

PAKISTAN

Issue 04 | August, 2022

A background image showing several hands of different skin tones cupped together, holding a mound of dark soil. The hands are positioned in a way that suggests care and support. The image is split into two vertical panels by a dark red vertical bar.

Country Analysis Report

20 22

Accountability Lab Pakistan is examining Pakistan's social, political, and economic development indicators to analyze the impact of policy actions and highlight challenges concerning each sector. Amid current political uncertainty and a financial crisis, the Country Report gives an overview of developments in different sectors like security, governance, and the rule of law.

The report also focuses on human rights progress, including the rights of minorities, women, and children. It examines the progress across various developmental indicators to promote citizen awareness of a socially connected, economically stable, and politically accountable Pakistan.

Political Section



The month of August marks the diamond jubilee of the creation of Pakistan – the 75th Independence Day - but the political and economic troubles are far from over. The chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insa (PTI),

Imran Khan, has taken the precedent in Pakistan's electoral history to [contest](#) from nine constituencies of the National Assembly in the upcoming by-elections.

However, the political party has found itself in a predicament over an eight-year-old foreign funding investigation. The Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) has unanimously ruled that the PTI has received unlawful money. PTI has sought two weeks from the ECP to respond to the issued notices.

The opposition leader, Imran Khan, was charged under section 7 of the Anti-terrorism Act after his address to thousands of supporters in Islamabad.

The First Information Report(FIR) states that Khan has terrorized and threatened top police officials and a respected female session judge.

In his speech, Khan promised to file legal cases against anyone involved in encouraging the arrest of his aide, Shahbaz Gill.

The former Prime Minister has been granted pre-arrest bail from an anti-terrorism court and has been ordered to appear before the court on September 1st.

The media regulatory body, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), has banned the live broadcast of Khan's speeches. After his speech in the capital, the regulatory body accused Khan of spreading hate speech against state institutions.

The High Court of Pakistan has suspended the ban and ruled that PEMRA exceeded its authority.

The Finance Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Taimur Jhagra, has expressed the provincial government's inability to provide a surplus this year due to the flood damages. This was a key condition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), previously agreed upon by the government.

The government has termed it PTIs' attempts to jeopardize the IMF loan program. An alleged audio leak between PTI Senator Shaukat Tarin and KP Finance Minister Taimur Khan Jhagra has surfaced recently.

“Amid the flood crisis, the government and the opposition found themselves in a power struggle. Analysts believe that the major parties have engaged themselves in their power struggle and have disregarded the catastrophe that has befallen the people of Pakistan.

On August 30th, Imran Khan raised around 5.2 PKR billion for the relief and rehabilitation of flood victims through a telethon where overseas Pakistanis contributed a significant amount.





Economic Updates and Developments

On the eve of Pakistan's Independence Day, the Ministry of Finance released its [update and outlook](#) report for August, which warns that the country's economic outlook is facing global and domestic uncertainties. The report also gives a glimpse of the country's 75-year economic journey highlighting the nominal GDP growth to [\\$383 billion from only \\$3 billion](#) in 1950 - marking Pakistan as the [24th largest economy](#) in the world. While these facts are undisputed, it is also true that Pakistan's economy continues to face a range of challenges, such as skyrocketing inflation which directly affects the socio-economic needs of its citizens.

The report has also warned that given the devastation caused by the ongoing floods, the [domestic retail price may further increase](#) in August compared to July. As per the [Composite Leading Indicators \(CLI\)](#), the economic activities in Pakistan's most important export areas, such as agriculture, have [deteriorated](#). For instance, the heavy monsoon has reduced the potential output of both main and minor [Kharif crop production](#).

The U.S-based [Financial Post](#) has reported that foreign investors are losing confidence in Pakistan amidst the dire economic conditions, including soaring commodity prices and tighter credit conditions, coupled with the impending political uncertainty.

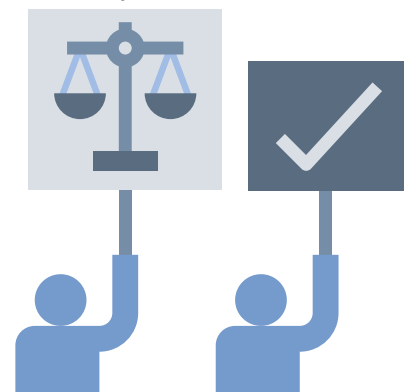
On August 5th, Finance Minister Miftah Ismael indicated that while Pakistan is on the [right track](#), he could not rule out the potential for [bad days ahead](#) for the economy.

On August 22nd, Pakistan's Minister for Finance and Revenue, Dr. Ayesha Ghaus Pasha, vowed to introduce [structural reforms](#) to bring sustainable growth and make the country's economy more inclusive. She acknowledged that [water and environmental protection](#) are the guarantors of economic development. Objecting to the rampant privatization of strategic national assets, Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) General Secretary in Karachi has urged the government to [focus on fundamental issues of the economy](#) and resolve them.

Nevertheless, Pakistan has recently secured two critical investments from Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Qatar's [Sovereign Wealth Fund](#) has pledged to invest \$3 billion in Pakistan's airports and hospitals. Speaking with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal has announced a \$1 billion investment in Pakistan. These developments come after days before the announcement of the [State Bank of Pakistan](#) about a potential investment of \$4 billion.

During talks about completing the 7th bailout package on August 24th, the Finance Ministry reported that the [IMF](#) sees the country's economic slowdown to be around [3.5 percent](#) by the end of the current fiscal year due to the rise in [the average inflation rate to 20 percent](#) and higher commodity prices.

After showing resilience again in the first three weeks of August, the Pakistani rupee continues a normal free fall and stands against the U.S. dollar at 220 PKR. Meanwhile, the IMF board has [approved](#) Pakistan's 7th and 8th reviews bailout program to allow for a release of over \$1.1 billion to the country's cash-strapped economy. While a combination of investment from friendly countries and an expected bailout from the IMF are likely to provide considerable relief, the impending challenges, including devastating floods, could potentially bring new socioeconomic challenges for the government and a burden too heavy for the country's economy to offset.



Security and Rule of Law



The month of August witnessed an increase in attacks on security forces. In two separate [incidents in Balochistan](#), two Pakistan army personnel embraced martyrdom, with two suffering injuries. On August 9th, in Mir Ali Town of Waziristan, four soldiers of the Pakistan army were killed in a suicide attack. The attack occurred following reports of the targeted killing of three top commanders of proscribed Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), including the mastermind of the 2014 APS attack, Omar Khalid Khurasani.

The TTP, which had previously challenged the state's writ by forming a state in Swat, has [reportedly](#) resurged in the valley. [Videos](#) showed the TTP fighter detained four police officers and a Pakistan Army Major, who were later released after Jirga reached an agreement with the militants. In an unfortunate [helicopter crash](#) on August 1st, six officers of the Pakistan Army and soldiers, including the Corps Commander Southern Command, Lt. General Sarfraz Ali, embraced martyrdom.

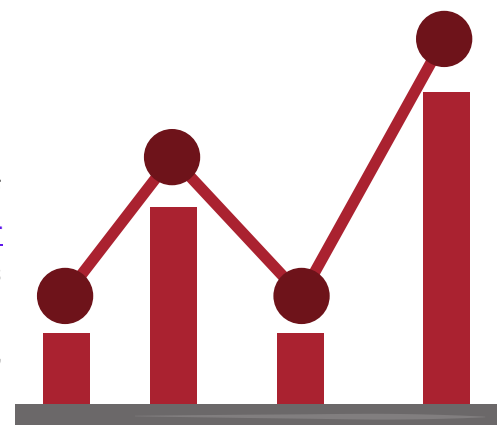
According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the helicopter crashed during [flood relief operations](#) in Lasbela, Balochistan. However, separatist insurgent groups in Balochistan have [claimed responsibility](#) for shooting down the chopper.

After a long hiatus, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Qamar Javed Bajwa [met](#) with the U.S CENTCOM Commander, General Micahel E. Kurilla, at the Pakistan Army General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. ISPR discussed matters of mutual interest, including regional security and defense cooperation between the two militaries.

During PM Shehbaz and Gen Bajwa's visit to Qatar, the Pakistani government and the State of Qatar signed an [agreement](#) for the Pakistan Army to assist with security matters for the upcoming Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Cup 2022.

Social Sector indicators and developments

The torrential monsoon rains and floods have taken hundreds of lives in different parts of the country. The [National Disaster Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#) has reported that the death toll has crossed 1000, damaging more than 80,000 houses and substantial infrastructural damage. Federal Minister for Climate Change, Sherry Rehman, has [warned](#) that the number of those affected due to the copious rain may reach 33 million.



The government has [declared a](#) national emergency as the number of affected people has already reached 30 million. Meanwhile, health officials have [reported](#) that the polio virus was found in sewage water samples collected from different cities in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This shows the lack of commitment by the government to implement effective measures to root out the virus. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only countries where polio is not eradicated. On August 19th, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif inaugurated the [third nationwide polio campaign](#) of the year and vowed to eradicate the virus from the country.

In a welcoming development, the newly elected Chief Minister of Punjab, Pervaiz Elahi, has announced [free education up to graduation level](#), vowing to provide free medical supplies in hospitals to make Punjab an exemplary province. Meanwhile, the U.S. ambassador, Donald Blome, handed over [36 vehicles](#) to strengthen KP's health department donated by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to help KP [track and manage infectious health diseases](#), including COVID-19.

Human Rights



Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan enshrines citizens' right to express themselves. However, the state of affairs regarding human rights in Pakistan is in dismal condition.

The government took extreme measures to curb free speech and shrink civic space for dissenting voices in the country.

On August 9th, Pakistan's biggest news broadcaster ARY News was [taken off the air](#) for being critical of the government and airing [seditious](#) content.

After the government [banned live telecasts](#) of former PM Imran Khan's speeches, the government also [banned YouTube temporarily](#)

when Khan used the platform to broadcast his speech. In an arbitrary display of power, the government has taken into custody several dissenting journalists and tortured them.

In the latest incident on August 21st, Jameel Farooqi, the Anchorperson at BOL News, was [arrested and tortured](#). In a recent report, the human rights body, Human Rights Watch, has demanded a transparent investigation into Shahbaz Gill's arrest and the [custodial torture](#) allegations by the PTI leadership.

In the report, they urge Pakistan to [criminalize](#) the use of torture by security forces.

In a shocking incident, a final-year [medical student in Faisalabad was kidnapped](#), sexually harassed, and filmed for refusing a marriage proposal from a man twice her age.

While the culprits are arrested, and the [national assembly panel has taken notice](#) of this brutal incident, the [victim is still waiting](#) for justice. In another incident in Peshawar, a case of alleged [religious conversion](#) of a Sikh woman was reported.

The Sikh community [protested](#) against what they alleged was forced conversion and marriage, [urging](#) the police to register a First Information Report (FIR), which the police have denied.

Meanwhile, two underage brothers and domestic workers were [brutally tortured](#) by their employer and their family in Lahore. Police reported that the two brothers were transferred to hospital, where one [succumbed to his injuries](#) while the other is undergoing medical treatment.

Another reported incident occurred in Hyderabad, where an angry mob almost killed a Hindu sanitary worker for alleged [desecration of the Holy Quran](#). The police [dispersed](#) the mob using tear gas shelling.



Foreign Relations



Pakistan and India celebrated their diamond jubilee with zeal and enthusiasm. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed his desire to seek [permanent peace](#) with India, noting that war is not an option. The Indian government sacked three of its air force officers for the accidental launch of their cruise into Pakistani territory on March 9th, 2022. Rejecting India's attempt to close the case, Pakistan has demanded a joint probe into the [highly irresponsible](#) incident that could have pushed the two countries to the brink of a nuclear war.

Despite the fractious bilateral relations, the two countries have demonstrated coordination in global health as they [jointly sponsored](#) two submissions at the World Health Organization (WHO) over the past two months.

On August 1st, China's Shenyang Economic and Technological Development Area (SEDA) and Pakistan's Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) signed the [Letter of Intent \(LOI\)](#) to expand Sino-Pak cooperation in the technology sector. Amidst the tensions in Taiwan Strait, after U.S House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, Islamabad reaffirmed its strong support for the [One-China Principle](#) by backing Beijing's stance on Pelosi's visit.

According to Pakistan's former ambassador to the U.N Maleeha Lodhi, the simmering tensions between U.S and China will [inevitably](#) have consequences for Pakistan. In a statement, Pakistan's Premier, Shahbaz Sharif, indicated Islamabad's desire to play a positive role in bridging gaps in the cold war between China and Pakistan. PM Shehbaz Sharif announced abolishing [the infamous CPEC Authority](#) to speed up the implementation of CPEC projects in Pakistan. The decision was [linked](#) to China's approval which has [tacitly approved](#) scrapping the controversial CPECA.

Pakistan's bilateral interactions with Iran centered mostly on economic cooperation. Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, in an [interview](#) with Iranian TV, has expressed Islamabad's willingness to work with Tehran in different sectors [to boost energy cooperation](#).

However, Iran believes that embargoes imposed on the country by the U.S will be an obstruction to the establishment of economic ties. The two countries also organized a [Pak-Iran Trade Expo](#) to boost trade and investment opportunities between 24 and 26 August.

On August 23rd, PM Shahbaz Sharif undertook [a two-day official state](#) visit to Qatar to seek investment and trade opportunities with [Qatar's Investment Authority \(QIA\)](#) fund announcing an investment of \$3 billion in Pakistan. Following the estranged relations with Islamabad, the U.S.

Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, [congratulated](#) the country on her 75th Independence Day and hoped for robust ties between Washington and Islamabad. On August 16th, the U.S envoy [Donald Blome](#) called Air Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Sidhu and Pakistan Chief of Air Staff to discuss bilateral cooperation on regional peace and security. Ambassador Blome's visit to Karachi and meetings with the governmental and trade officials indicate America's growing interest in boosting strong economic and trade relationships with Islamabad.



Presented by

