track would have the capacity to bear the rolling stock operations at the speed of 160km per hour. Under 140 million USD contract (Rs31 billion, approximately), the Chinese company is to manufacture 230 state-of-the-art passenger coaches, of which 46 will be provided as completely built units and the remaining 184 will be manufactured in Pakistan by the PR engineers and technical staff under the supervision of the Chinese experts. (Khalid Hasnain, "[Railway to receive 46 Chinese passenger coaches by December](#)," *Dawn*, 29 August 2022)

Yaqoob's accusation 'Highly Regrettable', says Pakistan

On 28 August, Pakistan termed the accusations made by Afghanistan's Acting Defense Minister Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob "conjectural allegations". In a statement, the Foreign Office spokesperson said that the statement was "highly regrettable" and defied the "norms of responsible diplomatic conduct". He further said, "In the absence of any evidence, as acknowledged by the Afghan minister himself, such conjectural allegations are highly regrettable and defy the norms of responsible diplomatic conduct." Afghan defense minister Mujahid accused Pakistan earlier today of providing airspace for US drones to enter his country, characterizing the incursions as a continuation of Washington's "invasion". ("[Pakistan terms Afghan minister's comments 'highly regrettable'](#)," *The News International*, 29 August 2022)

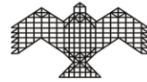
ON INDIA

Government mulling over imports of vegetables from India

On 29 August, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail declared that the government was planning to allow the duty-free import of vegetables and other edible items from India through the Wagah border to minimise the negative impact of rising inflation on the people. Following the announcement, the business community voiced its support for the proposal, but cautioned the government to restrict traders to import only raw vegetable and not finished goods. According to Yasir Bhatti, a Lahore-based importer currently in Kabul, the government must open trade with India by initially getting tomato, onion and other required vegetables. (Khaleeq Kiani, Khalid Hasnain, “[‘Veg-imports’ from India floated to control prices.](#)” *Dawn*, 30 August 2022)



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