**Challenges for the new chief**

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After much hype and controversy over the next army chief’s appointment, the new chief has finally taken over command. The positive part of the appointment was the amicable process which has foiled the conspiracy theories in circulation.

In a dignified ceremony, former army chief General Bajwa handed over the command of the sixth-largest army and only Muslim nuclear power to General Asim Munir. The new army chief has many challenges ahead of him. The most important would be to restore the trust of the army with the public damaged by continued malicious campaigns. For several years, the Pakistan army has been the target of much criticism by political parties, politicians, and their social media brigades.

This also provided the country’s enemies with an opportunity to achieve their nefarious designs. It does not go well with the families of martyrs and ghazis when the army (armed forces) are criticised and maligned. Those who criticize the army must understand the sacrifices rendered by the army and for that, one has to step in the shoes of a soldier.

[PM expresses sorrow over death of former president PML-N women’s wing](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Dec-2022/pm-expresses-sorrow-over-death-of-former-president-pml-n-women-s-wing)

The irony is that politicians blame the army for their involvement in politics and their failures. If one studies the political history of the country, unfortunately, politicians dragged the army into politics. According to Shuja Nawaz’s book ‘Crossed Swords’, soon after independence, politicians invited the army to settle political differences amongst themselves.

Even before taking over as president in 1958, General Ayub mentioned in his book ‘Friends Not Masters’ “politicians started making contacts with certain members of armed forces. They were spreading all kinds of rumours to isolate senior officers and create a group of army officers to support them in the pursuit of their ambition.”

The regrettable part of our political history is that the country remained under martial law regimes in 1958, 1969, and 1977 followed by the 1999 coup. None of the prime ministers of Pakistan have completed their tenure in the last 75 years.

[Polling begins for second phase of LG polls in Azad Kashmir](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Dec-2022/polling-begins-for-second-phase-of-lg-polls-in-azad-kashmir)

The second challenge is polarising politics in the country which is a threat to national security and may lead to a civil war and destabilise the country. Politicians abuse each other, even families are not spared and are not ready to accept each other. Again, they are looking towards the army to settle their political issues in the polarising political scenario of Pakistan. The issue needs to be sorted out by politicians themselves keeping in view the threat emanating from the polarisation.

Another challenge is our relations with our adversary India which is busy hatching conspiracies to destabilise Pakistan. Despite Pakistan’s extension of serious all-out efforts, good neighbourly overtures have borne no fruit. India is constantly provoking Pakistan by making hostile rhetoric by political and military leadership. The recent statement by the defence minister and commander of Northern Command needs to be taken seriously when they openly claimed that they are ready to attack GB and AJK.

[Funeral prayer of Begum Najma Hameed to be offered on Sunday](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Dec-2022/funeral-prayer-of-begum-najma-hameed-to-be-offered-on-sunday)

The threat from the enemy is real therefore we can never lower our guard as we need to continue with a high standard of operational preparedness to face challenges to ensure national security and defence. The message must be given to India that Pakistan is determined to defend its territorial integrity if attacked.

Also with the appointment of General Asim as the new chief, there has been a great hue and cry in India. The Indian media is discussing the new chief’s attitude towards India, his intelligence background and also his role as the commander of Force Commander Northern Areas (FCNA). The resurgence of elements of TTP in parts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa is alarming and has raised many questions.

The banned organisation has decided to end a ceasefire with the government and directed its terrorists to carry out attacks across Pakistan. Pakistan, once considered the breeding ground for terrorism, has been declared the only country in the world which has combatted terrorism successfully.

[PM thanks KSA for extension in $3bln deposit term](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Dec-2022/pm-thanks-ksa-for-extension-in-dollar-3bln-deposit-term)

Pakistan has become a safe country as tourists are pouring in from across the globe. Terrorists should never be allowed to establish a foothold to disturb our hard-earned peace.

CPEC is yet another challenge, the 62-billion-dollar project will benefit both China and Pakistan. The hostile powers are all out to damage the project and target and malign the Pakistan army knowing that it is the army that is ensuring its successful implementation.

Afghanistan is another challenge. It was Pakistan that played a key role in bringing the Taliban to the table/Doha Accord which ensured the exit of Americans. The international community has forgotten Afghanistan and we have to re-evaluate our relations with Afghanistan. Peace and stability in Afghanistan are directly linked with peace and stability in Pakistan.

Pakistan is facing a serious economic crisis and is on the brink of economic collapse due to a host of reasons. There is a dire need for consensus on the charter of the economy as a strong economy guarantees a strong defence of a country.

[2nd phase of AJK LG polls being held today](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Dec-2022/2nd-phase-of-ajk-lg-polls-being-held-today)

At the same time, the expectations from General Asim are very high. The people have a strong conviction that the new chief will restore the image of the army and Pakistan and are also aware of the challenges that lie ahead of him.

The people of Gilgit-Baltistan too expect that the chief will ensure the fulfilment of the decision by civil and military leadership made earlier to make the region an interim province. General Asim has been the commander of Force Command Northern Areas (FCNA), the region of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Despite malicious campaigns in the past, the nation loves the Pakistan army which can be seen everywhere. Politicians should sort out their problems in the parliament or amongst themselves at the table. A stable elected government and strong armed forces are the only safeguards against internal and external threats.

The Pakistan army will continue to support and assist the elected government for the national interest as and when asked. We as a nation have to foil the nefarious designs of our enemies internally and externally by maintaining unity in our ranks.