

August 2024

# GLOBAL UP-TO-DATE

A  Publication

The world around us is changing rapidly. Wars, new turn in global politics, human rights issues are occurring every day, posing new challenges and concerns. Global Up-to-Date is an initiative by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) which will work as a hub for explaining the contemporary global issues.

The regular briefs will focus and explain the issues related to International Politics, Economy, Security, Human Rights, and Development. There will be a monthly printed version newsletter containing briefs of all the contemporary global important issues. The online version contains regular updates of the pressing issues along with the PDF version of the newsletter.

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# Thailand's Youngest Prime Minister: A Fresh Facade for Existing Power Structures

*Sadia Tasneem*



Paetongtarn "Ing" Shinawatra, 38, was elected Thailand's youngest prime minister on August 16. She is the daughter of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a significant and controversial figure in Thai politics. Since 2023, Paetongtarn has led Pheu Thai (For Thais), the country's second-largest political party. She is also the third member of her family to hold the highest office in the nation, following her father, Thaksin, and aunt, Yingluck.

The ruling Pheu Thai Party selected Paetongtarn to succeed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin after the Constitutional Court compelled Thavisin to resign due to his appointment of an illegitimate politician to his cabinet. This change is part of a long-standing conflict involving the military, the pro-royalist establishment, and populist parties linked to Thaksin. Thaksin initially transformed Thailand's political landscape when he was elected prime minister in 2001. Despite his popularity, and winning three elections, the royalist elite were alarmed by his populist policies, which threatened the monarchy—a crucial element of Thai identity. This opposition contributed to Thaksin and his sister Yingluck being forced from office and into exile.

Last year, upon Pheu Thai joining the government, Thaksin returned to Thailand after years in exile, following his ousting in a military coup in 2006. However, his return was controversial, as many former supporters felt alienated by what appeared to be a self-serving agreement with his old conservative rivals. This deal enabled his return and facilitated his party's formation of a new government, but it sidelined the progressive Move Forward Party, which had won the most votes in the election but was perceived by the establishment as a greater threat.

Paetongtarn needs the support of more than half of the 493 legislators in parliament to become prime minister, and Pheu Thai, along with its allies, controls 314 seats. Although Paetongtarn lacks political experience, there are concerns that she may become a puppet for her father, Thaksin, or the conservative elites. Trust has been a significant issue between these factions.

Thaksin's complicated relationship with King Vajiralongkorn is highlighted by the ongoing lèse-majesté case. Despite many younger Thais advocating for a monarchy that is less powerful and more aligned with constitutional models like those in Japan and the United Kingdom, the king remains the ultimate power broker in Thai politics. It is widely believed that the king approved Thaksin's return to Thailand.

The monarch, who is more politically active than his father was, continues to be revered by Thailand's traditional elites. However, he lacks the charisma and popular support that his father had during his six-decade reign. Thaksin, Thailand's former prime minister, has re-entered politics despite his previous statements about retiring to take care of his grandchildren. He has shared his vision for Thailand, particularly focusing on economic issues, at various constituencies and high-profile events.

Paetongtarn's political survival depends on whether she follows her father's guidance or the demands of the conservative elites, which may cause tension between the two. This situation suggests that her role as prime minister will be less autonomous than that of Yingluck, who made significant decisions despite her ties to Thaksin. Given the mistrust between these parties, Paetongtarn's leadership is likely to contribute to ongoing political instability in Thailand.

In terms of politics, the new administration needs to balance the interests of the various groups within its ruling coalition. The Pheu Thai party's unusual partnership with its former conservative and pro-military rivals raises questions about the government's ability to implement significant changes. Full support from conservative voters and these parties is not guaranteed, leaving Paetongtarn in a precarious position. She risks facing criticism from multiple sides, which could hinder her effectiveness as a leader. Although there is some generational renewal, Paetongtarn's election still represents the continuation of a political system dominated by powerful families and the military-royalist elite.

There are serious questions regarding the independence of these institutions and the stability of the rule of law in Thailand when reformist voices are silenced by judicial institutions and monitoring bodies such as the Constitutional Court and the National Anti-Corruption Commission. It will be important to observe whether Paetongtarn follows in her father's footsteps or carves out her path when she begins her term by forming her cabinet. Her term will be closely scrutinized—not only for the policies she implements but also for the impact her leadership will have on the nation's democracy moving forward. The crucial question is whether she can break the cycle of political unrest or if she will become fascinated by the same factors that have shaped Thailand's history and her family's legacy.

## Balochistan Insurgency: A Historical cry for independence of Baloch people

*Debi Karmakar*

Separatist militants launched several coordinated attacks in Pakistan's province of Balochistan, killing at least 39 people.

A Well-coordinated wave of violent attacks swept across the troubled province -Balochistan that shook Pakistan. Gunmen have killed at least 22 people in south-west Pakistan after forcing them out of their vehicles and checking their identity. The attack happened overnight on a highway in Balochistan province, where security forces are battling sectarian, ethnic, and separatist violence. The armed men checked identity documents, reportedly singling out those from Punjab to be shot, before setting the vehicles alight. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), a militant group, has said it was behind the attacks in Musa Khel district. The nature of militant insurgency has changed over time. This time, they have attacked civilians.



The BLA's recent attacks show increased ambition and brutality compared to their usual small-scale assaults. Unusual tactics include warning civilians before attacks and coordinated highway assaults, reminiscent of a deadly April incident. In May, they targeted non-Baloch residents. Analysts described the BLA's improved mobilization and operational capabilities across different areas. With an estimated 3,000 fighters, the group demonstrated growing sophistication and a shift towards more aggressive, large-scale operations, which marked a significant escalation in their separatist campaign.

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) emerged from ethnic and political tensions between Pakistan's Baloch minority (3.8% of the population) and the government. Designated as a terrorist group by Pakistan in 2004 and the US in 2019, the BLA's activities have escalated regional tensions, involving Iran where many BLA members reside. Recent cross-border air raids between Pakistan and Iran highlight the conflict's international dimension. The BLA's latest attacks coincided with the anniversary of Baloch leader Akbar Bugti's death in 2006, killed by Pakistani forces.

Balochistan, a resource-rich region with a strategic geopolitical location has faced exploitation under Pakistani rule. The end of the Second World War marked the decline of British Colonialism in the Indian subcontinent. As the British Prepared to leave, they divided the region into India and Pakistan, the latter created in the name of Islam. Pakistan's creation was part of the British Strategy to influence the region—Baluchistan, previously a semi-autonomous entity under British rule, declared independence. However, On March 27, 1948, Pakistan forcibly annexed Balochistan through Military Intervention. This action sparked resistance among the Baloch people led by Prince Abdul Karim. However, the Pakistani authorities quashed the rebellion using oppressive tactics to force the Baloch People into submission.

Since then, Baloch people have been fighting for self-determination and non-discriminatory administrative policy from the Pakistan Government. The Pakistani government has used religion and education to suppress the Baloch people. Baloch people have been kept educationally backward and there have been establishments like religious institutions such as Madrasa at every corner or block. People who lack modern education have more tribal loyalty. This kind of framing immensely helps the Pakistan government to exclude nationalist power of Baluchistan to come to political power.

Several contemporary factors, challenging conflict resolution, fuel the current Baloch insurgency. The construction of the Chinese-funded Gwadar mega-port is a major driver of conflict. While strategically important for Pakistan, the project has largely excluded local Balochs from its development and benefits. The federal government runs the project, employing Chinese workers and engineers instead of locals and postarmy personnel for security. Expanded natural gas exploration is another source of tension. Balochistan is a transit site for the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline, but Baloch militants frequently target gas infrastructure to protest federal exploitation of their resources.

The economic marginalization of Baloch's in these projects has increased resentment and resistance, leading to a more hardline government approach. This creates a cycle of animosity perpetuating the conflict. Other factors contributing to the insurgency include historical grievances of political and economic subjugation, the war in Afghanistan, and the military's harsh response to nationalist demands. Despite the importance of these resources and projects, Islamabad remains unwilling to negotiate with the Baloch's over the very issues that fuel their resistance, further complicating the prospects for conflict resolution.

Prime Minister Sharif assured Pakistan's commitment to eradicating terrorism, honoring the sacrifices made by citizens and armed forces. He pledged full resources to the military for counterterrorism efforts, stressing the urgency and resolve needed to eliminate this threat. Sharif expressed openness to dialogue with those loyal to Pakistan and its constitution but firmly rejected negotiations with enemies and terrorists.

## Rape and Murder of Woman Doctor in Kolkata: Women's Safety in Professional Duties

*Arman Miah*

Moumita Debnath (31) was the daughter of a very ordinary lower middle-class family from the Sodpur area of North Chabbis Pargana, a suburb near Kolkata. His father is a tailor by profession, and his mother is a homemaker. Despite financial and other obstacles, Moumita completed her medical studies and worked in various hospitals. Most recently, he was a postgraduate trainee in chest medicine at RG Kar Medical College Hospital. He was also doing post-graduation in medical science. He was very dedicated and dutiful in medical care. He was on regular duty on Thursday, August 8, 2024. After 36 consecutive hours of duty, he went to rest in the seminar hall on the fourth floor of the hospital's pulmonology department after having dinner with his colleagues that night. And taking this rest becomes tomorrow in Maumita's life. That night, a group of cannibals brutally killed her after raping her. The next morning, his junior colleagues found his half-naked, mutilated body lying inside the hall. Hospital authorities and police initially said that Moumita had committed suicide. Later, however, in the face of intense public outrage and anger, the police registered a case of murder and rape in this incident. Within twenty-four hours of the recovery of the young woman's body from the hospital's seminar hall, the police arrested a man named Sanjay Roy, who was employed as a 'civic volunteer' in the Kolkata city police force, on suspicion of being the main accused.

In the case of the murder and rape of the wage earner doctor Moumita, the whole of India became agitated with the protests of people of various classes and professions, including doctors. Lakhs of people remembered the doctor by lighting candles and lamps at their respective locations across the state. Lakhs of women in West Bengal participated in the 'Occupy Night' protest demanding 'the right to live an independent and fearless life'. More than 10 lakh doctors from different states of India announced the strike. The doctors who participated in the protest turned away everyone except the patients of the emergency department. As a result, India's healthcare sector is virtually paralyzed. Various political, social, and voluntary organizations held demonstrations and sit-in programs to protest the rape and murder. According to the news agency Reuters, there have also been demonstrations and protests in more than 130 cities in 25 countries around the world demanding justice for Moumita's rape and murder.



A doctor of forensic medicine at a medical college hospital in Kolkata said that it was clear from the nature of the crime and the multiple injuries that he had been tortured for a long time. An autopsy report released on Monday (August 19) said, "There were multiple injuries on her body; evidence of sexual assault was also found. Head, cheek, lip, nose, right jaw, chin, throat, left arm, left shoulder, left knee, ankle, and genitalia were found. There was a blood clot in the lung. There were also blood clots in some other parts of the body. The autopsy also said that the woman doctor was killed by strangulation. 16 wounds were found on the outside and 9 on the inside of his body. A significant amount of male sperm was found in Maumita's body. Its amount is about 150 mg. From this, they think that she was gang-raped.

Her family, India, and other countries want justice for the rape and murder of Maumita. So that violence against women does not increase. So that women can walk and work safely. According to the 'West Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2024', life imprisonment, a death sentence, and a fine have been kept as punishment for rape. A proper trial in Moumita's rape case will send a good message to future criminals.