



NIAS Area Studies  
PAKISTAN WEEKLY

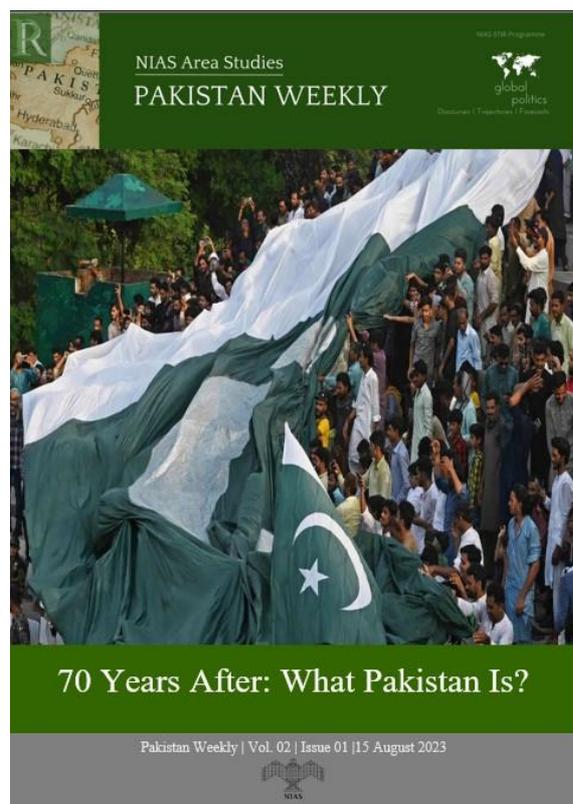


# 70 Years After: What Pakistan Is?



## Pakistan Weekly

15 August 2023, Tuesday | Vol 2, No.1



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### About NIAS Global Politics

Global Politics is a primary focus of the NIAS Programme on Science, Technology, and International Relations (STIR). The primary focus is on contemporary world affairs. The Programme publishes *The World This Week*, and *NIAS Fortnightly on Science Technology and International Relations*.

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D Suba Chandran

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### About NIAS Pakistan Reader

Pakistan Reader is an academic exercise at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in the Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore, India. The objective of its alert - "Pakistan Reader - Evening Brief" is to update the readers on contemporary developments within Pakistan, on a regular basis.

The PR Evening Briefs are a part of the focus on Pakistan at the International Strategic and Security Programme (ISSSP) within the NIAS.

## PR Special Commentary

### 76 Years After: What Pakistan is? And who is responsible for what it is?

By D Suba Chandran

*Is 'Jinnah's Pakistan' an ideal fading into a myth? On 14 August, reflecting on "76 years of sovereignty," Dawn, in its editorial, asked a pertinent question: Is 'Jinnah's Pakistan' an ideal fading into a myth? (Editorial, "From Jinnah to Now," Dawn, 14 August 2023).*

Founded by Muhammad Ali Jinnah in October 1941, *Dawn* is one of the leading English dailies in Pakistan, considered moderate, independent, and liberal. According to Dawn: "The founding fathers imagined an egalitarian, prosperous welfare state; one that thrived in harmony and justice with absolute civil supremacy. But decades after them, what emerged is entirely divergent from their beliefs."

*The News International*, another moderate and liberal English daily, in its editorial ("The Idea of Pakistan," *The News*, 14 August 2023), said: "The one thing we have never been able to do is define what Pakistan is. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah attempted to do so in his address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11, 1947. Unfortunately, we have strayed from that ideal and in doing so and paid the price." *The News International*, published since 1991, belongs to the Jang media group, which owns *Daily Jang*, a Urdu daily published since 1939, and *Geo News*, a TV channel.

*The News*, in its above editorial, continues: "...history has continued to repeat itself in Pakistan over and over and over again. Democratic leaders have been ousted, killed, maligned. Progress has been thwarted... Until the 21st century, not a single elected government served out its term. More than half the country was so alienated it decided to form a whole different nation. And today, so many Pakistanis had rather take the most dangerous journeys out of the country than try and live here."

#### **Pakistan "has stood far too close to the edge for far too long." Why so, and who is responsible?**

The editorial in *The News* also notes: Pakistan "has stood far too close to the edge for far too long. A year that saw Pakistan come dangerously close to default and suffer a political crisis not at all the people's making is a reminder of how much is left to be done to complete Quaid's vision."

This analysis attempts to analyse the above questions/issues posed by two editorials published by Dawn and *The News*: Is "Jinnah's Pakistan' an ideal fading into a myth?" And why Pakistan "has stood far too close to the edge for far too long." While most in Pakistan (and elsewhere) have zeroed on what the problem is facing the country, they

seem to miss two specific questions: Why and Who. Why is Jinnah's Pakistan fading? Why Pakistan has stood too close to the edge far too long? Why has the idea gone wrong? And who is responsible?

There have been numerous reflections on what has gone wrong with Jinnah's Pakistan – referring to his address to the Constituent Assembly in August 1947. In this context, the first question – the most fundamental question should be on Jinnah's idea of Pakistan itself. Most of us, based on his address to the constituent assembly in 1947, take it for granted that Jinnah wanted a moderate, liberal, and inclusive Pakistan.

Perhaps, he did want to achieve an inclusive, moderate, and liberal Pakistan. Unfortunately for Pakistan, and for his idea of it, he could not live for long to see it through. He passed away in September 1948 due to his ill health. From June 1948, his health was deteriorating, and he had to shift to Quetta. Thus, even during the brief period between August 1947 and September 1948, he could not concentrate fully to develop his idea into a full-fledged state. After his demise, the idea started unravelling by 1951 itself, as could be seen from developments leading to the first anti-Ahmediya riots. But, did Jinnah really believe, after creating Pakistan in the name of religion, and a "two-nation" hypothesis, that post-1947, it would create a different identity for itself?

Second, did the leaders then outside the Urdu-speaking Muslims in what became the provinces of East and West Pakistan, share the idea of Jinnah's Pakistan? And do they share it now? While there is so much focus today on terrorism and extremism as an existential threat to the country, there is less focus on what has gone wrong with the idea of Pakistan in the provinces. While those who migrated from British India to Pakistan agreed/agree with the idea, not many leaders today agree with Jinnah's project on what Pakistan ought to be.

Today's political leaders pay lip service to Jinnah's political idea of Pakistan, but think more through their ethnic identity. The PML-N, PPP, BNP and ANP have all but become Punjabi, Sindhi, Baloch, and Pashtun parties. Perhaps, the only exception should be Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who tried to build Pakistan and its middle class with his "Roti and

Kapda” slogan cutting across ethnic boundaries. Other leaders have been looking at Pakistan through their provincial prisms.

Even Zulfikar did not give space to the Bengalis in East Pakistan, leading to the breakup of Jinnah’s Pakistan. While India and Indira Gandhi took the blame (or the credit) for breaking Pakistan, the responsibility for what had happened in 1971 should rest with the post-Jinnah second-generation leadership that looked at Pakistan through ethnic prism, as against Jinnah’s religious identity. Ironically, it is the religious political parties in Pakistan today (that opposed the idea then), that look at the country beyond the ethnic and provincial identity. Though the religious parties have street power on any given day, they always lacked the political support to form the government at the national level. They could do it in KP (then the North Western Frontier Province) and Balochistan, that too thanks to Musharraf’s machinations in 2002.

The leaders of the mainstream parties today not look at national politics through the provincial prism, but worse, they also look through the class prism. In the process, building a Pakistan for an elite class. This should be one of the primary reasons for the exodus of the middle and lower classes to the Gulf and Europe. This should also be one of the reasons for the lower classes to look at religious political parties, and now the extremist ones.

**Political leadership vis-à-vis the Deep State**

While the “Deep State” is responsible and has been blamed for political engineering at the national and

provincial levels, the failure of political parties has been overlooked. The Establishment has been an extra-constitutional political factor in Pakistan. Its intervention during the recent years - the Imran project before 2018 elections at the national level was a case in point. At the provincial levels, the Deep State played a role in the breakup of MQM in Karachi, and the making of the Balochistan Awami Party in Quetta (to which the caretaker prime minister belonged to before resigning from it on Sunday).

Despite what the Army Chiefs have been telling in public, including the last one, on the political role of the Establishment, its action has been otherwise. A recent case in point is what has happened to Imran Khan and his party. The exodus of the leaders from the PTI would not have happened without the Establishment’s intervention.

The Establishment was and remains a factor in what had gone wrong with the political leadership. But the latter must take the blame for ceding that space. The political leadership also has been ceding the space to the Establishment. What Imran did before the 2018 elections, Shehbaz and Zardari did after it – working with the Establishment to overthrow the other. The political parties are yet to accommodate each other at the national level and integrate all provinces in the political decision-making. Until this happens, as *The News* has commented in its editorial, “history has continued to repeat itself in Pakistan over and over and over again” and will also continue to repeat.



PAKISTAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

The urban Rural Distribution of Population is as under:

ADMN UNIT	RURAL POPULATION %			URBAN POPULATION %		
	1998	2017	2023	1998	2017	2023
PAKISTAN	67.5	63.56	61.18	32.5	36.44	38.82
KP	83.1	83.45	84.99	16.9	16.55	15.01
PUNJAB	68.7	63.14	59.30	31.3	36.86	40.70
SINDH	51.1	48.11	46.27	48.9	51.89	53.73
BALUCHISTAN	76.7	72.38	69.04	23.3	27.62	30.96
ISLAMABAD	34.4	49.63	53.10	65.6	50.37	46.90

## PR SHORT NOTES

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### On delimitation: Issues and challenges for Pakistan

By Genesy Balasingam

The recent dissolution of the National Assembly and the constitutional requirement entailing delimitation of constituencies has led to speculation about whether elections would be held at all in the foreseeable future.

The fresh delimitation process has stirred various controversies in the nation. The two main coalition partners of PM Shehbaz Sharif - PPP and MQM hold opposite views on the enumeration. The PPP has on multiple occasions advocated that polls should be held based on the 2017 census, reiterating that any delay in polls will not be accepted while MQM-P has stressed that elections on the previous enumeration would not be acceptable.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf members have criticised the new delimitation of constituencies and blamed the outgoing government for giving extraordinary powers to the caretaker government beyond their usual remit of conducting polls therefore increasing the chances of unconstitutional functioning in various constituencies. Critics question whether the government purposely delayed signing off on the findings until the conclusion of the assembly's term to purchase more time for an economic rebound. If elections are held in the coming months, there is a strong likelihood that parties would not receive votes, resulting in increased political instability in the region amid high inflation and diminishing foreign reserves. More time would aid them in gaining votes in the upcoming general elections.

Digital census is triggering resentment in few as it might possibly end up on shelves and the graveyard of cyber data. Population is the sole criterion for the horizontal distribution of finances. Every year, Pakistan adds between four and five million people to its population. Despite protracted periods of sluggish economic growth and many natural calamities, steady population increase has overshadowed little economic achievements.

Members of the Balochistan Assembly are concerned about the formation of divisions and demonstrations between communities and tribes as a result of the delimitation of national and provincial assembly constituencies in quest of accurate representation and resource allocation among them. One of the most serious issues is the seeming indifference or rejection of minorities, which has an impact on the allocation and access to

fair representation, power, assets, and basic rights.

The new delimitation is beyond political agendas for the people of Pakistan during political and economic uncertainty. Political parties have used this technique to acquire momentum and influence in the next elections. The dilemma is whether entities will facilitate a fair census or continue to pursue their existing political goals. (Iftikhar A. Khan, "Delimitation to have little impact on NA seats," Dawn, 11 August 2023)

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### Fall in Remittances

By Shamini Velayutham

The State Bank of Pakistan reported that worker remittances decreased as the new fiscal year began. This is even though more Pakistani employees have left the country. According to analysts, this can be attributed to several factors, including political and economic unpredictability. Major countries such as Saudi Arabia, UK, USA, and UAE have given low rates of remittances for the month of July. The following are the detailed statistical data as per the remittance rate of the country.

In May 2023, Saudi Arabian expatriates from Pakistan sent the single-largest sum, totaling USD 524 million. From USD 434.3 million in May 2022 to USD 335.8 million in May 2023, United Arab Emirates inflows experienced a dramatic reduction of 23 per cent. The United Kingdom experienced a decrease of 14 per cent from USD 358.5 million in May 2022, with remittances totaling USD 306.5 million for the month. Additionally, USD 257.2 million was sent in May 2023 in remittances from Pakistanis living abroad in the US.

Remittance inflows during July were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia worth USD 486.7 million, United Arab Emirates worth USD 315.1 million, the United Kingdom worth USD 305.7 million, and the United States of America worth USD 238.1 million. Due to loan repayments, the SBP's foreign exchange reserves decreased from USD 110 million to USD 8.04 billion during the end of the week on 04 August.

### References

(Shahid Iqbal "Fiscal year opens with fall in remittances" *Dawn*, 10 August 2023; "Workers' remittances drop 19pc to USD 2bn in July" *The International News*, 10 August 2023; Press Release of Workers' Remittances, *State Bank of Pakistan*, 10 August 2023)

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## National Assembly is dissolved. What next for Pakistan?

By Genesy Balasingam

Accepting the recommendation from the Prime Minister, the President of Pakistan, Arif Alvi dissolved the National Assembly three days before its tenure expired.

The government has not finalised the caretaker prime minister who would lead the interim set-up till the general elections. Sharif is set to meet the opposition leader today and evolve a consensus on the name of the interim prime minister, according to the constitution (Articles 224 and 224A). There have been numerous names proposed, but the PDM could not reach a consensus so far.

In case of no agreement on any name within three days, the matter would be referred to a parliamentary committee, failing which the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will have two days to choose. Pakistan will have a maximum of eight days before the new caretaker prime minister takes office. However, till the appointment of the caretaker prime minister, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as well as provincial chief ministers, will continue in office.

Second, conducting the elections and finalising the date. One of the major challenges in the conduct of elections within 90 days from the dissolution of the national assembly is the mandatory new delimitations. The ECP would require more than four months to carry out a fresh delimitation exercise considering the revision of electoral rolls, thereby furthering the election date.

Third, the PDM's legacy question. On 10 August, PM Shebaz in his farewell speech considered it as the most difficult time in his 38-year political career with 16 months of political turmoil, economic meltdown, and alarming ceding of parliamentary space. PDM's political journey received an amalgam of both good and bad and confused criticisms. As he took the floor of the House to deliver a fiery speech, he was met with different accusations of the outgoing government's performance as well as the unjust imposition of taxes on the people. In response, the Prime Minister was reflective and thankful to everyone who helped and directed his government.

### Endnote: PDM's legacy as "mixed" says an editorial by *The News International*

On 10 August, *The News International* in an editorial provided an analysis of the Pakistan Democratic Movement's term of rule under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, outlining the activities that it would be remembered for. The best way to

sum it up is "a mix of some good, some bad, a lot confused." Its major achievements include securing the IMF deal, strengthening external relations through Bilawal Bhutto, progressing on CPEC, and tackling large floods. However, these are balanced out by a considerable number of failures, including concerns over excessive media censorship paired with controversial cyber laws, "economic mismanagement" brought on by internal disagreements, and "bulldozed legislation in parliament," which showcased how politics was still conducted traditionally. In all, the PDM had a "mixed" impact on the country.

### References

("PDM legacy," *The News International*, 10 August 2023;

"Election odyssey begins as president dissolves NA," *The Express Tribune*, 10 August 2023;

"PM terms 16-month tenure 'most difficult test'," *Dawn*, 10 August 2023;

Syed Irfan Raza, "Sun sets on the Shehbaz regime," *Dawn*, 10 August 2023;

Zebunnisa Burki, Explainer: "PM Shehbaz, CMs continue till caretaker setup appointed," *The News International*, 10 August 2023)

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## Pakistan's National Assembly: President to dissolve

By Genesy Balasingam

On 09 August, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is all set to prematurely cut short the national assembly term three days before its five-year term's culmination and to pass the baton to the caretaker set up to take up the reins at the stroke of midnight. The Prime Minister will be chairing a final federal cabinet meeting before formally sending the recommendation for the dissolution of the 15th National Assembly to President Arif Alvi. The President has been offered a stipulated 48 hours to comply with the recommendation failing to which the legislature will automatically stand dissolved. According to sources, three names have been shortlisted after three meetings with the opposition leaders but none has been finalised, one of which includes an economist. The shortlisting of an economist for the post of interim caretaker prime minister accents the country's determination to refine its economy and gives an edge to PML-N in the narrative of stabilising its economy.

Prime Minister Sharif has informed the nation that if his party is allowed to return to power in the forthcoming general elections, he will demonstrate his dedication to ridding the country of poverty and loans to make it self-sufficient. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has announced a three-month tentative delay of the constitutional polls and has

also said that delimitations of constituencies after the notification of the 2023 census can cause further delay.

In a press meet, Prime Minister Sharif in the matter concerning Toshakhana announced to sell all the gifts through an open auction and the cash flow generated would be spent on the education of poor children and familial support. He also reiterated his government's efforts to establish relations with countries which helped in the country's economic crisis.

### References

(Rizwan Ghilzai, "Tumultuous NA term ends today." *The Express Tribune*, 08 August 2023; Syed Irfan Raza, "Govt all set to bow out after premier sends advice for dissolution." *Dawn*, 08 August 2023; Asim Yasin & Muhammad Anis, "Shehbaz to write to Alvi today to dissolve NA." *The News International*, 09 August 2023)

## Election Commission disqualifies Imran Khan for the next five years: What next

By Dhriti Mukherjee

On 09 August, new developments in the arrest of Imran Khan sparked questions about the lack of democratic nature in the political process.

The most notable development is his disqualification for the next five years by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) under Article 63(1)(h) of the Constitution, and Section 232 of the Elections Act 2017. The ECP cited his conviction in the Toshakhana case, and stated: "Mr Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi is disqualified for five years and is also de-notified as a returned candidate from constituency NA-45 Kurram-I."

To contest his conviction, Khan's legal team appealed to the Islamabad High Court (IHC), attempting to have the judgment declared as "illegal" and based on "hyper-technical grounds" that were "misreading." His counsel, Gohar Khan, expressed confidence that due to the short sentence, he could be granted bail within weeks. Additionally, the IHC's policy guidelines, aiming to expedite appeals against convictions, may contribute to an accelerated legal process.

While PTI denounced the disqualification and announced its intention to challenge it in the Supreme Court, legal minds within Pakistan have raised concerns about due process in the

Toshakhana case. Critics argue that the haste in proceedings has undermined democratic principles, which is being fueled by PTI's claims that the verdict was "tainted with bias." Moreover, the disqualification of the PTI chairman and the ongoing legal battle has fuelled debates about the viability of upcoming elections and the possibility of a "minus-one" scenario.

The upcoming hearing in the IHC, led by Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, will shed light on the potential trajectory of Imran Khan's legal battle. A source from the judiciary told *The News International* that while Khan may receive bail, the Toshakhana case would take time. Fears of delays are low since the IHC policy directive states that criminal cases must be concluded within 90 days of the submission of the complete report.

### References

(Awais Yousafzai, "IHC to hear Imran's plea against Toshakhana verdict." *The News International*, 09 August 2023; Ansar Abbasi, "IK's case and IHC policy on criminal cases." *The News International*, 09 August 2023; Mumtaz Alvi, Shakeel Anjum, "Toshakhana case: ECP disqualifies Imran for 5 years after conviction," *The News International*, 09 August 2023; Malik Asad, "Imran barred from politics for five years after conviction." *Dawn*, 09 August 2023)

### Endnote

Legal challenge over Toshakhana case verdict  
On 08 August, a petition was filed by Imran Khan's lawyers in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) against the trial court's verdict in the Toshakhana (gift repository) case. As per the verdict, while filing Form-B for 2018-19, Khan committed "corrupt practices" as he failed to make truthful declarations regarding his assets, citing only "four goats" while not disclosing the sale and purchase of expensive gifts from Toshakhana. Khan's lawyers contend that the trial court's decision is contrary to the law and are seeking the annulment of the verdict. The former premier has requested the IHC to suspend the sentence and release him pending the central appeal's outcome. While the order stated that "his dishonesty has been established beyond doubt," legal experts are concerned about the way the court is handling the trial. ("PTI chief challenges Toshakhana verdict in IHC." *The Express Tribune*, 08 August 2023)

## PR DAILY BRIEFS

## POLITICS



Source: Dawn

### Pakistan celebrates its 77th Independence Day

On 14 August, despite all obstacles, Pakistan joyfully celebrated its 77th Independence Day. Its people were giddy with enthusiasm and anxious to honor the valiant efforts of our ancestors and national heroes in their fight for a distinct homeland. Delegations from various parties extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation and reaffirmed their commitment to fight for Pakistan's advancement to emphasize the significance of this day. The day began with special prayers for Pakistan, as mosques all throughout the nation echoed with early morning prayers for prosperity, unity, peace and appropriate prayers considering the political and economic unrest the nation is currently experiencing.

Various public and private sector departments are prepared to host a variety of special events and activities, including seminars, discussions, photographic exhibitions, artistic displays of paintings and poetry, national song renditions, and lively debate competitions as the nation observes the day with a national holiday. Political figures such as President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interim Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) President Asif Ali Zardari, and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari sent their sincere greetings to the country. ("Smiling against storms: Pakistan marks 77th Independence Day with traditional fervour" *The News International*, 12 August 2023)

### Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar becomes the eighth interim prime minister; BNP is unhappy

On 14 August, Pakistan's eighth caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar took the oath of office on Monday. He will lead the nation through an upcoming election. President Arif Alvi swore in Kakar, a former senator and the head of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), in front of the former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and members of his cabinet. Caretaker Prime Minister

Kakar was given a guard of honor at the PM Office following the swearing-in ceremony. Both previous government and opposition politicians applauded the choice and expressed confidence that the country would hold free and fair elections under the interim prime minister.

In the midst of objections from allies he took office in as caretaker prime minister. As the leader of a nation plagued by political and economic unrest for months, Kakar's first responsibility is to appoint a cabinet to govern the nation as it enters a lengthy election season. The appointment of Anwaarul Haq Kakar has also widened the chasm between the PML-N and BNP-M. In his letter, Mengal expressed disapproval of the government's choice of Kakar as interim the prime minister without discussing with allies. ("Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar sworn in as 8th interim prime minister" *The News International*, 14 August 2023; Syed Irfan Raza "Anwaarul Haq Kakar sworn in as caretaker prime minister amid allies' grumblings" *Dawn*, 14 August 2023)

### Parvez Elahi detailed once more while he was leaving the prison

On 14 August, after being released from the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) team immediately re-arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Parvez Elahi and conveyed him to Lahore on suspicion of soliciting bribes for contracts for growth endeavours. Elahi was initially held on June 1 in connection with his alleged involvement in a Rs70 million fraud case involving the fraudulent use of development funds in the Gujrat district. According to the court ruling, Elahi's arrest warrant was issued on August 11 in relation to the investigation. Elahi's attorney, on the other hand, has criticized his most recent detention as politically motivated and said that they will contest it at the Lahore High Court (LHC). ("Elahi rearrested after Adiala Jail release" *The Express Tribune*, 14 August 2023)

### 76 years of Pakistan: Strayed from Jinnah's ideal and paid the price, say Editorials in the News and the Express Tribune

On 14 August, on Pakistan's 76<sup>th</sup> year of independence, two editorials reflected on its journey through a complex path. The editorials highlight how Pakistan is yet to realise the ideals on which it was founded, despite having so much untapped potential. Although it undoubtedly has had to and continues to combat an array of internal and external challenges, it remains grounded in the

values instilled by its founding fathers. The editorials discuss how Pakistan had reached a point where it is imperative for it to eliminate sustained cycles of turmoil, and instead take actions and decisions that will help it move towards progress, marked by pluralism and positivity. (“The idea of Pakistan,” *The News International*, 14 August 2023; “Celebrating freedom!” *The Express Tribune*, 14 August 2023)

“There is no power on earth which can undo Pakistan,” says Pakistan’s Army Chief. On 14 August, while addressing the Azadi Parade, the Chief of Army Staff, Gen Asim Munir, brought forth instances of history, citing the “ideology of the Two Nation Theory” which played a role in Pakistan’s creation. Further, he acknowledged how, amid the challenges Pakistan faced, it continues to harbour a significant number of resources, an enthusiastic youth, and the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan who continue to battle “the savages of terrorism and proxies.” Gen Munir went on to condemn the international community’s lack of action on India’s actions in Kashmir, stating “we gained freedom after a great struggle and we know how to defend it.” (“Pakistan knows how to defend its freedom: COAS,” *Dawn*, 14 August 2023)

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### **The caretaker prime minister: Kakar quits the Senate and his party; BNP-Mengal is upset with his selection**

On 14 August, the nominated Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar Sunday tweeted his membership withdrawal from the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and Senate. Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) Chairman Akhtar Mengal has expressed his displeasure with the appointment of Senator Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar as the interim prime minister, claiming that this decision had created “more distance” between his party and PMLN. Mengal noted that this action will foster distrust, and several parties have expressed reservations about the most recent census. Many people are critical of Mengal’s objection to the caretaker prime minister because Kakar was his political competitor. (Ali Raza, “Kakar quits as BAP member, senator,” *The News International*, 14 August 2023)

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### **Return of Nawaz Sharif is not certain**

On 14 August, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif’s anticipated homecoming made the rounds again, but there has been no official declaration from Nawaz himself. PM Shahbaz Sharif has confirmed that no date for Nawaz’s return has been set, and his return is contingent on the announcement of an election date. Many senior PML-N figures have

stated that the elder Sharif’s homecoming is crucial before the country goes to the polls because his presence will bolster the party and revitalise workers. (Atika Rehman, “Uncertainty still surrounds Nawaz’s return,” *Dawn*, 14 August 2023)

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### **On Legislature vs Judiciary, “power to legislation exclusively and only rests with the Parliament,” says Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar**

On 13 August, leaders from multiple parties in the Pakistani Senate united in their criticism of a recent Supreme Court ruling that overturned the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023, which was aimed at broadening the scope of the court’s review jurisdiction. They stated that as per the constitution, the power to legislate belonged exclusively to the parliament, and any involvement by the Supreme Court would be “interference in the ambit of the parliament.” They argue that the ruling infringes on the independence of the parliament and challenges the principle of separation of powers. This backlash reflects the ongoing tensions between different branches of the government in Pakistan. (Ikram Junaidi, “Senators move to ‘reclaim space’ in renewed tussle with judiciary,” *Dawn*, 14 August 2023; Mumtaz Alvi, “Senators of majority parties say: Power to legislate exclusive right of parliament,” *The News International*, 14 August 2023)

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### **"Contempt of Parliament," says the PML-N on the Supreme Court's verdict on Nawaz Sharif**

On 12 August, legal professionals who reviewed the SC Review Act judgement claimed that while the verdict correctly distinguishes between a review and an appeal, it disregards the deficiencies the law was intended to solve. The significance of this decision on Nawaz Sharif’s return to active politics has been the subject of much discussion. According to Jaferii, “unless the incoming chief justice makes the adequate changes in the now venerated Supreme Court Rules 1980 and permits an appeal from the farce of a decision, he was subject to.” He also claims that the Election Amendment Act of 2023 does not give Nawaz a reprieve because his disqualification and rendered after the court interpreted a constitutional provision to hold a lifetime ban, Nawaz continues to be permanently disqualified up until that clause stays in place or the ruling is overturned.

However, according to Hassan Abdullah Niazi, a high court counsel and former member of the LUMS faculty, Nawaz’s fate will ultimately depend on “the revisions to the Election Act and how the

Supreme Court interprets them and he also apprised the SC 1980 rules cannot be changed by ordinary legislation is dubious and without constitutional support. (Zebunnisa Burki [“News Analysis: Is Nawaz out of options after SC tour de force?”](#) *The News International*, 12 August 2023)

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### **Caretaker PM: The differences continue**

On 11 August, President of Pakistan wrote to PM to propose a suitable person for appointment as the caretaker prime minister not later than August 12. Citing Article 224(1A) of the Constitution the letter by President reminded that the PM and the opposition leader were required to propose the name of a person for appointment as caretaker prime minister within three days of the dissolution of National Assembly. PM expressed his displeasure with media over why the president was in a hurry and insinuated that he might not have read the Constitution.

Meanwhile, Dawn reported that Mr. Raja Riaz was getting dictation from another power corridor and insisting on the name of Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, sources claimed. The news report mentioned few possible contenders for caretaker premier which were Jilal Abbas Jilani, former finance ministers Dr Hafeez Sheikh and Ishaq Dar, former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former principal secretary Fawad Hassan Fawad, former justice Tassaduq Jilani, Abdullah Hussain Haroon, Pir Pagaro, and Makhdoom Mehmood Ahmed. (Syed Irfan Raza, [“President and premier agree to disagree on caretaker PM,”](#) *Dawn*, 12 August 2023; [“Sadiq Sanjrani among Raja Riaz’s names for interim PM: Ahsan Iqbal,”](#) *The News International*, 12 August 2023; [“President Arif Alvi wants name of caretaker PM finalised by 12<sup>th</sup>,”](#) *The News International*, 12 August 2023)

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### **Judiciary strikes down Supreme Court (Review of Judgements and Orders) Act 2023**

On 11 August, a three-member bench of the SC ruled the recently passed act- Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 as “unconstitutional”. The judgment cited Article 184(3) of the constitution, which grants the SC original jurisdiction in its judgement and review judgements. Statement by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial quoted in the judgment: “This [law] appears to be an attempt to remodel the Constitutional scheme relating to judicature and potentially opening the door for diminishing, undermining and eroding the power and jurisdiction of the apex court.”(Nasir Iqbal, [“Ordinary bill cannot alter court’s review power: SC,”](#) *Dawn*, 12 August 2023, Hasnaat Malik,

[“Apex court strikes down review of judgments act,”](#) *The Express Tribune*, 12 August 2023, Editorial, [“SC’s review verdict,”](#) *The News International*, 12 August 2023)

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### **Imran Khan’s bail dismissed**

On 11 August, an anti-terrorism court dismissed bail plea of Imran Khan’s counsel to appear in the hearing other ongoing cases against him. The counsel of Khan, Barrister Salman Safdar had mentioned the case including the Lahore Corps Commander’s House attack and other seven cases registered over his alleged involvement in the May 9 riots. In a separate judgment by Islamabad High Court, chief justice reserved his verdict on Mr Khan’s request to transfer him to Adiala jail from Attock, where his lawyers claim he is “facing serious threats to life”. In a separate meeting of PTI core committee denounced actions against the party’s chairman calling them “political victimisation.” Kalbe Ali, Wajih Ahmad Sheikh [“Imran refused bail, ruling reserved on transfer plea,”](#) *Dawn*, 12 August 2023, [Imran Khan’s interim bail dismissed in seven cases,”](#) *The News International*, 12 August 2023)

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### **No decision on caretaker PM yet**

On 10 August, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Leader of the Opposition Raja Riaz engaged in deliberations to determine the name of the caretaker prime minister, but their meeting concluded without consensus. As mandated by the Constitution, PM Shehbaz invited the opposition leader to participate in the consultation process to finalize the caretaker prime minister's name after President Dr Arif Alvi dissolved the National Assembly on the advice of the prime minister. Raja Riaz expressed, "We've yet to reach a consensus," adding that further discussions would take place on Friday. Despite the lack of agreement, Raja Riaz remained optimistic about settling on a candidate among the six names exchanged for the interim premier's role in subsequent meetings.

The discussion unfolded amidst speculations about potential candidates for the caretaker premier position. Notably, the names of Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, Jilal Abbas Jilani, former finance ministers Dr Hafeez Sheikh and Ishaq Dar, former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, ex-principal secretary Fawad Hassan Fawad, and others have been considered. As the prime minister and the opposition leader continue discussions, the possibility of a candidate emerging from their exchange of nominees remains to be seen. If no agreement is reached within three days of the assembly's dissolution, Article 224-A of the Constitution stipulates that a committee would be

formed, composed of representatives from both the treasury and the opposition, to finalize the selection of the caretaker prime minister. ([“Race for caretaker PM wide open,”](#) *The Express Tribune*, 10 August 2023; Syed Irfan Raza, [“Premier, opposition leader keep ‘interim card’ close to chest,”](#) *Dawn*, 11 August 2023; Muhammad Anis and Mumtaz Alvi, [“First round of talks: Consensus eludes Shehbaz Sharif, Raja Riaz over interim PM name,”](#) *The News International*, 11 August 2023)

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### **“Every government requires backing from key sectors, including the military,” says Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif**

On 10 August, during an interview with *Geo News* Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif criticized former Prime Minister Imran Khan for running a hybrid regime, admitting that his government could not function without military support. He emphasized that Khan's government also leaned on military backing and other key sectors, saying that “his government was a blend of various components, despite his accusations against others for the same.” Additionally, he highlighted his government's achievements, stating that his government saved Pakistan's economy, dealt with “huge flood,” and built “new friendships.” Towards the end, he confirmed Nawaz Sharif's return next month to lead the election campaign for PML-N. ([“Could not run government without military's support, says PM,”](#) *Dawn*, 11 August 2023)

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### **The News International editorial describes PDM's performance “mixed”**

On 10 August, *The News International* in an editorial provided a critical analysis of the Pakistan Democratic Movement's term of rule under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, outlining its actions and activities that they would be remembered for. The best way to sum it up is “a mix of some good, some bad, a lot confused.” Its major achievements include securing the IMF deal, strengthening external relations through Bilawal Bhutto, progressing on CPEC, and tackling large floods. However, these are balanced out by a considerable number of failures, including concerns over excessive media censorship paired with controversial cyber laws, and “bulldozed legislation in parliament,” which showcased how politics was still conducted traditionally. In all, the PDM had a “mixed” impact on the country. ([“PDM legacy,”](#) *The News International*, 10 August 2023)

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### **On Imran's arrest: Status of bail petitions**

On 10 August, former Prime Minister Imran Khan's chances of early release seemed to diminish as an

accountability court dismissed his pre-arrest bail petitions in the Rs190 million Al-Qadir Trust and the Toshakhana cases. Khan faces accusations from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) related to concealing facts and corrupt practices. Despite Khan's legal team's optimism for his release, the Islamabad High Court's rejection of his petition lessened the possibility. Given NAB's issued warrants, Khan would be arrested upon discharge from jail. An accountability judge humorously noted NAB's air-conditioned lock-up as better than the Attock jail's conditions. Khan's legal representative argued for extending his interim bail, but the court deemed it a “time-consuming process” and dismissed his pre-arrest bail petitions in both the cases. (Malik Asad, [“Dismissal of bail petitions dims Imran's chances of freedom,”](#) *Dawn*, 11 August 2023; [“Bushra meets Imran in jail,”](#) *The News International*, 11 August 2023)

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### **IHC queries reasons behind Imran Khan's jail transfer**

On 09 August, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) instructed authorities to clarify why former Prime Minister Imran Khan was sent to Attock Jail instead of Adiala Jail, as directed by the sessions court. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq asked the assistant advocate general to identify the authority responsible for prisoner transfers and submit a report by August 11. As per the PTI's chief counsel, Khan was sent to Attock because it did not have any A-class facilities, and that he was being held in a “cell” in “solitary confinement.” After hearing the case in court, Justice Farooq stated that only after listening to the Election Commissions' points would another hearing on the case be held. (Asif Yousafzai & Ag App, [“Who ordered sending Imran to Attock jail, asks IHC CJ,”](#) *The News International*, 10 August 2023)

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### **Elections may be delayed “on technical grounds,” says Defence Minister Khawaja Asif**

On 09 August, amidst speculation over when the elections would be conducted, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif confirmed on separate platforms that a delay in the election was quite possible. As per the constitution, elections must be held within 90 days after the dissolution of the National Assembly on 9 August. However, Asif stated that “the election commission has the power to delay it.” Many believe that the caretaker government would have “unconventional significance” as it would stay in power for a longer period. Sanaullah said that it has been tasked with carrying out the delimitation as per the new Digital Census 2023, after which

“God-willing, elections will be held.” Nonetheless, the duration of the delay is uncertain, with Sanaullah confirming that they would not take place in 2023. (“[Ministers admit polls being delayed beyond 2023](#),” *Dawn*, 09 August 2023)

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### **PPP may face a challenge in balancing census approval and election timing, says a Dawn report**

On 09 July, post remarks by federal ministers which hinted at election delay, the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) faces a political dilemma. This is in the wake of the decision of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to approve the 2023 digital census, impacting election timing. Previously advocating for timely elections as they then felt that [there was no reason for delay](#), the PPP now grapples with the practical implications of fresh constituency delimitation. Despite this challenge, PPP lawmakers remain hopeful that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) can navigate the complexities and complete delimitation within the required timeframe. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari announced the initiation of the election campaign in the coming days, stating: “PPP workers are always ready for the elections.” (Rizwan Shehzad, “[PPP’s elections dilemma](#),” *The Express Tribune*, 09 August 2023)

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### **Concerns over hurried legislative actions**

On 08 August, Dawn in its editorial questioned the speed over the new legislations. The lawmakers hurriedly passed bills, including an amendment to the Official Secrets Act 1923. The amendment bill which was introduced discreetly, seeks to give immunity and legal backing to intelligence agencies for previously denounced practices that violate human rights. Critics worry that insufficient deliberation and lack of public scrutiny could lead to problematic consequences. Parliament’s rushed actions risk undermining transparency and accountability, highlighting concerns of eroding citizens’ rights. (“[What’s the hurry?](#)” *Dawn*, 8 August 2023)

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### **“[Asif] Zardari sahib and Mian [Nawaz Sharif] sahib should take decisions which would make politics easier for me and Maryam Sharif, instead of making it difficult,” says Bhutto**

On 07 August, the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) Chairman Bhutto Zardari, called for a change in the political environment while addressing the National Assembly. He underlined the need for a shift from animosity, hatred, and division, to one that “inspires hope and empowers the younger

generation to lead the country.” Seeing how the youth made up 65 per cent of the population, Zardari accentuated the importance of aligning with the youth’s “aspirations” and democratic principles, instead of following “traditional politics” which involved settling personal scores. Citing PPP’s constitutional approach during opposition and the constitutional no-confidence success against Imran Khan, he highlighted these as precedents for future governance. (Amir Wasim, “[Bilawal faults his elders for turning politics into minefield](#),” *Dawn*, 8 August 2023) (“[Govt couldn’t keep institutions in their ambit: Bilawal](#),” *The News International*, 8 August 2023.

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### **Update on Imran Khan arrest: Petition filed to move to a better jail**

On 07 August, Imran Khan filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court to be moved to Adiala jail which has A-class facilities, citing “distressing conditions” in his current cell. His lawyer stated that he was facing “distressing conditions” in a “dark, small, C-Class, chakki wala room.” The petition highlights a perceived discriminatory transfer and the denial of visits by lawyers and family. Meanwhile in USA, the US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller stated that the arrest was an “internal matter for Pakistan,” and while they “urge Pakistani authorities to act consistent with their constitution and laws,” Khan was undeniably “charged with very serious crimes that severely harmed the national security of the United States.” It was made clear that the case was not an “unfounded” one, and that US would not comment on it. (Malik Asad, “[Imran taken to Attock to deny rightful facility: PTI](#),” *Dawn*, 8 August 2023) (Anwar Iqbal, “[Imran’s cases don’t warrant comment, says US State Dept](#),” *Dawn*, 8 August 2023)

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## **SECURITY**



Source: Outlook India

### **Two assailants killed in Balochistan**

On 14 August, two assailants were killed by Balochistan security personnel who prevented an attempt on the military convoy that was accompanying the Chinese employees. An affiliate of the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army (BLA),

the Majid Brigade, took credit for the assault. The Gwadar terrorist attack was vehemently denounced by the Chinese embassy in Pakistan. It claimed in a statement that on 13 August, an attack took place on a convoy carrying Chinese nationals close to the port of Gwadar. A safety alert was issued by the general consulate of China in Karachi. "Due to the dire security situation, the consulate urges people to maintain high vigilance and strictly control large-scale gathering activities." The former President of Pakistan and leader of the Pakistan People's Party Asif Ali Zardari, in parliament, and the former foreign minister and leader of the party, both emphatically condemned the attack on the military convoy at Gwadar. ("Attack on Chinese convoy foiled in Gwadar," *The News International*, 14 August 2023; Behram Baloch and Saleem Shahid, "Two terrorists killed during attack on army convoy in Gwadar," *Dawn*, 14 August 2023)

### **Solder killed in a terrorist attack in Bajaur district**

On 14 August, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), in response to intelligence information indicating the presence of terrorists in tehsil Nawagai, security forces carried out an operation. The militants started firing as the troops drew near the alleged location. Four terrorists were shot dead by the security personnel when they reacted quickly. One terrorist was arrested in the Bajaur operation. The terrorist's possessions included weapons, ammo, and explosives, as well as a suicide vest. The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an illegal organization, has acknowledged the conflict and asserted that the fatalities were TTP members. (Anwarullah Khan, "Four terrorists killed in Bajaur operation: ISPR," *Dawn*, 14 August 2023)

## **ECONOMY**



Source: Dawn

### **Inflation hits again, says Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) in its weekly report**

On 12 August, in a report published by PBS, it was revealed that the price of 51 important commodities, including significant food items, continued to rise week over week, rising by 0.69 per cent in the examined week over the prior one.

Due to this, consumers are being forced to make the difficult decision of sacrificing on both the quantity and quality of necessities, notably big-ticket food, and kitchen products, as a result of the rising inflation that is pressurizing on their spending power. when compared to the same week last year, Pakistan's inflation rate, as determined by the weekly Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), soared to a five-week high of 30.82 per cent. ("Inflation hits five-week high" *The Express Tribune*, 12 August 2023)

### **Decline in Pakistan's regional exports**

On 11 August, the State Bank of Pakistan report showcased a dip of 21.1 per cent in Pakistan's exports as well as imports to nine regional countries. This dip is influenced by a drop in shipments to China. Import containers were awaiting approval as part of government policy to reduce the trade imbalance despite rapidly declining foreign exchange reserves, and the opening of letters of credit for consumer products was the State Bank of Pakistan's least priority in FY23. Pakistan's bulk of the regional exports share, which accounts for 60 per cent, is with China. Exports with China plunged 12 percent and imports declined by 44.1 per cent. Exports with Pakistan's official channel exports to Iran remained at PKR 0.028 million in FY23, compared to nil shipments the previous year. Most of the trade with Tehran is conducted through informal routes and barter trading. Most of the trading countries with Pakistan witnessed an export decline from the previous year except for Maldives with a 23.5 percent surge. (Mubarak Zeb Khan, "Regional exports plunge 21pc," *Dawn*, 11 August 2023)

### **Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline deal in trouble**

On 10 August, The PDM government in the national assembly impugned that the gas pipeline was a predetermination project. Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik claimed at the assembly that Pakistan has inevitably ceased the project until Iran is out of the US's economic sanctions. Although the pipeline project is considered ineffective and Iran has subsequently fallen under sanctions since 1979, its capricious stance on the scheme will have a resultant effect on the bilateral ties between the countries. ("Pipeline in doldrums," *Dawn*, 10 August 2023)

### **Dissolving government increases allowances as parting gifts for government employees**

On 09 August, the dissolving government notified a flat 50 per cent increase in the daily travelling and mileage allowances of all government employees on official duty effective from July 1. Based on a

notification by the Ministry of Finance the allowances within the country would now be allowed at a maximum special rate ranging from PKR 1,200 per day for Grades 1 to 4 to PKR 7,200 per day for employees in Grade 22. Transportation costs along with Air travel have also been increased to PKR 7.5 per kilometer for cars and PKR 3.75 for motorcycles. Government employees of up to BPS 1-19 may stay in government guest houses, public sector corporations, rest houses, motels, and hotels (except for five-star ones). Government servants posted abroad in diplomatic missions depending on various regions and countries are also at the receiving end of such price hikes. (Khaleeq Kiani, [“Govt gives employees ‘parting gift’ with 50pc allowance hike.” Dawn, 09 August 2023](#))

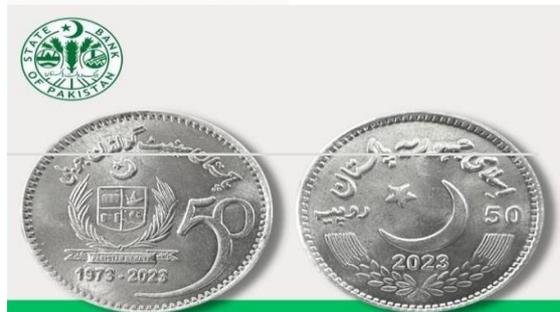
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### **Government's short sightedness blamed for unrelenting inflation- says Dawn report**

On 09 August, Dawn reported that the massive increase in prices of almost everything that is sold on the market is the major black mark in the 16 months of the coalition government’s rule. Whopping price hikes on food, transport, power, and gas utility have left an unbearable burden on consumers. Although the rupee’s free fall against the dollar escalates the existing inflation, the government caving into all the demands of the International Monetary Fund to secure loan instalments has added burden on the citizens. CEO of Topline Securities, Mohammad Sohail sighted that securing the IMF deal along with other inflows would ease pressure on the economy in the short term but not for the long-term stability of the economy. Rauf Ibrahim, the chairman of the Karachi Wholesale Grocers Association blamed the government’s short-sightedness for the increase in prices of edible commodities. (Aamir Shafaat Khan, [“Coalition govt’s tenure marked by unrelenting inflation.” Dawn, 09 August 2023](#))

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### **CHINA AND CPEC**



Source: The Express Tribune

### **Commemorative coin launched by SBP**

On 11 August, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a special coin worth Rs. 100 will be released through the exchange counters of SBP

Banking Services. It is made of Cupro-Nickel metal, which is comprised of 75 per cent copper and 25 per cent nickel. The five-pointed star on the coin is elegantly crafted. The crescent moon, star, and five stars from China's national flag are all encompassed inside the star. The coin also includes the dates "2013" and "2023" to mark the decade of CPEC's outstanding development. ([“SBP to issue Rs100 coin to mark CPEC’s 10th anniversary” The International News, 11 August 2023](#))

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### **EXTERNAL RELATIONS**



Source: The Express Tribune

### **Pakistan approves UAE's control of seaport terminals amidst initial concerns**

On 09 August, Pakistan approved a commercial agreement that entrusts the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with the management of two seaport terminals over 25 years. The cabinet which initially rejected the terms, vying for better prices, changed its mind two days later despite receiving no update. After multiple negotiations by the Price Negotiation Committee (PNC), Pakistan is set to receive significant revenue, with the country projected to gain 15 per cent of the gross revenues and around 40 per cent of the net revenues from terminal earnings. The UAE will pay an upfront amount of USD 25 million as goodwill, another USD 25 million upfront (adjustable against revenue sharing), and additional annual payments for the duration of the agreement. (Shahbaz Rana, [“Pakistan greenlights ‘below par’ UAE seaport deal.” The Express Tribune, 10 August 2023](#))

## PROVINCES



Source: Business Recorder

### **Sindh: Interim chief minister confirmed while Balochistan is in no hurry**

On 15 August, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Provincial Assembly Opposition Leader Rana Ansar decided to select retired Sindh High Court Chief Justice Maqbool Baqar as interim chief minister, a name first recommended by the Treasury, after three days of careful deliberation. The report for Justice Baqar's formal appointment was promptly forwarded to the Sindh governor. Balochistan's CM appeared to be in no hurry to reach an agreement on its caretaker CM. Dawn reported that the ECP could move through with the process of appointing the interim CM. (Imran Ayub, Saleem Shahid, "Sindh picks interim chief minister, Balochistan undecided," *Dawn*, 15 August 2023)

### **Balochistan: Terrorists responsible for military convoy attack killed by security forces**

On 15 August, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), two terrorists were killed by security forces who foiled an attack on a military convoy in Gwadar, Balochistan. A convoy transporting Chinese citizens was targeted near the Gwadar Port, and Chinese nationals in Pakistan have been warned to be cautious. This year has seen an alarming increase in terror and suicide assaults in Pakistan. China has been assisting Pakistan in dealing with its crippling economy, and as a result, the civilian and military sectors of the state are united and adamant in not allowing terrorists to worsen the region's instability. ("Gwadar attack," *The News International*, 15 August 2023)

### **Sindh: Assembly dissolved**

On 12 August, according to the legislation, Murad Ali Shah will stay in his position until a caretaker chief minister is appointed. But his cabinet is currently disbanded. The PPP administration in Sindh came to its demise on Friday when Governor Kamran Tessori approved the summary for its dissolution that had been forwarded to him by outgoing Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah. The outgoing CM and Opposition Leader Rana Ansar, a member of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, are anticipated to conduct discussions regarding the caretaker setup in the province. (Tahir Siddiqui "Governor dissolves Sindh Assembly" *Dawn*, 12 August 2023).

### **Sindh: Women on the receiving end of Tribal conflicts**

On August 11, a seminar titled 'Tribal Conflicts and Their Impact on Women' by the Women's Action Forum (WAF) was held to understand the underlying factors that contribute to tribal conflicts and their impact on women. The fact-finding mission was launched following the sad murder of Prof Ajmal Sawand by Sundarani tribesmen. Tribal battles exemplify a historical and social reality in which women suffer the burden in terms of stress, economic hardship, scholastic failure, and psychological trauma. The seminar discussed the triggers behind such disputes which are primarily caused by patriarchal ego. It also criticised the male dominated Jirgas system. Senior Superintendent of Police, Dr Farukh Raza shared the importance of sensitising the police to the issue by better equipping the police force with adequate resources. Journalist Riaz Sohail also explained the differences in portrayal of tribal disputes by mainstream and regional media and its long-lasting effects on people who were not directly or indirectly engaged. (Yousuf Katpar, "Tribal conflicts in Sindh continue to have devastating effects on women, seminar told," *The News International*, 11 August 2023)



Pakistan Reader is an academic exercise at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in the Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore, India. The objective of this alert - "Pakistan Reader - Evening Brief" is to update the readers on contemporary developments within Pakistan, on a regular basis.

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