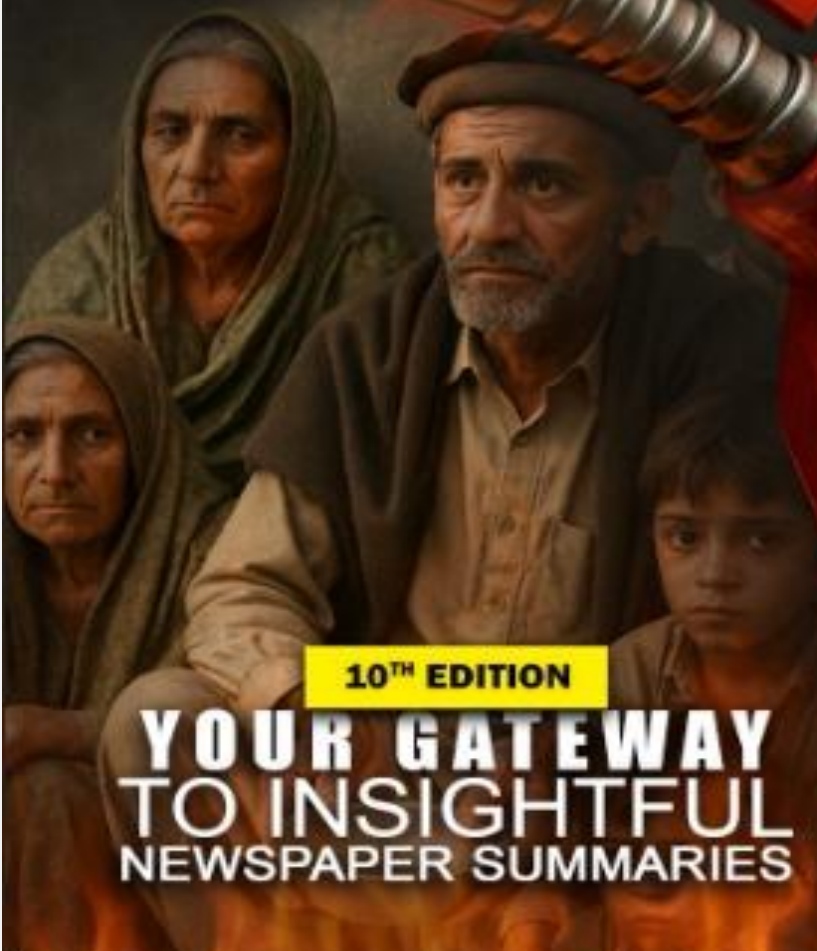


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CSS PLATFORM

Dawn –

AUTONOMY WITHIN

Author - Tasneem Noorani

Summary:

Pakistan a land of striking paradoxes is drowning in a pool of institutional failures yet still manages to produce pockets of excellence. The writer opens with a jarring image of 38 million beggars generating billions daily, mocking our national pride especially when the Pakistani passport ranks among the world's weakest. But right in this murky backdrop stands the Pakistan Air Force, a model of discipline and global recognition. The same people who are seen abroad with begging bowls have also produced one of the finest air combat forces, built not on vast resources but on organisational clarity, continuity in leadership and absolute autonomy. The writer drives home the point that when power and responsibility rest in the same hands, institutions can take off rather than fall flat.

The article then exposes the rot eating away at civil institutions where puppets pull strings while real authority lies elsewhere. From chief secretaries to federal secretaries, no one has any real say over their own departments. Political parties, while chanting democracy, follow no internal democratic structure. In contrast, the armed forces operate with defined chains of command and unwavering respect for leadership. What lifts one institution and sinks another is clear as daylight. It is autonomy, not mere slogans, that creates excellence. The dream remains to see every Pakistani institution run with the same grit, pride and purpose as the PAF.

Overview:

This article analyzes the dysfunctional structure of most civilian institutions in Pakistan while praising the effectiveness of the armed forces, especially the Pakistan Air Force, which thrives due to autonomy, leadership continuity and internal discipline. It advocates for institutional reform rooted in authority and accountability.

NOTES:

The article throws light on the glaring contradictions within Pakistan's institutions by contrasting the excellence of the Pakistan Air Force with the disarray found in most civilian structures. It begins by highlighting the disturbing claim that around 38 million Pakistanis are engaged in begging, many of them operating in foreign countries, which tarnishes the nation's image globally. Amid this shameful statistic, the Pakistan Air Force stands out as a symbol of discipline, efficiency and institutional success. The key to its consistent performance lies in organisational autonomy, uninterrupted tenures for leadership and a culture that respects internal command and hierarchy. Chiefs are granted at least three years without the threat of external interference, allowing them to plan strategically and elevate the force's standards. The Army too is cited for its operational excellence as seen in the 67 Punjab Battalion's gold medal at the Cambrian Patrol in the UK, a feat that underscores the effectiveness of autonomy and leadership continuity. In contrast, bureaucratic and political institutions are marred by invisible power brokers, lack of clear authority, and complete disregard for merit-based promotions or postings. The article critiques how political parties that champion democracy do not practise it internally and argues that any reform will be futile unless the core flaw of separation of power and responsibility is addressed.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Governance and Public Policy explores how institutions function, the balance of power, and the implementation of policies. This article provides a real-world example of how autonomy and stable leadership contribute to organisational success, which is a fundamental concept in this subject.
- Pakistan Affairs covers the historical and contemporary workings of the state, including its institutional structure. The comparison between the military's operational integrity and the dysfunction in civil bureaucracy fits squarely into discussions about the role of institutions in Pakistan's development.

- Essay paper often includes topics like institutional decay, reform, civil-military imbalance, or governance crisis. The content of the article serves as powerful material to build arguments for such themes, using examples, facts and analytical insight.

Notes for beginners:

This article teaches that organisations like the Pakistan Air Force work well because they are allowed to function without outside pressure. Their chiefs are given time and full control, which helps them make long-term plans. For example PAF leaders have never been removed mid-term in over 78 years, which creates stability. In contrast, in government departments and politics decisions are made by people behind the scenes, which leads to confusion and failure. A clear example of success is the Pakistan Army’s 67 Punjab Battalion winning gold at an international military competition in the UK in 2024, showing that with discipline and leadership, Pakistani institutions can shine on the world stage.

Facts and figures:

- 38 million people reportedly beg in Pakistan, collectively earning billions daily
- Pakistan’s passport ranks fourth worst globally
- The PAF has had uninterrupted leadership for 78 years
- 67 Punjab Battalion won gold at Exercise Cambrian Patrol in the UK in 2024

To sum up, this article urges us to stop spinning our wheels with cosmetic reforms and instead fix the foundation. The future of Pakistan lies not in imported models or hollow policies, but in replicating the proven success formula of the PAF across every public institution. Until then we will continue to chase dreams with broken compasses.

Difficult words and meaning:

1. Autonomy – the right to self-govern
Synonym: Independence, Antonym: Control
2. Curtail – to shorten or reduce
Synonym: Cut back, Antonym: Extend
3. Incremental – happening in small steps
Synonym: Gradual, Antonym: Sudden
4. Pretence – an attempt to make something appear true
Synonym: Sham, Antonym: Honesty
5. Interference – unwanted involvement
Synonym: Meddling, Antonym: Permission

THE WAGES OF HYBRIDITY

Author - Khurram Husain

Summary:

It’s crystal clear that Pakistan’s political elite did not climb the ladder of power to steer the country towards reform but merely to guard their own turf. The article tears the veil off the so-called hybrid system where democratic norms are only skin-deep. From 2008 to 2018, there was a flicker of hope as civilian control over state resources and policymaking grew stronger. The NFC Award empowered provinces, fiscal discipline began to settle in, and for a

while, the military's grip on discretionary spending loosened. Yet all this was slowly undone once the hybrid experiment crept in through the back door in 2018. The civilian government's sway over material resources dwindled and decision-making again slipped into the hands of unelected quarters. What started as democratic consolidation ended up becoming a political illusion. In the name of stability, Pakistan was thrown off the democratic track, and the control of power began revolving not around public mandate but institutional favoritism. Fast forward to today, the hybrid arrangement has led us down a cul-de-sac. Instead of fixing what's broken, the leadership is only trying to keep its head above water. The economy is groaning under the weight of an unfair tax structure, energy sector inefficiencies and growing fiscal burdens. Inflation is gnawing at household incomes while compliant taxpayers are milked dry. Yet those in charge seem to prefer treading water over rocking the boat. The government is more focused on survival than on ushering change. The result is a status quo that feeds off its own failure, and we're left spinning our wheels. The tragedy is that those who derailed democracy are now lamenting over the theft of their own mandate. What goes around comes around, but in this case, it is the people who are left paying the price for elite bargains made behind closed doors.

Overview:

The article explores the erosion of democratic gains in Pakistan over the past decade, especially after the emergence of the 'hybrid regime' model. It traces the timeline of rising civilian control from 2008 to 2018, followed by a steady decline in democratic authority and institutional integrity after 2018. It criticises the failure of political leadership to implement real economic and structural reforms and highlights how power has once again drifted into the hands of the unelected, leaving citizens burdened by inflation, poor governance and fiscal mismanagement.

NOTES:

This article provides analytical insight into the democratic transition, the concept of hybrid regimes, the role of civilian versus military authority and the structural issues in governance. Use it to support arguments in essays on democracy, civil-military imbalance, economic reforms or the cost of political compromise. It also highlights public policy failures and institutional decay, helping candidates connect theory to practical governance in Pakistan.

CSS Subjects and Relevance:

- Pakistan Affairs – It discusses the democratic evolution post-2008, federal-provincial power sharing, NFC Award, and civil-military relations.
- Current Affairs – It reflects the political and economic status of the country, hybrid regimes, governance issues, and institutional control.
- Essay – It provides content and arguments for topics like "The Crisis of Democracy in Pakistan", "The Cost of Poor Governance", or "Civil-Military Imbalance".
- Governance and Public Policy – It reflects on failed reforms, leadership accountability, and fiscal mismanagement as key policy issues.

Notes for Beginners:

This article can be understood as a criticism of how Pakistan's ruling elites have shifted from public service to self-preservation. From 2008 to 2018, elected governments gained increasing control over the country's budget and policies. However, that momentum stopped in 2018, when unelected institutions began regaining influence. Today, politicians are more focused on maintaining power than solving issues like inflation, tax injustice, or power sector reforms. Instead of changing the system, they've accepted the flaws. For example, despite high electricity costs hurting exports, no energy reforms have been made. Likewise, tax policies keep burdening honest taxpayers while leaving loopholes for the elite. This shows how reform is not on the agenda and governance has become more about survival than service.

Facts and Figures:

- Around 2008 to 2017, defence spending above the budgeted amount decreased.
- NFC Award 2009 shifted more fiscal power to provinces.
- Post-2018, the shift reversed as military influence on fiscal matters re-emerged.
- No major tax reform or energy sector reform was introduced by 2024.

To wrap up, This article shares Pakistan’s governance journey. It lays bare how the derailment of democratic progress and the rise of compromise politics have brought us to a standstill. The promise of reform has withered and what we see now is not leadership but crisis management disguised as governance. It’s a wake-up call for policymakers and citizens alike that without real institutional reform and the restoration of democratic authority, Pakistan’s future will remain stuck in the mud of its present.

Difficult Words with Meanings:

1. Wearied – Tired or exhausted.
Synonyms: fatigued, drained
Antonyms: energetic, refreshed
2. Spoils – Benefits gained through power or victory.
Synonyms: plunder, loot
Antonyms: loss, penalty
3. Tinkering – Making small, unproductive changes.
Synonyms: meddling, tampering
Antonyms: reforming, overhauling
4. Tread water – To maintain the current position without progress.
Synonyms: stagnate, stay afloat
Antonyms: advance, thrive
5. Cul-de-sac – A situation with no easy way out.
Synonyms: dead end, impasse
Antonyms: solution, breakthrough

STANDING WITH PALESTINE

Summary:

Pakistan has taken the moral high ground by refusing to jump on the bandwagon of the Abraham Accords. Despite whispers and nudges from international power corridors, Islamabad stayed true to its longstanding commitment to the Palestinian cause. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar’s reaffirmation of the two-state solution wasn’t just political lip service but a loud and clear message to the world: Pakistan won’t shake hands with an aggressor while Palestinian blood is still fresh on the ground. The idea of recognition, as the article rightly points out, is not just diplomatically risky but ethically indefensible, especially in light of Israel’s ongoing atrocities in Gaza. The article drives home the point that normalisation with Israel, under such gruesome circumstances, would mean siding with the oppressor and trampling on decades of principled foreign policy.

The editorial eloquently traces Pakistan’s ideological roots of solidarity with Palestine, quoting none other than the Quaid-e-Azam to prove this isn’t a seasonal stance but a deeply embedded value. In a rare show of unity, the political

spectrum in Pakistan from conservatives to progressives stands shoulder to shoulder on this issue. Recognising Israel as the article suggests, would be nothing short of rewarding a state for war crimes. It isn't just a matter of foreign policy, it's a question of collective conscience. Pakistan's refusal is not isolationism; it's resistance. In an age of transactional diplomacy, this stance may not win favours in Washington, but it earns Pakistan moral currency where it counts.

Overview:

This editorial commentary on Pakistan's continued refusal to recognise Israel, especially in the wake of the Abraham Accords. It highlights the ethical, historical and political dimensions that drive this stance, pointing to Israel's violent occupation of Palestine and the widespread public sentiment in Pakistan that aligns with the Palestinian cause.

NOTES:

The article underscores Pakistan's principled refusal to recognise Israel despite mounting international pressure, particularly under the Abraham Accords. It highlights the consistency of Pakistan's foreign policy as reiterated by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar who reaffirmed the country's support for the two-state solution and its moral stance against Israel's ongoing atrocities in Gaza. The editorial stresses that diplomatic ties with Israel cannot be justified when Palestinians continue to suffer under occupation and that recognising Israel amid such bloodshed would equate to rewarding aggression. It draws from history, citing Quaid-e-Azam's 1938 statement in support of Arab Palestinians to emphasize that Pakistan's position is not new or reactionary but deeply rooted. Furthermore, the article points out that across Pakistan's political and ideological spectrum whether left or right, there is unanimous support for the Palestinian cause. It suggests that normalization would be politically, morally and historically untenable especially while the Gaza genocide continues.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- International Relations – Israel-Palestine conflict, Abraham Accords, Pakistan's foreign policy doctrine
- Pakistan Affairs – Quaid-e-Azam's views, evolution of Pakistan's stance on Palestine
- Current Affairs – Contemporary Middle East diplomacy, Trump administration's policies, Muslim world solidarity
- Essay Paper – Topics like "Ethics in Foreign Policy" or "Justice for Palestine: A Global Responsibility"

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains why Pakistan refuses to make peace with Israel. It shows that the decision is not based on emotion alone, but on deep values and support for justice. The government believes that forming relations with a country responsible for harming innocent Palestinians would be like ignoring their pain. Even Pakistan's founder supported the Arabs in their fight for freedom. Today, all major groups in Pakistan agree on this issue, showing rare unity. When the world pushes for deals, Pakistan chooses principle over profit.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has followed the same policy on Palestine for over 70 years
- The Abraham Accords were signed by UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco between 2020 and 2021
- The accords were first significant normalisation efforts after Egypt (1978) and Jordan (1994)
- Quaid-e-Azam expressed support for Palestinian Arabs in 1938
- Gaza has faced heavy bombardment and humanitarian crises in recent months

To wrap up, this editorial is a reflection of Pakistan's conscience. In a world increasingly driven by self-interest, Pakistan's refusal to legitimise an apartheid state is a bold act of moral clarity. The article reminds readers that sometimes, the right path isn't the easiest or most profitable but it is the most just.

Difficult Words with Meanings:

1. Genocide – Systematic killing of a large group of people
Synonyms: massacre, extermination
Antonyms: preservation, protection
2. Sobering – Causing serious thought or reflection
Synonyms: thought-provoking, grave
Antonyms: amusing, lighthearted
3. Usurpers – Those who seize something illegally
Synonyms: invaders, occupiers
Antonyms: rightful rulers, legitimate authorities
4. Normalisation – Establishing regular diplomatic relations
Synonyms: reconciliation, restoration
Antonyms: estrangement, hostility
5. Reprehensible – Deserving strong criticism
Synonyms: disgraceful, shameful
Antonyms: praiseworthy, commendable

IRAN, ISRAEL SCORECARD

Author - Abbas Nasir

Summary:

The 12-day war between Iran and Israel, ignited by Israel's unprovoked assault, was nothing short of a bloody chess match dressed as a geopolitical drama. While Tel Aviv flexed its muscles by decapitating Iran's military leadership and targeting nuclear sites with surgical precision, it failed to break Tehran's backbone. Despite its iron-fist tactics, Israel couldn't trigger the domino effect it had hoped for. The regime-change fantasy fell flat, and even Reza Pahlavi's social media theatrics fizzled out without stirring public unrest. Instead, the Iranian people, often at odds with their theocratic rulers, stood united against foreign aggression. Netanyahu's three-fold agenda divert attention from the Gaza genocide, collapse the Iranian regime and draw the US deeper into conflict backfired. Rather than bringing Tehran to its knees, it exposed the cracks in Israel's invincibility as Iran fired back harder and louder, puncturing the myth of the so-called Iron Dome.

Meanwhile, the United States, playing its usual endgame, dropped a few bunker busters and then rushed in with a ceasefire call before the winds of war spun out of control. Trump's last-minute heroics were more for domestic optics than battlefield gains. Iran though bloodied came out breathing and in this deadly duel, that alone spelled victory. As both sides lick their wounds and prepare for the next round, one truth stands tall: Iran's ability to retaliate with force has reshaped regional dynamics. The war revealed that in today's Middle East, military prowess and propaganda often march hand-in-hand, but it's resilience and strategy that write the final chapter. With ceasefire smoke still lingering and whispers of a Gaza peace deal swirling, the powder keg remains lit, waiting for the next misstep to blow it sky-high.

Overview:

The article dissects the recent 12-day military conflict between Israel and Iran, analyzing the objectives, strategies and consequences for both nations. It presents Israel's failed attempts at military decapitation and regime

destabilization in Iran, explores how Iran responded with unexpected resilience, and outlines the broader implications for US foreign policy, regional power dynamics, and global diplomacy.

NOTES:

This editorial provides in depth analysis of US-Israel foreign relations, Iran's regional posture and propaganda in geopolitical conflicts. It can be referenced for answers relating to Middle Eastern politics, nuclear diplomacy, regional security paradigms and international alliances. The article reflects how military strategy intersects with media narrative and domestic politics, especially in multipolar conflicts where symbolism matters as much as actual gains.

CSS Syllabus Relevance:

- Current Affairs: Middle East conflict and diplomacy
- International Relations: Foreign policy analysis of Iran, Israel, and the US
- Pakistan Affairs: Geopolitical implications for Pakistan
- Political Science: Regime change and hybrid warfare
- Strategic & Defence Studies: Nuclear deterrence and missile warfare

Notes for Beginners:

Israel launched a surprise attack on Iran aiming to weaken its nuclear program and create unrest, hoping for regime change. For example, key nuclear sites like Fordow were bombed, but Iran had contingency plans ready and continued to respond with missiles. The US joined briefly but pulled back before escalation. Iran's missile retaliation hit cities and sensitive Israeli targets, showing it was far from helpless. This conflict shows how countries use both war and propaganda as tools, and even weaker nations can punch back when strategically prepared.

Facts and Figures:

- 12 days of warfare
- Dozens of top Iranian military officers and nuclear scientists killed
- Multiple Iranian nuclear sites attacked (Natanz, Fordow, Isfahan)
- Iranian missile strikes reached Tel Aviv, Haifa, Ashdod, Beersheba
- US dropped 30,000-pound bombs and then sued for peace
- Ceasefire negotiated after a retaliatory strike on US base in Qatar

To wrap up, this article peels back the layers of a brief but intense confrontation because it exposes not just military maneuvers but the political theatre behind them. It's a sobering reminder that in today's world, might alone doesn't make it right. Strategic depth, public unity and the art of bouncing back can turn even a bruised nation into a symbol of resistance. The echoes of this clash will ring far beyond the deserts of the Middle East.

'MAN OF PEACE'?

Author - Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

Trump's claim to be a "man of peace" is riddled with contradictions, and Maleeha Lodhi doesn't pull any punches in exposing that charade. While he bellows about ending wars, his actual track record tells a different story. From threatening to seize Greenland and the Panama Canal to launching military attacks on Iranian nuclear sites with the swagger of a wartime general, Trump has trampled over global norms in the name of so-called peace. His support for Israel's onslaught in Gaza, where over 60,000 Palestinians have been killed and aid is weaponized, paints a blood-soaked picture that flies in the face of his Nobel Prize aspirations. Declaring ceasefires after lighting the match himself is hardly peacemaking—it's more like arson followed by a PR cleanup. His actions reek more of a strongman's bravado than a statesman's restraint.

Author also highlights Trump's manipulative diplomacy in the India-Pakistan standoff, where he twisted nuclear deterrence into a self-serving claim for global applause. His coercive doctrine of "peace through strength" resembles a gangster's playbook that forces compliance through might, not diplomacy. The US blocking ceasefire resolutions and turning a blind eye to Israel's war crimes further weakens his moral footing. Trump's play at peacemaking isn't about resolving conflicts, it's about controlling the narrative while backing brutal regimes. Lodhi's analysis tears away the mask, showing us that real peace isn't declared in press conferences or shouted from podiums, it's built on justice, restraint and respect for human life. And by that measure Trump's peace crown is nothing but fool's gold.

Overview:

This article dissects Donald Trump's contradictory claims of being a peacemaker, critically analyzing his foreign policy moves, aggressive rhetoric and deep-rooted complicity in ongoing global conflicts. It particularly highlights his role in escalating tensions in the Middle East, manipulating international diplomacy, and using peace narratives as a political façade.

NOTES:

The article outlines how Donald Trump's claim of being a "man of peace" collapses under the weight of his actions and rhetoric. It recounts his aggressive behavior early in Office including threats of territorial takeovers and launching a trade war. Trump greenlighted Israel's assault on Iran, coordinated attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities and later praised the destruction, comparing it to the atomic bombings of Japan. Despite promising to end wars, he supported Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza where over 60,000 Palestinians mostly women and children have been killed. The US under his leadership blocked multiple UN ceasefire resolutions and backed aid strategies that resulted in the deaths of over 500 aid-seekers in a single month. While Trump claims credit for ceasefires in Middle Eastern and South Asian conflicts, the article argues these efforts were either self-serving or exaggerated. His doctrine of "peace through strength" is portrayed as coercive, unlawful, and dangerously destabilizing.

Relevant CSS syllabus section:

- International Relations: US foreign policy, Israel-Iran conflict
- Current Affairs: Gaza war, global diplomacy, role of the UN
- Pakistan Affairs: India-Pakistan tensions, nuclear deterrence
- Political Science: Global governance, authoritarianism
- International Law: Violation of humanitarian law, ceasefire protocols

Notes for beginners:

Trump says he wants peace, but his actions speak louder than words. For example, while he promised to avoid wars, he attacked Iran's nuclear sites and praised Israel's military aggression. He says he brought peace by ending conflicts, but he helped start them in the first place. Think of someone who punches you and then gives you a bandage. That's not peace, that's damage control. Real peace is when issues are solved and people stop suffering, like ending famine or allowing aid into Gaza. Instead Trump backed policies that worsened things for innocent people. Peace requires fairness not force.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 60,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza, mostly women and children
- Six US vetoes blocked UN ceasefire resolutions on Gaza
- 500+ aid-seekers killed in one month at US-backed food distribution points
- Trump coordinated with Israel during its June 13 strike on Iran
- Trump compared his strike on Iran to the WWII atomic bombings of Japan
- Pakistan nominated Trump for Nobel Peace Prize after India-Pakistan ceasefire

To sum up, this article exposes the dangerous disconnect between what leaders say and what they do. Trump’s self-proclaimed status as a man of peace is nothing but smoke and mirrors, hiding a track record steeped in aggression, manipulation and selective morality.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

1. Imperious – Arrogantly domineering (Syn: overbearing Ant: humble)
2. Flagrant – Blatantly offensive or outrageous (Syn: egregious Ant: subtle)
3. Carte blanche – Full freedom to act (Syn: unconditional authority Ant: restrictions)
4. Disingenuous – Not sincere or candid (Syn: deceptive Ant: honest)

WHY A NARRATIVE?

Author - Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

As I see it, the days of the state holding the reins of narrative are long gone. With every individual acting as a broadcaster in today’s digital jungle, weaving a meaningful national story is no walk in the park. Mohammad Ali Babakhel hits the nail on the head when he argues that Pakistan’s master narrative must go beyond religious rhetoric and embrace a multidimensional approach—one that speaks to its cultural richness, democratic spirit, and history of peacekeeping. Violent non-state actors are beating the state at its own game, exploiting cyberspace to churn out divisive tales. The author makes a strong case that countering such narratives can’t be a knee-jerk reaction but must be rooted in inclusivity, truth, and foresight. Narrative-building isn’t a one-off mission, it’s a lifelong journey, and if we keep brushing real grievances under the carpet, someone else will surely hijack the mic.

What stands out is how Babakhel draws parallels from countries like Greece and Japan, showing how even nations scarred by history can turn their past into a magnet for global admiration. He doesn’t sugarcoat the bitter truth: bureaucracy-heavy policies won’t cut the mustard if people aren’t taken on board. The piece calls for provincial and federal cooperation in shaping a narrative that doesn’t just echo patriotism but celebrates Pakistan’s diversity, resilience, and global contributions. He warns that escapism and censorship will only fuel the fire of extremism, and if Pakistan wants to ward off internal decay and external hostility, it must write its own story that should be boldly, inclusively and with vision.

Overview:

The article underscores the need for Pakistan to craft a dynamic, inclusive national narrative that outpaces extremist ideologies and reflects the nation’s democratic aspirations, diversity, and global responsibility. It explores how a well-rounded narrative can strengthen national integration and global perception.

NOTES:

The article emphasizes the urgent need for Pakistan to construct a coherent and inclusive national narrative that can counter extremist ideologies and misinformation in the digital era. It highlights that with the rise of social media, the monopoly of the state over information has ended and anyone with a smartphone can influence public opinion. The article stresses that an effective narrative must include history, identity, culture and values that bind citizens together and provide a sense of belonging. Violent non-state actors exploit cyberspace to spread divisive messages which cannot be countered solely through religious arguments. Instead, a counter-narrative should address political, ethnic and socioeconomic grievances as well. The Paigham-i-Pakistan decree is appreciated but deemed limited in scope. The writer points out that policy-making must be inclusive, with public endorsement and participation from provinces especially after the 18th Amendment. He warns that filling the information void with censorship only invites hostile narratives. Pakistan’s democratic, choices contributions to global peacekeeping and cultural richness must be part of the broader national story. Drawing inspiration from countries like Japan and Greece the article

argues that even a painful past can be transformed into a narrative of pride. The key takeaway is that narrative-building is a continuous, participatory process rooted in social justice, transparency and diversity.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Topics:

- Current Affairs
 - National integration and narrative building in Pakistan
 - Role of media and digital space in shaping public opinion
 - Counter-extremism strategies and internal security challenges
- Pakistan Affairs
 - Nationalism and identity politics
 - Impacts of the 18th Amendment on governance and policy-making
 - Role of religion, culture, and education in national unity
- International Relations
 - Information warfare and digital diplomacy
 - Countering violent extremism through soft power and narratives
- Governance and Public Policies (from General Knowledge/General Science)
 - Policy formulation and public engagement
 - Inter-institutional collaboration for national cohesion
- 5. Essay and English (Precis & Composition)
 - Topics on national unity, media influence, digital age challenges, and extremism
 - Practice in argumentative and analytical writing on societal issues

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains why building a strong national story or narrative is essential for Pakistan in today’s fast-paced world. It tells us that people now get information from all sorts of sources not just from the government. If the country doesn’t tell its own story honestly and clearly others with bad intentions will step in. A good national narrative includes history, peace, cultural values and achievements. For example, like Japan and Greece used their painful pasts to attract the world’s admiration, Pakistan too can promote its history, culture and efforts in world peace.

Facts and Figures:

- 1,800 ulema signed the Paigham-e-Pakistan decree
- Greece draws 36 million tourists annually
- Japan contributes 12.5% of the UN budget
- Pakistan has served 8 times in the UN Security Council

To put it simply, In an era where digital voices drown traditional channels, Pakistan must wake up and smell the coffee. A national narrative isn't just a PR stunt, it's the soul of the country laid bare to the world. If not written by its own people, it will be rewritten by others often with dangerous twists.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

• Monopolise – to dominate or control entirely (Syn: dominate
• Ant: share)
• Rebuttal – a counter-argument or contradiction (Syn: denial
• Ant: confirmation)
• Escapism – avoiding reality or responsibility (Syn: avoidance
• Ant: realism)
• Laudable – deserving praise (Syn: commendable
• Ant: blameworthy)

TERRORIST THREAT

Summary:

The article highlights Pakistan's ongoing struggle with terrorism, which seems to have taken deep root in its soft underbelly, especially in the former FATA districts, KP, and Balochistan. With 85 militant attacks in May alone, claiming 113 lives, it's clear that our counterterrorism strategy is failing to keep these flames at bay. Saturday's suicide blast in Mir Ali that martyred 13 soldiers was another bitter pill to swallow. While the military points fingers at India and banned outfits like the TTP, shadowy groups such as Asood al-Harb are also crawling out of the woodwork. These groups might change names like a chameleon changes colours, but their dark intentions remain unchanged. In this game of smoke and mirrors, the state must not turn a blind eye but rather tighten its grip on both local and foreign collaborators of terror.

The editorial stresses that diplomacy alone cannot do the heavy lifting. Although ties with the Afghan Taliban have improved due to Chinese mediation, the reality on the ground tells a different tale. The UN's February report clearly indicated that the Taliban still shelter TTP operatives. And if our neighbours won't clean up their backyard, Pakistan must draw a red line. Reiterating blame isn't enough; rebuilding our own security apparatus and reclaiming every inch of our territory must become the order of the day. A stitch in time saves nine, and unless we reinforce our counterterrorism policy now, we risk letting this "new normal" dig in its heels even deeper.

Overview:

This article highlights the persistent terrorist threat in Pakistan's border regions, especially North Waziristan, KP, and Balochistan, emphasizing the need for a revised counterterrorism policy and proactive diplomacy with India and Afghanistan. It calls for a holistic approach to uproot militancy and reestablish the state's writ.

NOTES:

The article underscores the alarming rise in terrorist activities across Pakistan, particularly in the former FATA regions, KP and Balochistan, with a notable suicide attack in Mir Ali that martyred 13 soldiers. It highlights the 85 militant attacks recorded in May 2025 alone, resulting in at least 113 deaths, mostly among security personnel and civilians. The editorial criticizes the inadequacy of current counterterrorism strategies and calls for an urgent policy overhaul. It mentions how groups like the TTP, often operating under different names such as Asood al-Harb, continue to act with impunity. The military has accused India of sponsoring these activities and cited evidence of cross-border terrorism. Furthermore, the article stresses the duplicity of the Afghan Taliban, who despite diplomatic ties, still harbor TTP operatives, as confirmed by a February 2025 UN report. While acknowledging recent progress in Pak-Afghan relations facilitated by China, the piece warns that such efforts are futile if cross-border militancy is not addressed. It urges the Pakistani state to reassert its writ, uproot militant networks, and ensure internal stability by strengthening its counterterrorism framework through both internal reform and diplomatic firmness.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Internal security challenges, TTP, former FATA, Pak-Afghan relations
- International Relations: Regional diplomacy, Pak-India-Afghan trilateral ties, foreign policy tools
- Current Affairs: Terrorism trends in Pakistan, counterterrorism strategies, UN reports on militancy
- Governance and Public Policy: State response mechanisms, CT policy reforms, writ of the state

Notes for Beginners:

This article discusses the worsening security situation in Pakistan, particularly in border areas like KP and Balochistan. For example, a suicide bombing in North Waziristan recently killed 13 soldiers, which shows how dangerous the situation has become. Groups like the TTP are blamed for these attacks, and some believe India is also involved. The article explains that these groups keep changing names to hide their identity. It also mentions

that although Pakistan and Afghanistan are trying to improve their relationship, the Afghan Taliban are still allowing terrorists to stay in their territory, which creates more problems for Pakistan.

Facts and Figures:

- 85 terrorist attacks in May 2025 across Pakistan
- 113 deaths, mostly of civilians and security personnel
- 13 soldiers killed in one suicide bombing in Mir Ali, North Waziristan
- UN report (Feb 2025) confirmed Taliban's continued support for TTP
- Asood al-Harb, a lesser-known group, claimed responsibility for the recent attack

To wrap up, this article compels us to rethink how we define security and how much longer we can afford to sit on the fence while terrorists run amok. Whether it's foreign hands or local accomplices, the menace of terrorism must be crushed with wisdom, strategy and unwavering resolve. The road ahead is steep, but the cost of complacency is far steeper.

UN PARALYSIS

Summary:

As the world watches Gaza drown in blood and starvation, the United Nations, despite its tall claims and heavy mandates, has turned a blind eye and become a mere spectator to Israel's unrelenting savagery. The editorial paints a damning picture of the UN Security Council's inaction, particularly highlighting the complicity of major powers like the US in blocking any meaningful resolutions that might hold Israel accountable. Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad didn't beat around the bush but he called out the Council for its spinelessness and how its failure to uphold its own decisions is chipping away at its credibility. With wars blazing in Ukraine, Palestine, Iran, and even Pakistan's own backyard, the so-called post-WWII 'rules-based order' now lies in tatters. What was once imagined as a global moral compass now appears as a rusted relic hijacked by the might of the powerful.

The piece doesn't just throw punches at the West; it asks tough, lingering questions. Why is Russian aggression in Ukraine painted as a threat to the free world, but Israel's occupation of Palestine gets a free pass? This blatant double standard has become the Achilles' heel of the global order. The article makes a clarion call for a new world order one rooted in fairness, accountability, and human dignity where no state gets to play god and no nation is left to bleed in silence. If this status quo continues, the UN might soon become nothing more than a talking shop, and the Global South will keep paying the price for a justice system built on hypocrisy. The immediate goal must be to put an end to the genocide in Gaza before the conscience of the world dies a quiet death.

Overview:

This editorial from Dawn sharply criticizes the UN Security Council's failure to act against ongoing atrocities in Gaza. It underscores the hypocrisy of global powers, especially the United States, in selectively upholding international laws. With Pakistan assuming the presidency of the UNSC, the article urges urgent reforms to restore credibility, fairness, and accountability in the global system.

NOTES:

The editorial underscores the appalling failure of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, in addressing the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, where tens of thousands have been killed or left to starve due to Israeli aggression. Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad sharply criticized the Council's inaction, warning that its inability to implement its own resolutions erodes its authority and global trust. The article draws attention to the broader pattern of the UN's paralysis in the face of major global conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine, India's attack on Pakistan, and Israel's strike on Iran. It highlights how powerful countries, especially the United States and its European allies, have repeatedly blocked efforts to hold aggressors accountable,

thereby rendering the international order dysfunctional. The editorial also criticizes the stark hypocrisy of treating Russia's actions in Ukraine as a global threat while ignoring Israel's occupation and brutality in Palestine. It suggests that the current rules-based order, forged after World War II, is practically dead and needs to be replaced with one grounded in justice, equality, and human dignity. Emphasizing the urgency of ending the Gaza crisis, the article calls for an international framework where no state is above the law and the Global South has equal representation in global decision-making processes.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- International Relations (Paper I & II)
 - This article aligns with themes like the role of international organizations (e.g., UN), the crisis of the global order, and major power politics. It also touches on the limitations of the United Nations and the influence of global hegemony like the US.
- Current Affairs
 - The editorial is directly relevant to contemporary international conflicts including Gaza, Ukraine, Indo-Pak tensions, and Israel-Iran hostilities. It highlights Pakistan's diplomatic stance at the UN, which is key to understanding Pakistan's foreign policy posture.
- Pakistan Affairs
 - The article supports analysis of Pakistan's foreign policy, especially its role in the Muslim world and at multilateral forums like the UN. It also connects to Pakistan's stance on the Palestinian issue.
- Governance and Public Policy
 - The failure of global governance institutions like the UN and the need for a new, justice-based international system relate to governance reform and international policy frameworks.
- Political Science
 - The editorial critiques the concept of a 'rules-based international order' and explores the power dynamics that challenge the effectiveness of global institutions, falling under theories of international politics and political realism.

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how the United Nations, which was created to maintain peace and justice in the world is failing to do its job. Even though many people are dying in Gaza, the UN has not stopped the violence. Why? Because countries like the US protect their friends even when those friends do bad things. For example, the US blocks decisions that criticize Israel. This shows that rules are not applied equally. When Russia attacks Ukraine, everyone speaks out. But when Israel kills people in Gaza, many powerful countries stay quiet. The writer says we need a fair system where every country, big or small is treated the same. Otherwise, weaker countries like Palestine will continue to suffer.

Facts and Figures:

- Tens of thousands of people have died or starved in Gaza during the ongoing Israeli military operation.
- Pakistan currently holds the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council as of July 2025.
- The UN has failed to stop conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, Iran, and during India's recent attack on Pakistan.
- The United States has repeatedly vetoed resolutions that condemn Israel in the UN Security Council.

To sum up, This article is an attentive call for anyone who still believes that the global order is built on fairness. It not only exposes the double standards of the world's most powerful nations but also warns that unless real reforms are made, the UN might lose all its moral weight. The silence on Gaza is not just a diplomatic failure it's a stain on the conscience of humanity.

DANGEROUS 'NEW NORMAL'

Author - Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

In the thick of mounting global uncertainty, this article strikes at the heart of a world teetering on the edge of chaos. With conflicts spreading like wildfire and multilateralism gasping for breath, the international order is clearly off balance. She pulls no punches in exposing the glaring double standards of Western powers, who call out Russia's aggression in Ukraine while turning a blind eye to Israel's merciless pounding of Gaza. The rules-based order, once paraded as the pillar of global peace, is now being trampled by the very nations that claim to uphold it. With preemptive strikes masked as defence, and international law being tossed aside like yesterday's news, a dangerous 'new normal' is setting in, one where might is right and diplomacy is left hanging by a thread.

The world, it seems, is bracing for a storm of its own making. With defence budgets ballooning, nuclear ambitions getting a second wind, and diplomacy pushed to the sidelines, global stability is becoming a pipe dream. The Sipri and IISS reports paint a grim picture: countries are arming to the teeth, not for peace, but out of sheer fear. The failure of the UN, hobbled by its veto-wielding giants, to curb bloodshed or uphold justice is fueling this fire. The lesson? Without reforms, without fairness, and without real consequences for aggression, global disorder won't just be the exception—it'll be the rule. As history reminds us, peace built on force is nothing but a house of cards.

Overview:

This article critically examines the rising global instability marked by conflict, militarization and the erosion of international norms. It argues that the world has entered a dangerous era where powerful nations flout international law with impunity, leading to an alarming breakdown of multilateral systems. The author underscores the failures of global institutions, especially the UN Security Council, in preventing wars and maintaining peace.

NOTES:

The article is important for understanding the dynamics of contemporary global politics, especially how power asymmetry affects international law and diplomacy. It connects with themes like global governance, international security and the evolving nature of multilateralism. Aspirants should focus on the implications of declining trust in international institutions, rising defence expenditures, and the resurgence of nuclear ambitions.

Relevant to CSS syllabus or subjects::

- International Relations
- Current Affairs
- Global Issues (Essay Paper)
- Pakistan Affairs (Global Power Politics and Its Implications for Pakistan)

Notes for Beginners:

This article helps us understand how powerful countries today are ignoring international rules to serve their own interests. For instance, while Russia is being condemned for attacking Ukraine, many Western nations support Israel's attacks on Gaza without any criticism. This shows the double standards in global politics. Defence spending around the world has reached record highs and more countries are thinking of getting nuclear weapons for protection. This article also highlights how institutions like the United Nations have failed to stop wars or punish violators, making people lose trust in them. For example, the UN could not stop the genocide in Gaza because powerful members blocked actions against Israel. All these facts indicate that the world is moving towards a dangerous future unless fairness and international law are restored.

Facts and Figures:

- Global defence spending reached a record high, according to the 2025 Sipri and IISS reports.

- Nuclear powers attacked Iran and Ukraine, both non-nuclear states, leading other countries to reconsider their security strategies.
- UN credibility is questioned by leaders like Ban Ki-moon and Guterres, who called out its dysfunction and broken trust.
- No condemnation from Western nations for Israel's strike on Iran, despite clear violations of international law.

To wrap up, this article nudges us to think critically about who controls the rules and why. It offers powerful insights into the unraveling global order and the urgent need for principled leadership and institutional reform before the tide turns irreversibly.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Geopolitics: Politics influenced by geographical factors.
- Synonym: Geostrategy | Antonym: Domestic politics

- Impunity: Freedom from punishment or consequences.
- Synonym: Exemption | Antonym: Accountability

- Multilateralism: Cooperation among several nations.
- Synonym: Alliance | Antonym: Unilateralism

- Denouement: The final outcome or climax of a situation.
- Synonym: Conclusion | Antonym: Beginning

THE KEY VALUE

Author: Amin Valliani

Summary:

Reading Amin Valliani's article is like peeling back the layers of a society in crisis. He cuts to the chase by pinpointing justice as the cornerstone of any functional and fair community. Without it society turns into a chaotic jungle where the strong trample the weak. Valliani doesn't beat around the bush but he shows how injustice starts at home and spreads like wildfire. If daughters are treated like second-class citizens, denied equal education, or married off without consent, the rot sets in deep. The article shines a light on the raw reality of Pakistan's patriarchal setup, where the playing field is tilted from birth. He throws in Islamic teachings not just for moral seasoning but to hammer home that justice isn't a Western import but it's deeply rooted in our own faith and heritage.

What makes this piece more than just a moral sermon is its clear-eyed call to action. Valliani underlines how justice is more than a personal virtue; it's a state responsibility. When the state turns a blind eye to discrimination - be it based on gender, class, caste or creed it chips away at its own foundation. The article doesn't sugarcoat the ugly truths but also doesn't leave the reader hopeless. It insists that justice is doable if families start at the grassroots and the state backs them up with laws and policies rooted in fairness. From family dynamics to workplace parity, justice is the glue that binds peace and progress. Without it, we're building castles on sand.

Overview:

This article dives deep into the value of justice as a fundamental principle for both personal and social wellbeing. It illustrates how the lack of justice in family structures, especially in rural Pakistan, reinforces inequality and perpetuates systemic discrimination, particularly against women. Drawing from Islamic teachings and social

realities, it weaves a compelling case for institutional and personal accountability, urging a societal shift from patriarchal norms to egalitarian values.

NOTES:

The article stresses that justice is not just an ethical ideal but a practical necessity for social harmony. It uses examples from rural Pakistan to show how discrimination starts at the family level, with girls receiving inferior treatment compared to boys in education, freedom, and respect. Valliani explains that Islam champions justice for all, regardless of gender, race or religion which makes it clear that these values are not foreign but intrinsic to our belief system. The article also emphasizes that the responsibility of ensuring justice lies both with the state and the family. Justice in family life can lead to peace in society, while injustice breeds resentment and conflict. He uses Islamic references and prophetic traditions to reinforce his arguments, making it particularly resonant in the Pakistani socio-religious context.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Islamic Studies – Ethical teachings in Islam, concept of justice in Islam, role of justice in societal development
- Pakistan Affairs – Social structure of Pakistan, rural and urban dynamics, gender inequality
- Sociology – Social stratification, gender roles in South Asian culture, justice in family system
- Essay and Current Affairs – Topics like “Justice: A Pillar of Peace,” “Patriarchy and Social Injustice in Pakistan,” or “Islamic Values and Modern Governance”

Notes for Beginners:

This article makes it easy to understand how justice isn't just for courtrooms, but it begins at home. If parents treat sons better than daughters give them better food, bedding and education that's injustice. And when injustice starts early, it grows into bigger problems in society. Valliani explains that Islam teaches us to treat everyone equally, whether man or woman, Muslim or non-Muslim. For example paying a man more just because he's male, even if a woman does the same job is against the principle of justice. The article encourages us to stand up for what's right, beginning with how we treat our own family members.

Facts and Figures:

- In many rural households, girls sleep on floors while boys get proper bedding
- Daughters are often excluded from educational and marriage decisions
- Islamic reference: Quran (5:8) defines justice as a supreme virtue
- Hadith: Just people will be rewarded with pulpits of light in the presence of Allah
- Justice must prevail even if it favours a non-Muslim in a dispute

To sum up, The article is a bold reminder that justice is not optional; it's the lifeblood of any decent society. From the dinner table to government policy, fairness needs to be baked into our decisions. The article hits hard where it hurts most: inside our homes. It makes it clear that if we want peace in the country, we need justice in the household. And when a nation fails to treat its daughters with dignity, it digs its own grave.

Difficult Words with Meanings:

1. Impartially – Fairly, without bias: Synonym: neutrally | Antonym: unfairly
2. Patriarchal – Male-dominated social system: Synonym: male-centered | Antonym: egalitarian
3. Prejudice – Preconceived judgment not based on reason: Synonym: bias | Antonym: fairness
4. Creed – A set of beliefs or principles: Synonym: doctrine | Antonym: disbelief
5. Machismo – Strong or exaggerated masculinity: Synonym: male dominance | Antonym: gender equality

IRONY OF HISTORY

Author: Muhammad Amir Rana

Summary:

In a twist steeped in irony, Russia's official recognition of the Afghan Taliban government raises more questions than it answers. Once bloodied and beaten by the mujahideen, who now spiritually guide the Taliban, Russia is seemingly turning the page on history to forge a new geopolitical chapter. As power plays shift across the region, old foes are wearing the masks of strategic allies. Moscow, alarmed by its waning relevance in Southwest Asia amid the chaos in Syria, Gaza and Ukraine is clawing for diplomatic traction. Yet, the move reeks of desperation and calculated gamble, especially when viewed against Iran's growing unease with the Taliban's ambiguous alignments and the destabilising cross-border militancy threatening both Pakistan and Iran.

The Taliban, meanwhile, are walking a tightrope, courting every global power in sight China, the US, Russia, India while playing double games with militant groups operating on Afghan soil. Pakistan is caught between a rock and a hard place, as former allies now fan the flames of insurgency across its western borders. Suicide bombings, insurgent alliances, and proxy wars are the bitter harvest of past miscalculations. Russia, seeking to cash in on realpolitik, may find its recognition brings more risk than reward.

Overview:

This article looks deep into the geopolitical riddle posed by Russia's recognition of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It weaves historical context with present-day tensions, exploring how regional dynamics, proxy militancy, and diplomatic realignments are shaping Pakistan's security challenges and strategic choices.

NOTES:

The article opens with a powerful irony that Russia once wounded by the mujahideen during the Afghan-Soviet war, now extends formal recognition to their ideological heirs the Taliban. This shift marks not just a policy change but a dramatic realignment of geopolitical interests. It details how Russia's recognition comes amidst its fading influence in Southwest Asia, compounded by setbacks in Syria, Ukraine, and limited responses to the Iran-Israel crisis. Meanwhile, the Taliban growing more diplomatic and pragmatic are engaging with global powers including China, the US and India. However, the reality on the ground remains volatile. Militancy is still thriving; groups like TTP, Hafiz Gul Bahadur's network, and others have escalated attacks in Pakistan, using Afghan soil as a base. Iran too is alarmed by the Taliban's ambiguous posture particularly given the presence of anti-Iran groups like Jaish al-Adl in Afghanistan. Despite adopting a veneer of diplomacy, the Taliban have maintained ties with militant factions, which they seem to manipulate strategically against neighboring states. This evolving web of proxy warfare and shifting alliances underscores the Taliban's attempt to balance global recognition with regional leverage. Russia's recognition appears driven by realpolitik, aiming for economic and strategic gains, yet the question remains whether Moscow can actually influence Taliban behavior, especially on curbing terrorism. The article closes by reflecting on the complexities faced by regional actors like Pakistan and Iran, who are now confronting the unintended consequences of past alignments and the unpredictable nature of proxy power.

Relevant CSS Subjects or Topics:

- Current Affairs (Regional politics, Afghanistan situation, Pak-Russia ties)
- International Relations (Geopolitics, Proxy Warfare, Diplomatic Alignments)
- Political Science (Ideological evolution of political entities)
- Pakistan Affairs (Militancy, Afghan Policy, Border Security)
- Essay Writing (Geostrategic shifts, regional peace and conflict)

Notes for Beginners:

For beginners, this article offers a classic example of how past conflicts come full circle. For instance, Russia, which once fought the mujahideen (the Taliban's ideological ancestors), is now reaching out to them diplomatically. It's like two enemies in a chess game shaking hands halfway through because a new player has entered the board. Similarly, the Taliban's dual engagement with both global powers and militant factions showcases the concept of using "proxies" actors who fight on behalf of a state to achieve its goals without direct involvement. The suicide attack in Mir Ali illustrates how these proxies can turn rogue and threaten their handlers.

Facts and Figures:

- Russia has formally recognised the Taliban regime.
- Suicide attacks linked to militant groups like Hafiz Gul Bahadur's network, Lashkar-i-Islam, and TTP have surged across Waziristan and urban KPK.
- Taliban maintain links with global powers including China, Russia, the US, and India.
- Taliban's ideological roots trace back to the mujahideen who fought the Soviet Union.
- HTS and Taliban share similarities in diplomacy but diverge in handling of militant groups.
- Jaish al-Adl, an anti-Iran group, operates from Afghan territory, complicating Pak-Iran ties.

To wrap up, this article reminds us that there are no permanent friends or enemies in international relations, just only permanent interests. As Russia, China, the Taliban, and Pakistan reposition themselves on the chessboard of South Asian politics, the stakes remain sky-high. For students CSS aspirants this is a masterclass in understanding how history, ideology and strategy intersect in real-time.

SAARC'S FUTURE

Summary:

Saarc once envisioned as South Asia's answer to ASEAN, is now gathering dust on the geopolitical shelf, primarily because of India's stubborn refusal to sit across the table from Pakistan. The 2016 boycott of the Islamabad summit threw a wrench into the workings of the regional bloc, and since then, it's been more symbolic than functional. While some countries, including Pakistan, China, and Bangladesh, flirted with the idea of forming a new regional club, Islamabad has publicly doubled down on its commitment to Saarc, preferring inclusivity over fragmentation. This chess move shifts the onus squarely onto India's shoulders, suggesting that if New Delhi keeps dragging its feet, the entire region will keep paying the price.

What's striking is the contrast in past behavior: back in 1995, Pakistan swallowed its pride and sent its president to attend the New Delhi summit despite tensions. Today, it still sees Saarc as a lifeboat in stormy regional waters, a mechanism to tackle poverty, climate change, and trade stagnation. With global economies teetering and resource wars flaring up, the case for regional unity has never been stronger. The editorial subtly nudges India, hinting that if it can't step up for the collective good, South Asia may have no choice but to march ahead India or no India. The writing's on the wall: the region needs cohesion, not cold shoulders.

Overview:

The article critically examines Saarc's current paralysis due to India's ongoing diplomatic standoff with Pakistan. It sheds light on Pakistan's consistent support for regional cooperation, the potential repercussions of Indian disengagement, and the pressing need for collaborative problem-solving in South Asia. It uses historical comparisons to highlight shifting priorities and calls for renewed efforts to revitalize the regional bloc.

NOTES:

The article critically explores the gradual decline of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), once seen as a beacon of hope for regional integration and cooperation in South Asia. The Organization despite its potential remains crippled by deep-rooted political tensions especially between India and Pakistan. Its infrequent

summits, lack of implementation mechanisms and over-dependence on consensus have stalled progress on trade, connectivity, health and climate cooperation. While global and regional blocs elsewhere are adapting and strengthening, SAARC has failed to evolve largely due to bilateral hostilities overshadowing collective interests. The article underscores how the absence of political will and strategic vision from regional leaders has turned SAARC into a symbolic forum rather than a functional one. Without serious efforts to depoliticize the platform and revive institutional mechanisms, the organization risks complete irrelevance in a region that desperately needs cooperation to face shared challenges like poverty, climate change, and pandemics.

Relevant CSS Subjects or Topics:

- Current Affairs: Saarc, South Asian regionalism, Pakistan-India relations
- International Relations: Regional cooperation, diplomacy, multilateral forums
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy, historical participation in Saarc
- Political Science: Integration theory, regional blocs
- Essay Writing: South Asia's political landscape, collective economic development, diplomacy

Notes for Beginners:

This article is important to understand why regional blocs like Saarc matter. Think of Saarc as a neighborhood committee formed to solve common issues such as garbage disposal, street lighting or water supply but two neighbors stop talking, so the whole committee goes silent. That's what's happened here: India and Pakistan's diplomatic cold war has frozen Saarc. Yet Pakistan has shown restraint and diplomacy by staying engaged, much like someone attending a meeting even if their rival is present. The article uses the example of the 1995 summit to show how cooler heads prevailed back then, something that's missing today.

Facts and Figures:

- Saarc has been inactive since 2016 due to India's boycott of the Islamabad summit.
- Saarc was modeled after ASEAN but failed to achieve similar integration.
- Pakistan reaffirmed commitment to Saarc in 2025 despite reports of new blocs.
- In 1995, President Farooq Leghari represented Pakistan in India during heightened tensions.
- Saarc's charter mandates the presence of all member heads of state/government for a summit to proceed.
- Regional challenges like poverty, climate change, and trade require collective South Asian action.

To sum up, this article is a call to action wrapped in diplomatic finesse. It urges regional powers, especially India to break the ice and breathe life back into Saarc. In a world where unity is strength and isolation is costly, South Asia cannot afford to keep spinning its wheels. For aspirants, this editorial is a masterstroke in how historical memory, strategic patience, and regional interdependence are interwoven in the complex dance of diplomacy. The message is loud and clear: progress demands presence, not absence.

GREEN TOKENISM

Summary:

Pakistan's FY26 climate budget seems to be a textbook case of putting lipstick on a pig. While the government drums up noise about green initiatives, the truth is it's cutting corners with token measures disguised as climate action. Imposing a carbon levy of Rs2.5 per litre on petrol and taxing imported solar panels sounds like a green push, but in practice, it's a kick in the teeth for the poor and a spanner in the works for clean energy adoption. Coal plants still chew through public funds while projects meant to actually help people adapt to climate change get crumbs. What's more alarming is that only 10 percent of the climate budget is set aside for adaptation—this in a country that reels from climate disasters like deadly floods and glacier outbursts every year. Tragedies like the

drowning of 18 tourists in Swat serve as chilling reminders that mitigation-heavy policies are turning a blind eye to the urgency of ground-level realities.

The government seems to be barking up the wrong tree by prioritising long-term, flashy projects instead of people-centric adaptation efforts. It still hasn't followed through on its promise of a climate authority, leaving crucial decisions stuck in limbo. There's a dire need to shift from politically convenient optics to science-backed policies that empower local communities, from farmers to forest dwellers. Climate budgeting shouldn't just be about ticking boxes; it must be about building resilience. As things stand, Pakistan's climate governance is neither here nor there but trapped between hollow rhetoric and half-hearted execution. This article calls for genuine leadership, strong legislation and smarter investment if Pakistan wants to stop chasing its tail and finally stand on firm ground in its climate fight.

Overview:

This article sharply criticises Pakistan's FY26 climate budget, labelling it as symbolic and ineffective in addressing real-time climate challenges. While the budget brands itself as climate-responsive, its main focus lies in long-term mitigation, ignoring the immediate need for adaptation. It highlights the disproportionate funding allocated to mega infrastructure and coal projects instead of community-level climate resilience. The piece also exposes the contradiction of taxing solar imports while subsidising polluting sectors and laments the absence of promised institutions like the climate authority.

NOTES:

This article is one of the essential resource for understanding climate governance challenges in Pakistan. It touches topics such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, energy policies, public budgeting, environmental justice and governance. Aspirants can extract policy critique, governance flaws and real-world examples of misallocation of climate funds. The article provides data-driven insights and critical perspectives which are ideal for developing analytical depth in written responses.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects:

- Environmental Science – The article highlights Pakistan's climate governance, carbon taxation, renewable energy transition, and climate justice, which fall under climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Pakistan Affairs – It discusses the national budget priorities, the socio-economic impact of climate policies, and institutional failures such as the lack of a functional Climate Change Authority.
- Governance and Public Policy – It critiques the inefficiency, tokenism, and lack of effective climate legislation and enforcement, tying into public sector reform and accountability.
- Current Affairs – The editorial connects budgetary allocations with real-time climate challenges, like the Swat River incident and flood recovery, making it relevant to contemporary policy analysis.
- International Relations – Concepts like climate justice, carbon levies, and commitments to international climate frameworks link this article with global environmental diplomacy and negotiations.

Notes for Beginners:

This article shows how governments sometimes make policies that look good on paper but don't help in real life. For example, taxing solar panels discourages clean energy even though we claim to support it. The Rs2.5/litre carbon tax is supposed to reduce pollution but ends up hurting low-income groups who depend on petrol. Only 10 percent of the climate budget is being used for immediate protection like flood safety, even though disasters like the Swat River drowning have shown how urgent adaptation is. The focus remains on long-term projects like dams while poor communities remain exposed. Understanding the difference between mitigation (like building a dam) and adaptation (like providing early warning systems for floods) is important.

Facts and Figures:

- Only 10 percent of FY26's climate budget is dedicated to adaptation

- A Rs2.5 per litre carbon tax imposed on petrol
- Tax added on imported solar panels
- Coal plants continue to receive government support
- 18 tourists drowned in Swat River due to a sudden surge in water
- Climate authority still not established as promised
- Massive dams and motorways still prioritised in climate allocation

To sum up, this article exposes the gap between Pakistan's climate narrative and its real actions. It's a call to switch gears from token gestures to meaningful, science-based governance. Without swift reforms, Pakistan's climate policies will remain trapped in an echo chamber of empty promises. The real test lies not in what the government says, but in what it funds, empowers and protects on the ground.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

1. Greenwashing – presenting something as environmentally friendly when it's not
Synonym: Deception | Antonym: Transparency

2. Mitigation – steps to reduce future climate damage
Synonym: Prevention | Antonym: Negligence

3. Adaptation – adjustments to live with current climate impacts
Synonym: Adjustment | Antonym: Resistance

4. Tokenism – superficial or symbolic action
Synonym: Pretence | Antonym: Sincerity

5. Expediency – doing something for convenience rather than principle
Synonym: Practicality | Antonym: Integrity

HINDUTVA'S MYOPIC DIPLOMACY

Author: Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

India's diplomatic performance under the Hindutva regime has turned into a cautionary tale of how ideology can pull the strings of foreign policy. With one foot stuck in religious extremism and the other trying to tap-dance on the world stage, Modi's government has turned diplomacy into a showbiz act. The recent BRICS summit was yet another feather in the cap of failure, where India showed up with chest-thumping pride but went home empty-handed. China and Russia are redrawing the lines of global power, yet India is busy playing to the gallery with anti-Pakistan rhetoric and photo-ops. The article lays bare how Indian diplomacy has been reduced to a mix of chest-thumping nationalism, botched secret missions, and toxic neighborly ties all wrapped in a cloak of denial and distortion.

The writer cuts to the chase by exposing how the Nehruvian legacy of moral clarity and strategic neutrality has been left to rot. The focus on religion-based foreign decisions, including hostility towards Pakistan and hostility toward Muslim-majority nations, has backfired badly. Countries like Iran, Afghanistan, and even the US have been kept at arm's length or pushed away by either arrogance or sheer incompetence. BRICS' growing alignment with Chinese and Russian leadership exposes how far India has fallen behind in strategic depth. While India's diplomats dance

to the tune of nationalist sentiments, the real diplomatic game is being played without them. The writer's tone doesn't mince words: this is not Diplomacy it's damage control dressed as strategy.

Overview:

The article critically dissects India's foreign policy under the Hindutva-led government, portraying it as ideologically rigid, strategically shallow, and diplomatically isolated. It highlights the failure of Indian diplomacy in regional cooperation, global platforms like BRICS, and bilateral relations with Iran, the US, and Pakistan. The shift from Nehru's non-alignment to today's communal favoritism has led India into a blind alley of missed opportunities and growing irrelevance on the global stage.

NOTES:

This article is immensely useful for building answers in topics like ideological diplomacy, India's strategic behavior, the changing dynamics of BRICS and South Asian political history. It demonstrates how internal politics shape foreign policies and how religious ideology can damage a nation's international stature.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects:

- Current Affairs
 - The article touches on India's diplomatic conduct in the contemporary global arena, particularly in relation to Pakistan, BRICS, and Iran, making it a relevant read for ongoing regional developments.
- International Relations
 - It delves into foreign policy strategies, ideological diplomacy, shifting global alliances, and India's position in multilateral forums like BRICS, reflecting key IR theories and practices.
- Pakistan Affairs
 - The piece addresses India's approach toward Pakistan, historical tensions, and current diplomatic postures, offering insights into bilateral relations that are essential for understanding South Asian dynamics.
- Political Science
 - The content discusses the role of ideology (Hindutva) in shaping state policy and diplomacy, linking it to the broader themes of governance, political thought, and nationalism.

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how foreign policy can go off the rails when religion and politics start calling the shots. For instance, India's decision to sideline Iran due to Saudi or Western preferences hurt its long-term energy and regional plans. Similarly, its over-focus on isolating Pakistan overshadowed more productive regional partnerships. BRICS, once seen as a chance for India to grow economically, has now become a platform where China and Russia dominate. A beginner can understand that diplomacy isn't about showing muscle, it's about building trust and long-term strategy. Countries grow by engaging their neighbors and balancing superpowers not by playing favorites based on religion.

Facts and Figures:

- BRICS now represents over 40% of the world's population and about 25% of global GDP
- Iran was invited to BRICS while India struggled to influence decisions
- India's oil imports from Iran dropped from over 450,000 barrels per day in 2018 to nearly zero by 2020 under US pressure
- India's diplomatic rankings in global indices have slipped in recent years
- China and Russia's push for BRICS to create its own currency sidelines India's global financial ambitions

To sum up, this article is a call for how not to run a country's diplomacy. When a nation puts ideology before interest, pride before partnership, and politics before pragmatism, it ends up playing a losing hand on the global table

'SOUTH ASIAN QUAD?'

Author - Khurram Abbas

Summary:

I'm writing this while observing a clear shift in Pakistan's regional diplomacy, which is now increasingly leaning toward minilateralism that is forming focused alliances with like-minded states for targeted cooperation. The article paints a vivid picture of how Pakistan, with strong backing from China, is warming up to countries like Afghanistan and Bangladesh to stitch together a 'South Asian Quad' of sorts. With SAARC running out of steam and India's strategic cold shoulder toward it, Islamabad has decided not to cry over spilled milk and instead create alternate routes to safeguard its regional interests. The trilateral talks with Afghanistan and Bangladesh aren't just symbolic gestures but timely strategic moves, especially when New Delhi is trying to deepen BIMSTEC as its pet project. What really adds meat to the matter is China's growing role in the region, bringing with it economic muscle and strategic depth. From the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan railway to diplomatic thawing between Kabul and Islamabad, this new wave of trilateralism is bearing fruit. The article hits the nail on the head by pointing out that India's paranoia about a China-Pakistan-driven regional club is not baseless. However, the big question mark still looms large: will these forums survive political changes, especially in countries like Bangladesh? Still, for now, Pakistan seems to be calling the shots at the right moment, capitalising on shifting regional sands and India's own hesitancy.

Overview:

The article explores Pakistan's strategic pivot toward forming minilateral alliances in South Asia, highlighting its trilateral engagements with Afghanistan and Bangladesh supported by China. With SAARC virtually dead in the water due to India's resistance, Islamabad is pursuing alternative forums for regional influence, hoping to establish a 'South Asian Quad'. The writer underscores the practicality, speed, and strategic edge of such focused alliances in contrast to large, stagnant regional organisations.

NOTES:

This article shares real-time examples of evolving diplomacy, trilateral dialogues, and geopolitical realignments. For questions on regional cooperation, Indo-Pak rivalry, China's regional role, or the decline of SAARC, this article provides solid material. It also helps frame answers around alternative diplomacy models like minilateralism, which are gaining traction in the post-globalisation world.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy of Pakistan, Regional cooperation, Relations with neighboring countries
- International Relations: Minilateralism, Strategic alliances, Regional security, China's role in South Asia
- Current Affairs: SAARC and BIMSTEC dynamics, South Asian geopolitics
- Essay: Regionalism vs nationalism, Pakistan's evolving foreign policy

Notes for Beginners:

Minilateralism is a new trend in diplomacy where countries form smaller groups for targeted cooperation. For instance, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan are working together on infrastructure like the Uzbekistan railway project. This is faster and more focused than traditional groups like SAARC, which includes eight countries and often faces political deadlock. Pakistan is now trying to build a similar partnership with Bangladesh. The idea is to avoid India's interference and create cooperation on mutual interests like trade and security.

Facts and Figures:

- SAARC hasn't held a summit since 2014
- India boycotted the 2016 SAARC summit hosted by Pakistan
- China has invested over \$100 billion in South Asia through BRI

- All South Asian countries except India and Bhutan are part of the BRI
- Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan railway is a major trilateral project
- Trilateral forums recently held: May (Pakistan-Afghanistan-China) and June (Pakistan-Bangladesh-China)

To sum up, this article is a timely and sharply written piece that underlines Pakistan's shifting diplomatic game plan. It reveals how Islamabad is wisely reading the regional tea leaves and reshaping its alliances to get out of SAARC's shadow and beat New Delhi at its own game. The concept of a South Asian Quad may be nascent, but it reflects a larger trend where countries take their fate into their own hands, especially when old alliances have turned toothless. Whether this new bloc finds its feet or not, one thing is clear: Pakistan is no longer waiting for SAARC's revival but is taking matters into its own hands.

KILLING FIELDS

Summary:

Israel's barbaric onslaught in Gaza has crossed every line of humanity and decency. With every passing day, the scale of this bloodbath grows larger, yet the world remains shamelessly tight-lipped. Netanyahu's move to nominate Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize is like adding insult to injury, especially while his forces are butchering innocent Palestinians in cold blood. Gaza, once a vibrant and densely populated strip, has now turned into a living graveyard where dreams are buried under rubble and despair. The comparison drawn between the Zionist atrocities and Nazi fascism isn't poetic exaggeration, it's a chilling reality the world keeps brushing under the carpet.

The article throws light on how strategic diplomacy and the so-called war on terror have become convenient covers for ethnic cleansing. While Israel wraps its genocide in the garb of "security" and "deradicalisation," the real picture is one of hunger, displacement, and horror. The UN's repeated warnings fall on deaf ears as Israel eyes Rafah for a final push, planning to push Palestinians out of Gaza completely. What's worse is the eerie silence from the same world powers that once said "Never Again." If anything, this is a betrayal of humanity and an alarming reminder that history has a dark habit of repeating itself.

Overview:

This article sharply condemns the ongoing genocide in Gaza, calling out the double standards of global powers who once stood against fascism but now enable it through silence and complicity. It highlights the brutal intentions of the Israeli government to displace Palestinians completely, making it a well-planned ethnic cleansing operation masked under counterterrorism and security narratives.

NOTES:

This editorial analyzes international silence on war crimes, explores how state narratives manipulate global discourse, and questions the failure of international humanitarian law. The article can be referenced while discussing the politics of genocide, the role of international organisations, and power imbalance in global diplomacy. Also the contrast drawn between historical fascism and modern Zionism is relevant for critical analysis sections.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects:

- Current Affairs: Middle East crisis, humanitarian catastrophes, geopolitics
- International Relations: War crimes, genocide, Zionism, global diplomatic response
- Political Science: State power, fascism, ethnic cleansing, international law violations
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's stance on Palestine and broader Muslim world concerns
- International Law: Geneva Conventions, laws of war, rights of displaced populations

Notes for Beginners: This article explains how the Israeli military is not just fighting Hamas, but wiping out Palestinian lives, homes, and identity. The term "genocide" means systematically killing people of a certain race or

religion. Here, Israel's strategy is to remove all Palestinians from Gaza, especially through bombings and pushing them towards Rafah, near the Egyptian border. The world's silence shows how international politics can ignore human suffering when big powers are involved. For instance, even when over 83,000 people have died, major countries still support Israel. The article encourages readers to question power, media silence and how the strong twist narratives to justify atrocities.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 83,000 people reportedly killed in Gaza since the conflict escalated
- Rafah, the last major shelter for Palestinians, is now targeted for invasion
- Israel's Defence Minister openly announced plans for "ethnic cleansing"
- UN and other agencies continue to warn about famine and medical collapse
- Historical parallels drawn between Nazi genocide and modern Israeli actions

To sum up, the article hits like a hammer to the conscience. It doesn't tiptoe around the issue but slams the door on neutrality. It calls a spade a spade, laying bare how international hypocrisy and power politics enable a second Holocaust in plain sight. This isn't just an article, it's a moral outcry against the deafening silence of the so-called civilised world.

A WORLD IN CHANGE

Author: Khurram Husain

The world as we know it is on the brink of a massive shake-up, with two revolutions solar power and digital payments, coming full steam ahead. These aren't just flashes in the pan; they're game-changers. Solar energy, which once looked like a luxury, has now become mainstream thanks to plunging panel prices and China's dominance in supply. What started with President Obama's push for clean energy has snowballed into a silent storm sweeping across rooftops everywhere. Now, the missing puzzle piece storage is being snapped into place with rapidly evolving battery technology. Picture this: your car becomes a battery on wheels, your house generates its own power, and the grid becomes little more than a relic, like telephone wires buried beneath our feet. The grid-based electricity model, with its bloated bureaucracy and stranded costs, is slowly losing its grip as we inch toward true energy independence.

The second upheaval is happening in your wallet. Digital payments are moving in fast, aiming to pull the rug from under our cash-loving economy. While the roadblocks, Pakistan's shadow economy, tax evasion, and smuggling cling to cash like a lifeline, the tide is turning. From corner stores to agriculture markets, resistance is strong, but not unshakable. As secure, user-friendly cashless systems spread like wildfire, the writing is on the wall for cash-based dealings. These revolutions won't wait for anyone to catch up. If the state doesn't step in to back them smartly, it risks being left in the dust while the world races ahead. This isn't just a shift; it's a seismic change in how we produce energy and handle money—and the sooner we adapt, the better we'll ride the coming wave.

NOTES:

This Article explains the global transition in power generation from fossil-fuel-based grids to solar energy, and the transformation in financial systems from physical currency to digital transactions. Key facts include Obama's green energy initiative, China's rise as the top solar supplier, and the declining cost of battery storage which is revolutionising both personal and national energy systems. The article also critiques Pakistan's slow adoption of digital payment systems due to systemic corruption, undocumented economic activities, and tax evasion. These are excellent talking points for policy analysis, reform proposals, and understanding global economic shifts.

CSS Syllabus Relevance:

- Current Affairs, General Science & Ability (energy and technology).

- Essay (topics like digitisation and sustainable energy).
- Pakistan Affairs (infrastructure and economic reform).
- Governance & Public Policy (role of state in facilitating or hindering change).

Notes for Beginners:

Solar panels are becoming a household essential, just like mobile phones once were. For instance in 2015 very few households had solar setups, but by 2025 it's become a norm in urban areas. The drop in panel prices mainly due to Chinese production and the advent of affordable batteries means people can now generate and store electricity themselves. Likewise, digital payments like JazzCash, Easypaisa, and Raast are changing how we shop, pay bills, and transfer money. However, Pakistan's heavy reliance on undocumented cash flow—especially in agriculture, real estate, and retail—is slowing this shift. Still, as battery storage improves and mobile banking gets simpler, even remote areas will be part of this digital and energy revolution.

Facts and Figures:

- **Solar Energy Prices:** The cost of solar panels has dropped by nearly 90% over the past decade, making solar one of the cheapest sources of energy globally.
- **China's Role:** China currently accounts for over 80% of the world's solar panel production, dominating the global supply chain and reducing costs through economies of scale.
- **Battery Storage:** The cost of lithium-ion battery storage has decreased by around 85% since 2010, enabling more efficient and affordable energy storage for homes and businesses.
- **Electric Vehicles (EVs):** Electric cars like Tesla are now being used as mobile power storage units, with models capable of storing up to 75–100 kWh, which can run a home for 2–3 days during outages.
- **Digital Payments in Pakistan:** As of 2023, only around 1.5% of retail transactions in Pakistan are digital, highlighting heavy reliance on cash.
- **Tax Evasion Impact:** Pakistan's informal or undocumented economy is estimated to be around 36–50% of the total GDP, contributing to low tax collection and hampering digital financial inclusion.
- **Government Incentives:** The State Bank of Pakistan and NADRA have supported digital banking, but adoption remains low due to lack of trust, digital literacy, and incentives in rural and semi-urban areas.
- **Power Distribution Losses:** Pakistan suffers from transmission and distribution losses of over 17%, whereas international best practices keep it below 10%, making solar and off-grid solutions more attractive.

To sum up, this article lays bare the massive shifts already underway in how the world produces power and manages money. As solar panels and digital wallets gain ground, systems that once looked immovable are being swept aside. For Pakistan to thrive in this new age, we need foresight, not fear. The state must stop clinging to old investments and instead, invest in the future.

SPURIOUS DRUGS

Author: Naeem Sadiq

Summary:

Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry is under siege from a flood of counterfeit and substandard medicines, with the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimating that one in ten drugs in developing countries is fake. In Pakistan, the number rises alarmingly to over 50% for life-saving drugs. The situation is dire, with a nationwide network of counterfeiters operating from Multan to Karachi and Lahore to the remote corners of Balochistan. However, a transformative solution has emerged. The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has launched a mobile app that allows consumers to verify the authenticity of medicines via QR codes. This app not only detects fake drugs but also incentivises users by offering a 2% cashback on each scanned product, whether genuine or

counterfeit. More importantly, it nudges citizens toward digital banking and encourages the transition from an informal to a formal economy, achieving dual goals of public health protection and financial inclusion.

The app's process is elegantly simple: register once using CNIC and a bank account or wallet ID, scan any medicine's QR code, and instantly receive a message confirming its safety or warning of its falseness. Simultaneously, scan data is sent to DRAP, and a 2% reward is transferred to the user's bank account. The built-in system prevents repeated scans of the same code. This initiative, though technologically modest, has the potential to spark a nationwide movement against counterfeit pharmaceuticals and simultaneously pull millions into Pakistan's formal financial system—a feat the country's institutions have struggled to achieve for decades.

Overview:

This article tackles the growing threat of counterfeit medicines in Pakistan and DRAP's innovative app-based response. It highlights how technology can empower ordinary citizens to detect fake drugs, inform regulatory authorities, and benefit financially, all while promoting digital financial inclusion. The article is a powerful example of low-cost, citizen-centric reform with massive potential impact.

NOTES:

The article outlines Pakistan's grave issue with counterfeit and substandard medicines, especially life-saving drugs which are reportedly over 50% fake. The counterfeit drug trade spans cities like Multan, Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar. It indicates a deeply rooted nationwide problem. In response, DRAP's launch of a mobile app introduces a practical, user-friendly solution that allows consumers to verify medicine authenticity via QR code scanning. This system not only provides real-time verification but also notifies DRAP and transfers 2% of the medicine's value to the user's bank account or digital wallet. The article stresses the broader implications: the app encourages formal banking, provides public health protection and empowers citizens. It's a rare example of policy that is simple, scalable and impactful, achieving what decades of government campaigns could not.

Related CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Public health governance, regulatory institutions
- Current Affairs: Technological interventions in developing economies
- Governance & Public Policy: Anti-counterfeit measures, digital inclusion
- Economic Development: Informal to formal economy transition
- Science and Technology: Mobile health (mHealth) applications in governance

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how fake medicines are harming people in Pakistan. Over half of the life-saving drugs might not be real. To stop this, a new app by DRAP lets people scan a QR code on medicine to check if it is safe. If they use the app, they also get back 2% of the medicine's cost. It's a smart idea that helps people stay healthy and brings more people into the banking system. Even small rewards can help big changes happen in a country like Pakistan.

Facts and Figures:

- \$83 billion worth of counterfeit drugs sold worldwide each year (WHO).
- 10% of medical products in developing countries are fake.
- Over 50% of life-saving drugs in Pakistan are reportedly counterfeit.
- QR code scanning rewards users with 2% cashback, regardless of drug authenticity.
- One-time registration via CNIC and bank/wallet account required.
- Repeat scans of the same code are blocked to prevent abuse.

To sum up, this article is a powerful example of how practical, citizen-oriented innovation can address deep-rooted issues in health and governance. It combines verification, accountability, and public incentive in one elegant solution. It gives Pakistan a realistic shot at tackling counterfeit drugs while promoting digital financial growth.

JUDICIAL OVERSIGHT

Author: Aisha Khan

Summary:

In Pakistan's growing climate crisis, judicial oversight has come out swinging as a powerful tool to fill the gap left by sluggish policy implementation and fractured governance. Despite having climate blueprints like the National Climate Change Policy 2021 and the Paris Agreement's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the country's progress has been more talk than action. The article shows how Pakistan is hurtling toward a climate catastrophe with weak governance, poor interprovincial coordination, and overburdened ecosystems while the courts have quietly started to pick up the slack. By interpreting fundamental rights through a climate lens, the judiciary has expanded its reach to include access to clean water, air and a healthy environment under the right to life and dignity clauses of the Constitution. Suo motu actions and public interest litigation are now forcing environmental accountability into the spotlight, giving civil society a leg to stand on when bureaucracy stays silent.

As things go from bad to worse such as with melting glaciers, shrinking forests and vanishing biodiversity the courts are being called upon to not just interpret laws, but to actively safeguard the future. The Margalla Hills National Park is flagged as a case in point: a unique chance to test-run how judicial intervention can harmonise policies and ecological priorities. The article drives home the idea that this isn't just about nature anymore, it's about survival. When the executive turns a blind eye and the legislature drags its feet, it's time the judiciary puts its foot down. The need of the hour is decisive judicial muscle to enforce climate obligations, protect vulnerable populations, and turn toothless environmental pledges into ironclad constitutional commitments.

Overview:

This article touches upon climate justice, judicial activism, institutional inefficiencies and policy gaps. Candidates should take note of how constitutional interpretation is evolving to cover environmental rights and how judicial institutions can influence public policy in the absence of effective governance.

NOTES:

The article underscores the rising importance of judicial oversight as an alternative force in Pakistan's climate governance landscape. Courts have started applying Articles 9 and 14 of the Constitution in a climate context, asserting that environmental well-being is integral to the right to life and dignity. Judicial interventions, such as suo motu actions under Article 184(3), allow courts to step in even without formal petitions, making the judiciary an active player in climate accountability. With the executive and legislature largely inert in enforcing environmental commitments, courts are increasingly interpreting climate inaction as a human rights violation. Landmark legal principles like environmental justice and the incorporation of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) are gaining ground. Margalla Hills National Park is presented as a testbed for aligning ecological protection with judicial mandates. The absence of coherent federal and provincial coordination has made such judicial involvement not only necessary but vital for meaningful climate action in Pakistan.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects:

- Environmental Science:
 - Climate change and its effects, Environmental governance, Sustainable development, Nature-based solutions
- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Constitutional provisions and judicial interventions, public policy and institutional challenges, environmental issues in Pakistan
- Governance & Public Policy:
 - Role of judiciary in policy implementation

- Public interest litigation and suo motu powers
- Inter-institutional coordination failures
- Current Affairs:
 - Pakistan's climate vulnerability
 - International commitments like the Paris Agreement and NDCs
 - Recent developments in environmental jurisprudence

Notes for Beginners:

In simple terms, the article explains that when government departments fail to protect the environment, the courts can step in and force them to act. Pakistan has laws and policies for climate action, but they are often ignored. The courts are now treating clean air, water, and a healthy environment as basic human rights under the Constitution, particularly Article 9 (right to life) and Article 14 (right to dignity). This means that protecting nature is not just a good thing, it's a legal duty. Even if no one files a case, the Supreme Court can act on its own to address environmental harm. A famous example is the Leghari case, where a farmer sued the government for failing to follow climate rules, and the court ruled in his favor. These kinds of legal steps are helping ordinary people hold the government accountable for climate negligence, especially since Pakistan is highly vulnerable to climate change despite contributing very little to global pollution.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan contributes less than 1% to global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it ranks among the top 5 countries most vulnerable to climate change (Global Climate Risk Index).
- The National Climate Change Policy 2021 and NDCs under the Paris Agreement exist, but their implementation remains weak and inconsistent.
- In the Leghari v. Federation of Pakistan (2015) case, the Lahore High Court declared climate inaction a violation of constitutional rights.
- The Supreme Court's suo motu powers under Article 184(3) enable it to address environmental issues without a formal complaint.
- Margalla Hills National Park is cited as a case study for judicial-environmental policy integration in urban ecological zones.
- Pakistan has lost nearly one-third of its forest cover since 1990, worsening biodiversity loss and climate vulnerability.

Glacier melt in Pakistan's northern areas is occurring at an accelerated pace, threatening water availability for millions downstream.

To sum up, this article cuts straight to the heart of Pakistan's climate paralysis and makes a compelling case for judicial activism to steer the ship. It provides a no-nonsense reality check on how court rooms may become the last line of defense against environmental collapse. For students, policy professionals, and activists alike, this piece is both a warning and a roadmap: when systems fail, it's the constitution that must do the heavy lifting.

POVERTY & EXTREMISM

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

Extremism is often blamed on poverty, but the link is more complex than it seems on the surface. Many governments use poverty as a convenient scapegoat, sweeping under the rug deeper issues like ethnic tension, governance failures and unequal resource distribution. The article points out that while Pakistan and other countries rank poorly in both

poverty and terrorism indexes, this is not a one-size-fits-all equation. Israel, for example, ranks high in terrorism activity but is economically and educationally advanced, suggesting ideological and geopolitical motives play a bigger role there. On the other hand, countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger display a clearer overlap between poverty, poor literacy and rising extremism. This mixed bag of evidence shows that while poverty is a key ingredient, it's not the only one in the recipe for terrorism.

The piece hammers home that militant groups don't just feed on hunger but also on hopelessness and manipulation. Extremists offer money, food and purpose, but their real fuel is state neglect, joblessness and lack of education. Shockingly, many terrorists aren't just poor and uneducated—two-thirds of a militant sample from various regions were university graduates. So, what really pulls people into this black hole isn't just empty stomachs but empty promises, blocked paths, and emotional exploitation. The author argues that solving poverty must be paired with strong education systems, youth development, political inclusion and community engagement. He stresses that only by winning hearts and equipping minds can states pull the rug out from under extremism.

Overview:

The article looks into the multifaceted connection between poverty and extremism, particularly in countries like Pakistan. It uses global data to argue that poverty alone doesn't light the fire of terrorism, it's a mixture of political failure, ideological brainwashing and systemic neglect. It recommends a more holistic state response that focuses not just on economic aid but also on education, social inclusion and community building to prevent radicalisation.

NOTES:

This article provides a critical look into how socio-economic disparity, poor governance and lack of education create a perfect storm for extremism to rise. The use of international statistics and real-world comparisons allows aspirants to cite strong evidence in their answers. This article subtly critiques the state's narrow approach to counterterrorism,

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Terrorism and extremism in the global context
- Current Affairs: Security threats, governance, socio-economic issues
- Pakistan Affairs: Poverty, terrorism and counter-extremism policy
- Governance and Public Policy: Education, inequality, state capacity and civic inclusion
- Sociology: Causes and impacts of radicalisation
- Essay Paper: Topics on terrorism, poverty, or education as a counter-extremism tool

Notes for Beginners:

This article says that just being poor doesn't turn people into terrorists. For example, in many poor African countries, people live tough lives but don't always become violent. However, when poor people feel ignored or cheated by the government and are told by extremist groups that they can be heroes or get revenge, they might join. Some groups offer food, money or even just a sense of being important. That's how they brainwash people. Also, not all extremists are poor. Many are educated. So the problem is bigger than just poverty. It's about lack of hope, joblessness and unfair systems. The article tells the government to focus more on schools, jobs and justice instead of just using force.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan is the 50th poorest country but ranks 2nd on the Global Terrorism Index (GTI)
- Burkina Faso is the 16th poorest and ranks 1st in terrorism
- Israel ranks 157th in poverty but 8th in terrorism, showing a different cause
- Pakistan's HDI ranking is 168th out of 193 countries
- Around 44.7% of Pakistan's population lives below the poverty line according to the World Bank
- A study from 1966-1970 found that two-thirds of militants were graduates, debunking the myth that terrorists are all uneducated

- Top GTI countries mostly fall between 155 and 192 in HDI, showing a clear development-extremism link

To wrap up, the article suggests that poverty may open the door to extremism, but it's the government's negligence that lets the enemy walk through it. It's not just about bread and water, it's about dignity, justice and purpose. Militants know how to fill that void, but the state often doesn't. The takeaway is loud and clear: if we want to end terrorism, we must start by building hope. Without a national strategy that marries economic inclusion with educational uplift, the fight against extremism will always be half-baked.

PARALLEL WARS

Author: Fahd Humayun

Summary:

In the wake of the recent 12-day Israel-Iran war, the article unpacks how the strategic mindsets behind these confrontations are reshaping the playbooks of other nuclear and regional powers, particularly India and Pakistan. The writer argues that these conflicts show a growing temptation among states to engage in short, sharp wars that target not only borders but the hearts of major cities. While both the Israel-Iran and India-Pakistan dyads share some striking similarities, such as escalation patterns and political motives, key differences like nuclear deterrence, military parity, and geographical proximity must not be glossed over. Failing to distinguish between these dynamics can lead to fatal miscalculations.

The piece drills down into how future conflicts between India and Pakistan may take dangerous cues from Israel's tactics, ranging from deep cyber infiltration to targeting leadership and creating chaos in urban centers. These aren't just shots in the dark; they're calculated moves meant to dominate the narrative as much as the battlefield. As the lines between deterrence and provocation blur, the writer warns that the next war may not be shaped by South Asia's past, but by someone else's recent headlines. The onus is now on policymakers to prepare for a conflict where information warfare and strategic mimicry could ignite a fire no one can put out.

Overview:

The article evaluates the ripple effect of the Israel-Iran conflict on the India-Pakistan dynamic, warning against blind imitation. It explores how modern warfare is evolving from territorial fights to psychological and technological battles, where perception often matters more than results. Pakistan must tread carefully in a landscape where others' military adventures could dangerously influence local strategic thinking.

NOTES:

The article draws a compelling parallel between Pakistan's economic survival and its fight against terrorism, portraying both as equally critical wars that must be fought simultaneously. It highlights the irony that while Islamabad remains absorbed in IMF negotiations and internal political disorder, the threat of terrorism is rapidly expanding and underscored by the deadly attack on Chinese engineers in Besham and the ambush on security forces in Tank. These incidents signal the resurgence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the looming threat of regional instability, especially with Afghanistan acting as a safe haven for such groups. The editorial criticizes the Pakistani state's lack of strategic urgency and coordination, pointing out that although the National Action Plan exists on paper, implementation has been superficial. It warns that without decisive, sustained counterterrorism policies and a parallel effort to stabilize the economy, Pakistan risks falling into chaos. The article stresses that these are not separate fronts but interconnected battles that demand unified national focus, strong civilian-military **coordination, and political will to enforce long-term reforms, secure borders, and rebuild public confidence.**

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations (Conflict & Strategic Studies, Deterrence Theory)
- Current Affairs (India-Pakistan Relations, Middle East Impact)
- Pakistan Affairs (Regional Security and Foreign Policy)

- Political Science (Nuclear Diplomacy, Strategic Doctrine)
- Essay Paper (Topics on South Asian Security, Modern Warfare, Regional Peace)

Notes for Beginners:

This article is saying that Pakistan and India may be learning risky lessons from the Israel-Iran war. For example, Israel attacked Iran's cities and leaders directly, and Pakistan or India might do the same in a future war. This is very dangerous because if India hits Islamabad, then Pakistan will feel forced to respond in the same way. These kinds of actions can lead to full-blown war, especially when nuclear weapons are involved. The article is warning that copying others' wars without thinking about our own reality can be like playing with fire. Instead, Pakistan needs to think smart and prepare for modern threats, like cyber attacks and psychological warfare, not just tanks and missiles.

Facts and Figures:

- Israel-Iran conflict lasted 12 days and involved direct strikes on cities and leadership
- Pakistan did not use cruise missiles in its latest encounter with India, despite capability
- Escalation dynamics differ due to Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and geographical proximity to India
- Modern war outcomes increasingly depend on satellite imagery and global media perception
- India has been expanding foreign intelligence operations, particularly from Pakistan's western border

To sum up, this article holds a mirror up to how the world of warfare is shifting beneath our feet. What was once a matter of boots on the ground is now a race for information, influence, and psychological control. Pakistan caught in a fragile regional balance cannot afford to fight the next war based on someone else's last one. If decision-makers blindly follow a script written in Tel Aviv or Tehran, they might light a match too close to the powder keg. Strategic maturity, not mimicry, must guide South Asia's future if peace is to have any chance of survival.

THE NEGLECTED CRISIS

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

Pakistan is skating on thin ice when it comes to human development, yet this existential crisis barely makes it to the national agenda. While the government is bogged down in its endless economic firefighting, vital issues like education, health, poverty, and gender inequality are swept under the rug. The country's dismal ranking of 168 out of 193 on the Human Development Index should have triggered sirens in Islamabad, but the silence is deafening. The numbers speak for themselves over 26 million children are out of school, half of them girls, and the education budget has dropped to a shocking 0.8% of GDP. What's worse, political leaders often pay lip service to these crises without putting their money where their mouth is. From hollow declarations of education emergencies to ghost policies on population planning, everything remains stuck in the realm of rhetoric.

The article shows a nation squandering its greatest asset to its people. The youth bulge which could be a launchpad for progress is turning into a ticking time bomb due to illiteracy, unemployment, and lack of skills. Poverty has climbed to 44%, and malnutrition has left nearly 40% of children stunted, condemning them to a future riddled with disease and deprivation. Gender disparities are equally jarring, with Pakistan ranked dead last in the Global Gender Gap Index and female labour participation trailing miserably. The author makes it crystal clear unless Pakistan wakes up and pours resources into its people, dreams of economic recovery will remain a mirage. Inaction today will mortgage the nation's tomorrow.

Overview:

The article shines a spotlight on Pakistan's deepening human development crisis, warning that neglecting education, health, gender parity, and population control will drag the country further into economic stagnation. It criticizes the

government's tendency to sideline these issues in favor of short-term economic fixes and hollow declarations, stressing that true progress demands urgent investment in human capital.

NOTES:

This article provides in depth analysis of Pakistan's failure to prioritize human development despite alarming indicators. The author underlines that economic development cannot occur in a vacuum, it is fundamentally tied to investing in education, health, gender equality, and population control. The article exposes the contradiction between official rhetoric and actual budgetary allocations, particularly the shocking fall of the education budget from 2% to 0.8% of GDP. The article also serves as a reminder that long-term planning and sincere implementation of policy, rather than populist declarations, are what can avert the looming demographic and economic crisis. The emphasis on constitutional rights (Article 25A) and international indices makes it a rich source for quoting in essays and arguments.

Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Human development, education, poverty, health
- Current Affairs: Economic policy, gender issues, population planning
- Governance & Public Policy: Budget priorities, policy failure, implementation gaps
- International Relations: Human Development Index, World Bank and UNDP reports
- Essay & Precis: Human capital, demographic challenges, education crisis

Notes for Beginners:

This article makes it clear that Pakistan's real crisis isn't just economic, it's human. For example, out of every 10 children in the country about 4 never attend school, and half of those who do drop out before learning anything meaningful. That's like trying to build a skyscraper without bricks. Similarly, when 40% of our kids under five are stunted due to poor food, it means their brains and bodies won't grow properly. So how can they become productive citizens? The article also explains that simply announcing plans, like calling for an education emergency, isn't enough. If the government doesn't back up its promises with real money and real actions, nothing changes. This is a wake-up call for us all.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan ranks 168 out of 193 in the UNDP Human Development Index 2025
- Over 26 million children (aged 5–16) are out of school, 50% of them girls
- Education budget is 0.8% of GDP, down from 2% in 2018 — one of the lowest in South Asia
- Child stunting affects 40% of children under five, according to World Bank
- Poverty rate stands at 44%, while extreme poverty has risen from 4.9% to 16.5%
- Female labour participation is 22%, compared to over 80% for males
- Pakistan ranks 148th (last) in the Global Gender Gap Index 2025

To sum up, this article exposes the gap between Pakistan's potential and its priorities. It warns that the nation is running on borrowed time if it fails to invest in its people. This is more than a policy failure but it's a moral one. The solution isn't rocket science: fund education, fix health systems, empower women, and plan population growth smartly. But unless leaders stop kicking the can down the road and start walking the talk, Pakistan will keep spinning its wheels in the mud of underdevelopment. It's time to stop treating human development like a footnote and make it the headline.

Your Thoughts on the Article:

HOLD YOUR AI HORSES

Author: Zahrah Mazhar

Summary:

As artificial intelligence hurtles forward at breakneck speed, much of the world, including Pakistan, is dragging its feet when it comes to drawing up the rules of engagement. The article rings the alarm bell on the unchecked use of generative AI across industries, particularly in countries where oversight is a mere afterthought. While AI tools promise efficiency, savings, and innovation, the writer cautions against jumping the gun. Without proper regulation, ethical consideration, or structured oversight, the technology may do more harm than good. With Pakistan's National AI Policy still gathering dust since its 2023 draft, the absence of guardrails leaves wide room for misuse from data privacy violations to institutional dependence on unverified outputs.

The piece also dissects how AI is being handled globally, highlighting examples like the UAE's appointment of an AI minister or Kenya's strategic national framework. Pakistan, in contrast, is dabbling in AI without a clear roadmap. While a few institutions like the Supreme Court and Aga Khan University are taking baby steps toward responsible integration, others, especially the media industry, are walking blindfolded. The article pulls no punches in pointing out how generative AI is flooding digital spaces with lazy, biased, and sometimes downright bizarre content. It argues that the real problem isn't the technology itself but it's the blind trust and lack of structure around it. If Pakistan doesn't get its act together, it risks being left in the dust or worse, overrun by the very technology it's trying to harness.

Overview:

This article lays bare the growing chaos surrounding unregulated AI usage in Pakistan and beyond. It presses for urgent policy development and institutional accountability before generative AI tools spiral out of control. Through global comparisons and real-time examples, the writer shows how carelessly adopting AI without ethical frameworks is a recipe for disaster.

NOTES:

This article highlights the growing gap between AI adoption and policy implementation, an issue that is gaining traction globally. The writer emphasizes that while AI is here to stay, its use must be governed with foresight and responsibility. The article is especially relevant when discussing public policy failures, digital governance, ethical dilemmas in technology, and institutional readiness. Aspirants can cite this article to showcase how global examples of AI readiness contrast with Pakistan's sluggish policy-making. It's a wake-up call for policymakers and an eye-opener for aspirants eager to present grounded, current and critical perspectives on emerging technologies.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Technology Policy, Institutional Capacity
- Current Affairs: Artificial Intelligence, Global Technology Trends
- Governance & Public Policy: Ethical Use of Technology, Regulatory Oversight
- Science & Technology: Emerging Technologies, Digital Transformation
- Essay: Ethics in AI, Technology and Society, Future of Work

Notes for Beginners:

This article makes it easy to grasp how dangerous it can be to use a powerful tool like AI without any safety net. Imagine giving a child a chainsaw without showing them how to use it, that's how risky it is when AI tools are used without rules. The writer explains how even major newsrooms are using AI without guidelines, leading to embarrassing mistakes like showing witches in a news story about black magic. Some places like Aga Khan University are trying to handle it responsibly, but that's not enough. Think of AI as a high-speed train, but without tracks it crashes. Pakistan needs policies and departments to guide its direction before it's too late.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's National AI Policy, drafted in May 2023, still not finalized as of mid-2025
- Aga Khan University has a dedicated AI division to support academic and research use
- In April 2025, the Supreme Court recognized the use of AI to support, not replace human judgment
- State Bank of Pakistan is working on AI guidelines for the financial sector
- UAE appointed a Minister for AI in 2017, and Kenya launched a National AI Strategy 2025–2030 in March 2025
- Media outlets in Pakistan are using AI without formal guidelines, leading to biased or inaccurate representations

To sum up, this article doesn't mince words in calling out the reckless embrace of AI without responsibility. While the potential of AI is sky-high, so are the risks if left unchecked. Zahrah Mazhar masterfully warns that enthusiasm must be matched with ethics, and speed with structure. Pakistan's lag in finalizing its AI policy is not just a bureaucratic delay, it's a ticking time bomb. Until we stop treating AI like a magic wand and start managing it like a tool with limits, we'll remain trapped in a loop of mistakes, biases, and missed opportunities. The future isn't about whether we use AI or not, it's about whether we use it wisely.

DIGITAL GAPS

Summary:

Pakistan stands at a digital turning point but has so far snubbed every opportunity to leap forward. While the world races ahead, leveraging technology to redefine governance, commerce, and citizen engagement, Pakistan remains stuck in quicksand—talking big but delivering little. With only 17.7 per cent of citizens using digital payments and e-commerce raking in \$10 billion compared to Bangladesh's \$16 billion, the country's digital engine is sputtering. Structural roadblocks, poor policy cohesion, feeble infrastructure, and scant trust are shackling progress and making the digital promise feel like a distant mirage.

Enter the Asian Development Bank's call: cut GST on digital payments to 5 per cent, slash corporate taxes for digitized SMEs, set aside 15 per cent of bank lending for tech startups, bring foreign exchange into the picture, and fully embrace the Pakistan Digital Stack. These sweeping incentives could turbocharge the ICT industry, boost e-commerce, and grow digital trust across the board. Yet the plan bumps into resistance from Pakistan's tax authorities and the demands of the IMF's \$7 billion fiscal sanity package. A tug-of-war between short-term revenue and long-term transformation. The article clinches the argument: Pakistan must stop kicking the can down the road and risk being left gasping for relevance in the global digital marathon.

Overview:

The article highlights Pakistan's failure to transform digital aspirations into tangible outcomes despite possessing a youthful population, expanding internet infrastructure, and prior government pushes. By juxtaposing Pakistan's low digital payment penetration and e-commerce performance with regional peers like Bangladesh and India, it exposes missed opportunities. The piece then maps out the ADB's strategic proposals aimed at incentivizing digital uptake but also acknowledges the friction these reforms create within Pakistan's current fiscal framework and international loan obligations. It warns that hesitating now could mean falling irretrievably behind.

NOTES:

Pakistan's digital economy remains stunted: just 17.7 per cent of people use digital payments, 24 per cent hold payment cards (versus India's 71 per cent), and e-commerce stands at \$10 billion compared to Bangladesh's \$16 billion in 2023. The ADB recommends sweeping reforms: cutting GST on digital transactions to 5 per cent, reducing corporate tax for registered ICT SMEs by 10 per cent, allocating 15 per cent of banking loans to tech startups, and establishing a Data Exchange Layer and full deployment of the Pakistan Digital Stack. This approach

aims to boost SME digitization, stimulate foreign investment, reduce cash economy inefficiencies, and empower citizens. Yet entrenched bureaucracy, revenue concerns, and IMF-aligned austerity measures are pushing back, making comprehensive digital reform a tough sell.

Related CSS Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: regional digital competitiveness, global ICT investments
- Governance & Public Policy: fiscal policy, digital governance frameworks
- Pakistan Affairs: state of ICT infrastructure, youth and economic empowerment
- Economic Development: formalization of economy, SME acceleration

Notes for Beginners:

Pakistan trails behind neighbours in using digital technology for payments and e-commerce only 17.7 per cent use digital payments, while India has 71 per cent card ownership. Bangladesh's e-commerce market of \$16 billion dwarfs Pakistan's \$10 billion. The ADB suggests financial incentives like lower taxes for digitally registered SMEs, increased lending to tech startups, and rolling out digital infrastructure called the Pakistan Digital Stack. These measures aim to encourage small businesses and digitization across services. But success hinges on overcoming budget hurdles and aligning with IMF fiscal conditions and without that the country risks stagnating while the digital world moves ahead.

Facts and Figures:

- Digital payment users in Pakistan: 17.7 per cent
- Payment card penetration: 24 per cent (compared to India's 71 per cent)
- E-commerce spending 2023: Pakistan \$10 billion, Bangladesh \$16 billion
- Proposed SME loan allocation: 15 per cent of bank portfolios earmarked for tech and ICT startups
- Recommended GST on digital transactions: lowered to 5 per cent

To sum up, Pakistan stands at a crossroads. This is the moment to choose between digital empowerment and falling behind. The ADB's roadmap offers a compass toward inclusive growth, efficient governance, and economic modernization. But bold visions need brave implementation. If Pakistan continues to stall, it risks watching from the sidelines as the digital age passes it by.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

- Diagnostic – analytical tool to assess strengths and weaknesses (Syn: evaluative | Ant: uninformed)
- Stagnation – lack of growth or advancement (Syn: standstill | Ant: progress)
- Incentive – something that motivates or encourages (Syn: inducement | Ant: deterrent)
- Consolidation – unification into a stronger structure (Syn: integration | Ant: fragmentation)
- Ecosystem – interconnected environment that sustains activity (Syn: network | Ant: isolation)

SHUT UP & BEAR IT

Author – Mahir Ali

Summary:

The article draws historical parallels between Nazi atrocities and the ongoing Israeli onslaught in Gaza, arguing that the Western world's silence and complicity mirror past failures. The article accuses liberal democracies, especially in the West, of facilitating a modern-day genocide under the guise of defending Israel. With a focus on media narratives, government-endorsed definitions of antisemitism, and censorship of pro-Palestinian voices, the article exposes how the West once the moral flag-bearer post-WWII now finds itself on the wrong side of history. From Australia's controversial appointment of a pro-Israel lobbyist to Britain criminalising Palestine Action, Mahir

highlights how dissent is being silenced. He also points to voices of Jewish solidarity and the courage of activists who stand against genocide, contrasting them with the cowardice of political elites who champion free speech yet punish it when directed at Israel.

The article mourns the erosion of genuine moral values and international law in favor of political allegiance to Israeli interests. Mahir concludes that the callous mantra of the WEST “shut up and bear it” may find condemnation in the eyes of history, especially as global protests rise and more people refuse to stay silent about Gaza’s suffering.

Overview:

The article criticizes Western complicity in Israel’s military operations in Gaza, linking modern silence to historical guilt and hypocrisy. It dissects how liberal democracies have shifted from champions of human rights to enablers of oppression by suppressing pro-Palestine activism and redefining antisemitism to block legitimate criticism. It paints a grim picture of shrinking civic space and growing authoritarianism in the guise of protecting Israel.

NOTES:

The article discusses the global failure to confront Israeli aggression in Gaza, particularly after October 2023, when Hamas’s actions were used as a justification for Israel’s prolonged siege. Mahir Ali argues that this war has become genocidal, with mass displacement and targeting of civilians, especially children. Western complicity is emphasized particularly in the US, UK, and Australia where governments have either passed draconian laws, suppressed protests, or appointed pro-Israel figures to key roles under the pretense of combating antisemitism. These moves are seen as strategies to criminalize criticism of Israel, despite growing activism from Jews and others condemning the assault. The author laments that such censorship and duplicity betray the very values the West claims to uphold. The piece references a UN emergency conference involving nations like Pakistan, Colombia, and South Africa, stressing the role of countries in the Global South in standing up where the West has failed. Overall, the article portrays a world where truth is sacrificed for political convenience, and those who dare speak up are told to "shut up and bear it."

Related CSS Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations:
 - Human rights violations
 - Role of the UN and Global South diplomacy
 - Western foreign policy and double standards
- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Pakistan’s stance on Gaza and participation in global peace conferences
- Current Affairs:
 - Gaza conflict and Western political response
 - Freedom of speech versus national interest
- Political Science:
 - State censorship and civil liberties
 - Redefinition of antisemitism and its political use

Notes for Beginners:

This article says that countries like the US, UK, and Australia are supporting Israel even when it's harming innocent people in Gaza. Instead of standing up for what’s right, they try to stop people from speaking out. Some leaders say criticizing Israel is antisemitism, which makes it harder to talk about Palestinian rights. Even peaceful protests and young activists are being silenced. But some countries in the Global South, like Pakistan and South Africa, are speaking up. The article warns that staying silent during injustice is dangerous and history may judge these governments harshly.

Facts and Figures:

- October 2023: Hamas attacks were used to justify the current Gaza invasion.
- Colombia & South Africa: Hosting an emergency conference attended by UN officials and Pakistan.
- Jillian Segal's Report (Australia): Suggested restrictions on criticism of Israel using controversial antisemitism definitions.
- 14 Years: Prison sentence in the UK for publicly opposing Palestine Action's designation as a terrorist group.
- Ireland and Spain: Only Western European countries taking a pro-Palestinian stance

To sum up, the article is a searing indictment of Western hypocrisy and selective morality, especially in the context of the Gaza crisis. It reminds us that silence in the face of oppression is not neutrality, it is complicity. The West once the self-appointed guardian of human rights post-Holocaust, now appears to be cloaking genocide in legal jargon and political alliances. By criminalizing resistance and whitewashing Israeli aggression, liberal democracies risk becoming the very monsters they once claimed to fight. This piece serves as a wake-up call, urging the global conscience to resist suppression, speak truth to power, and refuse to “shut up and bear it.” Because history does not forgive those who watched in silence, it remembers them with shame.

PERILS OF IRRATIONALITY

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The political cauldron in Pakistan is bubbling over once again, with the PTI and the ruling alliance locking horns after a brief lull post the skirmish with India. The opposition, cornered and bruised, is gearing up to storm the streets, while its diaspora supporters beat the drums in international forums, calling out what they deem as a crackdown on dissent. At home the legitimacy of the current power setup is hanging by a thread, with the judiciary and media accused of toeing the establishment's line. The controversial Supreme Court ruling on reserved seats has given the ruling coalition a supermajority but stripped away any pretense of democratic fairness. Instead of dousing the flames of unrest, the government seems to be pouring oil on the fire by doubling down on curbs and constitutional tinkering. The article explores the already shaky democratic order teetering on the edge. The attempt to engineer a change in the KP government, despite PTI's firm majority, and the whispers of horse trading only throw fuel on the flames. The looming threat of militancy in the province makes such political gambits a dangerous tightrope walk. Meanwhile, internal rifts within PTI, worsened by brash overseas influencers stoking fires on social media, have made the party a ship without a rudder. The country's political temperature is red-hot, and unless sanity prevails, this confrontationist approach could unravel whatever fabric of democracy remains. The author's message rings loud and clear: real sovereignty lies in democratic freedom, not in manipulated majorities or authoritarian reflexes.

Overview:

This article dissects Pakistan's escalating political turmoil, focusing on the shrinking democratic space, rising authoritarian tendencies, and the growing risk of national destabilization. It critiques the hybrid regime's manipulation of institutions and the opposition's desperate international lobbying, all while warning of the grave risks of derailing democratic processes in a volatile internal security climate.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's deteriorating democratic structure, emphasizing how institutional integrity is being systematically eroded. It highlights the executive's growing disregard for judicial independence, seen in the manipulation of court benches and targeting of dissenting judges. The writer highlights the alarming shift in parliamentary behavior, where instead of fostering accountability, the legislature is being used to stifle judicial scrutiny and rubber-stamp executive decisions. A significant point raised is the growing collaboration between the establishment and certain political figures to suppress opposition and manipulate legal outcomes. The author also

critiques the alarming use of judicial references and inquiries as tools of political victimization, warning that these maneuvers are pushing the country toward constitutional chaos. The article underscores that instead of strengthening democracy, the state is relying on intimidation, silencing critics, and bypassing legal norms, all of which signal an alarming drift away from constitutionalism and toward authoritarian tendencies.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs
 - This article directly relates to Pakistan's internal governance, civil-military relations, and constitutional challenges.
- Current Affairs
 - The ongoing judicial crisis, executive overreach, and parliamentary manipulation fall under contemporary political developments and governance issues in Pakistan.
- Governance and Public Policies
 - The article offers insights into institutional accountability, judicial independence, and democratic governance.
- Political Science
 - Concepts such as the balance of power, civil-military dynamics, and democratic backsliding are reflected in the content, which ties into political theory and practices.
- Essay and Precis Writing
 - The content can be used to support arguments in essay topics concerning democracy, institutional decay, rule of law, and political instability.

Notes for Beginners:

This article highlights how Pakistan's politics are becoming more unstable, with the government using strong-arm tactics while the opposition cries foul. Laws are being twisted, protests crushed, and opposition leaders jailed. Even though the PTI has popular support in places like KP, efforts are being made to remove it through unfair means. This is risky because KP already has a history of violence, and such actions might trigger more unrest. The government is also trying to bring back outdated systems like the tribal jirga, which could cause legal chaos. The article teaches us that democracy needs openness, fair rules, and respect for all sides, or else the country could fall deeper into crisis.

Facts and Figures:

- PTI leaders, including Imran Khan, remain imprisoned under contested charges
- US congressional hearing scheduled to review Pakistan's treatment of opposition and journalists
- Supreme Court ruling on reserved seats gave ruling alliance a two-thirds majority
- PTI still holds unassailable majority in KP despite loss of reserved seats
- Reports of political engineering and horse trading in KP
- Over two dozen PTI lawmakers in Punjab face disqualification for assembly disruption
- Tribal jirga system may be restored in merged districts without provincial consent
- Rise in violent militancy in KP already claimed hundreds of lives, mostly soldiers

To sum up, Zahid Hussain's column is a timely and piercing commentary on Pakistan's dangerously polarized political landscape. It exposes the fragile underpinnings of a democratic system held hostage by institutional overreach and opposition disarray. The writing doesn't just report facts, it issues a dire warning: when democracy is undermined, and power becomes a game of brute force and manipulation, the entire state structure teeters on collapse.

CLIMATE GOVERNANCE HURDLES

Author: Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

Summary:

The staggering institutional sluggishness and red tape laid bare here show how Pakistan's climate policy has become a victim of its own administrative disarray. With apex councils meant to steer the nation through the storm of climate challenges meeting either irregularly or not at all, we find ourselves caught in a cycle of lofty commitments and half-hearted execution. Bodies such as the Council of Common Interests and National Economic Council, which should act as engines of policy alignment, are simply missing in action. It is beyond disappointing that even the Pakistan Environmental Protection Council, meant to guide our response to escalating environmental threats, has barely stirred over the decades. The piece paints a painful picture of how delays in appointments, infrequent policy reviews and institutional neglect have all but crippled Pakistan's climate governance machinery.

The writer makes it clear that all hope is not lost, but only if we act decisively. With suggestions like convening joint apex council meetings, streamlining leadership appointments and creating an independent monitoring cell under the PM's Office, the article lays down a clear roadmap. These are not mere administrative tweaks but vital lifelines to drag our climate institutions out of their slumber. Unless we step up and put our climate policies where our promises are, we risk letting the climate crisis hit us like a freight train while we bicker over who was supposed to schedule the meeting. This article is an alarm screaming that climate resilience demands more than words, it demands action and fast.

Overview:

The article critically evaluates Pakistan's climate governance structure and highlights the severe gaps between policy formulation and implementation. It explains how the infrequency of apex council meetings, leadership vacancies, and bureaucratic delays have left Pakistan's climate response fragmented and ineffective. Despite a comprehensive institutional framework, the lack of coordination and urgency continues to paralyze the system. The writer proposes practical reforms to revitalize these institutions and align Pakistan's climate ambitions with actionable governance.

NOTES:

This article provides essential observations into the intersection of public administration, environmental policy and institutional reform. Aspirants should pay attention to how institutional inertia can sabotage policy goals, particularly in the context of climate governance. The discussion provides an excellent example of bureaucratic challenges, inter-provincial coordination issues, and how executive authority can either accelerate or hinder progress. These observations are relevant when framing policy critiques or suggesting reforms in governance-related essay questions or interviews. Furthermore, the article is a practical case study of how overlapping institutions without efficient oversight and regular activity can render policy efforts toothless.

Relevant CSS subjects and syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Climate policy, inter-provincial coordination, federal governance
- Current Affairs: Environmental governance, national disaster management
- Public Administration: Institutional efficiency, bureaucratic structure, administrative bottlenecks
- Environmental Science (Optional): Climate resilience, policy implementation
- Governance & Public Policy (Optional): Policy execution, institutional reform

Notes for beginners:

This article shows how important regular meetings, leadership roles and teamwork are when dealing with big problems like climate change. Even though Pakistan has many organizations to handle climate issues, most of them don't meet regularly or don't have appointed leaders, which slows down progress. For example, if councils meant

to manage water and disasters don't talk to each other, then floods or droughts can cause more damage. It's like having a team for a match but not showing up for practice. The article also suggests simple solutions, such as appointing active leaders and holding joint meetings. These examples make it clear that fighting climate change isn't just about technology or money, but about good management and coordination.

Facts and figures:

- Only one meeting of the Pakistan Water Council has been held since its creation in 2018
- The Pakistan Environmental Protection Council has met only twice in the past 40 years
- Pakistan has committed to achieving 60 percent renewable electricity by 2030
- The National Disaster Management Commission has failed to meet regularly since its 2010 formation
- Pakistan Climate Change Council, created in 2017, has not met as frequently as mandated

In essence, the article highlights a quietly brewing crisis within Pakistan's climate governance landscape. It exposes the systemic inertia and mismanagement that have turned promising policy structures into ceremonial shells. The call to action is loud and clear: reform or risk irrelevance. The article reminds us that the climate crisis doesn't wait for quorum or clearance it demands clarity, courage and above all consistency. Without a functioning institutional backbone, all policy talk is just hot air.

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE CAPACITY

Author: Faisal Bari

Summary:

The federal government in its attempt to wear the cloak of austerity, is going after departments with vague and often politically influenced criteria. While ministries fatten their budgets, buy flashy new cars and raise elite salaries by millions, critical institutions like the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) are being served on the chopping block. Despite showing early promise, providing quality research and helping shape national education standards, PIE's future hangs in the balance simply because it lacks political muscle. This is a textbook case of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Education, already hanging by a thread in the country, now faces further mutilation under the guise of reform.

If one scratches beneath the surface, this isn't just about cutting jobs or merging departments; it's a larger statement about where the state chooses to spend its time and money. Education doesn't win elections in the short term, so it gets pushed to the back burner. The article makes you want to scream in frustration at the cyclical insanity: kill the institution now, regret it later, and then reinvent the wheel. There's no dearth of evidence or urgency just a deep-rooted lack of will. And as always, when the axe falls, it's not the overpaid minister or the oversized motorcade that suffers. It's the students, the researchers, and the very idea of progress that gets trampled.

Overview:

The article explores the disconnect between Pakistan's stated goals of austerity and the practical choices made under this policy umbrella, focusing on the education sector. It critiques how institutions like PIE are being downsized not due to inefficiency but because education lacks political clout. The piece emphasizes the shortsightedness of undermining promising institutions and how this reveals the government's misplaced priorities. It challenges readers to consider the long-term consequences of policy decisions shaped by optics rather than genuine reform.

NOTES:

This article shows how fiscal decisions are mostly politically motivated rather than evidence-based. The analysis of the rightsizing process, its implications on educational planning, and the government's contradiction in spending priorities all highlight key themes in governance, reform and policy analysis. It gives a glimpse into how education, when lacking political backing, becomes the first victim in fiscal pruning.

Relevant CSS subjects and syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Public sector education, policy history and institutional reforms
- Current Affairs: Governance models, public sector budgeting, education policy
- Public Administration: Austerity measures, departmental restructuring and performance-based resource allocation
- Governance & Public Policy (Optional): Resource prioritization, stakeholder influence in public policy

Notes for beginners:

This article shows how governments sometimes make decisions that hurt education more than help it. While they claim to save money, they often cut budgets from places that actually need more support, like schools and research departments. For example PIE was doing valuable work in gathering data and improving education policy but is now facing downsizing simply because it's not politically powerful. On the other hand, salaries of high officials are being increased without hesitation. This shows how priorities can be skewed and why education suffers when it doesn't have strong backing. Beginners should understand that policy decisions often involve trade-offs, and this article gives a real-world look at how those choices play out in government.

Facts and figures:

- Salaries of National Assembly Speaker and Senate Chairperson raised by over two million rupees a month
- PIE was formed by merging two federal education departments just three years ago
- Federal funding for higher education has not even kept up with inflation
- Established public universities are now struggling to pay salaries and pensions
- No major commitment or funding increase for out-of-school children or improving quality in K-12 education

To sum up, this article is a call to reimagine how we value education in policy-making. The PIE example underscores how institutions, no matter how promising, can be axed in the name of savings if they lack political protectors. It's a warning about short-term thinking and a reflection of the disconnect between rhetoric and action. If we continue to make decisions with blinders on, we'll keep reinventing what we've already destroyed. This piece reminds us that a nation cannot climb the ladder of progress while kicking away the rungs of education beneath its feet.

REVAMPING THE ECOSYSTEM

Author: Ishrat Husain

Summary:

In this thought-provoking piece, the author dissects Pakistan's obsolete bureaucratic structure, arguing that reforming governance without altering the foundational ecosystem is a recipe for failure. The recent move to induct secretaries from outside the traditional pool is painted as a step in the right direction, but the author warns that it could fizzle out unless deeper systemic reforms are implemented. A recurring theme is the tyranny of outdated rules and procedures, especially the 1973 Rules of Business, which paralyse decision-making and reward ritualistic compliance over innovation. Without performance-based accountability, trust in secretaries' decisions, and protection from political interference, even the most qualified recruits are likely to get bogged down in red tape or pushed out by entrenched interests. The article explores a bold roadmap: reducing hierarchical tiers, empowering decision-makers at the local level, digitising governance, and aligning outdated manuals with modern management principles. The writer suggests that transparency, meritocracy and digitisation must go hand in hand to shake up the stagnant machinery. He argues that decentralisation, especially in service delivery sectors like education, health and sanitation, is key to responsive governance. In essence, the article is a call for structural overhaul, not cosmetic

tinkering. Without systemic change from the top to the grassroots, Pakistan's governance will remain stuck in a bygone era.

Overview:

This article provides a critical analysis of Pakistan's governance apparatus. It spotlights the structural and procedural bottlenecks that have stifled innovation, accountability and service delivery. It advocates a comprehensive revamp of the civil service ecosystem, from induction to execution, leveraging merit-based appointments, decentralisation, and digital governance tools to foster efficiency, transparency and citizen-centric outcomes.

NOTES:

The article offers a valuable lesson on how institutional reforms can either catalyse national development or crumble under systemic resistance. It urges aspirants to understand governance as a layered mechanism where rules, accountability, leadership and implementation capacity are interdependent. The analysis encourages future policymakers to challenge the status quo and embrace reformist thinking. It also provides insight into public administration, decision-making autonomy, e-governance, decentralisation, and performance Management. Readers can learn how outdated practices stifle growth and why reforming them is pivotal for long-term stability and efficient public service delivery.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects

- **Current Affairs:** The article covers economic governance, state inefficiencies, and institutional reforms — all central themes in CSS Current Affairs, especially under public policy and economic development in Pakistan.
- **Pakistan Affairs:** It directly relates to internal political structure, civil service reform, and governance crises — major areas under the topic of Political Evolution and Governance.
- **Governance and Public Policies (Optional):** The article fits perfectly in discussions on institutional decay, civil service inefficiency, rule-based governance, and policy implementation challenges.
- **General Science and Ability:** While not technical, the article touches on decision-making frameworks, performance indicators, and system feedback, which indirectly helps in analytical writing and critical reasoning in exams.
- **Essay Paper:** Its themes can support essays like “Good Governance is the Key to National Development,” “Pakistan's Institutional Decay and the Way Forward,” or “The Crisis of Meritocracy in Developing Nations.”

Notes for Beginners:

This article discusses how Pakistan's civil service system needs an upgrade. The current structure follows very old rules, like the 1973 Rules of Business, which make it hard for even good officers to make timely decisions. For example, a secretary may need to get approval from many offices before taking a simple step, which wastes time and reduces efficiency. The author suggests hiring new professionals from outside, but he says this only works if the whole system is fixed too. He proposes using modern digital tools and training to speed up work, letting honest officers take decisions on their own, and rewarding performance. Just like in a company where smart employees are promoted and poor ones let go, the same should happen in government. Also, local officials like Assistant Commissioners and District Police Officers should be given the power to directly help citizens, especially with services like education, water and transport.

Facts and Figures:

- The 1973 Rules of Business are still in use, inherited from colonial governance models
- Current bureaucratic structure includes six tiers; the article suggests reducing them to three
- Staff-to-officer ratio should ideally be 2:1 with e-governance
- Proposed ‘National Executive Service’ would recruit officers above Grade 19 through open competition

- Grades 1–16 staff consume most of the government’s HR budget, limiting investment in skilled professionals
- Mandatory training in e-filing and document sharing recommended for all officers

To put it plainly, Pakistan’s governance problems are not due to lack of talent, but due to rigid, outdated systems that choke initiative. The writer argues passionately that it’s time to throw out the old playbook and build one fit for today’s challenges. From recruitment to rulebooks, from local service delivery to high-level decision-making, everything must be redesigned with efficiency, transparency and performance in mind. It’s not just about hiring new people, it’s about giving them the tools, the authority and the space to make a difference. Without this even the best intentions will sink like a stone in stagnant waters.

LICENCE TO KILL & DISPLACE

Author Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article shares the harrowing reality of Israel’s relentless assault on Gaza, despite high-profile diplomacy and global appeals. With Trump’s claimed ceasefire efforts amounting to little more than window dressing, Netanyahu’s regime has pressed on with a brutal military campaign that not only ignores international outcry but escalates the violence against Palestinians. Bombings have ravaged schools, hospitals, and refugee camps, while starvation has become a weapon of war. What is most chilling is the systematic targeting of civilians at aid stations and water collection points, with soldiers allegedly ordered to shoot unarmed people. These aren’t isolated incidents. They’re part of a coordinated plan to forcibly relocate Palestinians to what the Israeli defense ministry disturbingly calls a “humanitarian city” in Rafah, effectively turning it into a locked ghetto under military control. Critics, including former Israeli prime ministers and legal experts, describe the plan as tantamount to ethnic cleansing and genocide, a modern-day crime against humanity with eerie echoes of history’s darkest chapters.

Beyond the battlefield, the article uncovers a geopolitical theater where forced migration is being dressed up as “voluntary relocation.” Trump and Netanyahu, behind closed doors and now out in the open, are pushing for Gaza’s depopulation in line with a dystopian vision of real estate transformation—a so-called Riviera of the Middle East. The plan’s legal, ethical, and humanitarian implications are deeply troubling. From the UN to Israeli academics, voices of reason are warning that this path leads to mass internment, generational trauma, and an irreversible betrayal of international law. With Gaza’s death toll surpassing 58,000 and displacement on the verge of becoming permanent, the article becomes a searing indictment of global inaction. Arab and Muslim countries, it argues, must shake off rhetorical posturing and act decisively, or risk being complicit in a historic injustice that could ignite the region once more. The world stands at a moral crossroads, and silence, now more than ever, is a form of surrender.

Overview:

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of Israel’s ongoing war in Gaza, its violations of international humanitarian law, and the broader political scheme to displace Palestinians. It draws attention to the deliberate use of violence, starvation, and displacement under the guise of security, while also exploring the global Response particularly from the US and the silence of Arab and Muslim nations.

NOTES:

The article lays bare the brutal reality of Israel’s ongoing war on Gaza, detailing a calculated campaign of destruction, displacement, and dehumanisation of Palestinians. Despite diplomatic engagements, including meetings between Trump and Netanyahu, no ceasefire has been achieved and instead Israel has intensified its military offensive. Gaza’s schools, hospitals, refugee camps, and residential areas have been relentlessly bombed, while starvation has been weaponised as a tool of war. The most horrifying revelations include Israeli soldiers being ordered to shoot unarmed Palestinians at food and water aid sites, resulting in nearly 900 deaths, including children.

A far more sinister strategy is now unfolding Israel's plan to forcibly relocate over two million Palestinians into a confined area in Rafah, misleadingly named a "humanitarian city," effectively turning it into a ghetto or concentration camp under total Israeli control. This move has sparked international outrage, with condemnation from the UN, human rights organisations, and even former Israeli prime ministers who deem it an act of ethnic cleansing and a violation of international law. The article also exposes the political collusion between Netanyahu and Trump, who allegedly support the vision of emptying Gaza for a real estate makeover branded as the "Riviera of the Middle East." Legal scholars from Israel have labelled the relocation plan as manifestly illegal and a probable war crime. Amid this humanitarian catastrophe, the article issues a stark call for action, warning that silence and inaction from the international community especially Arab and Muslim nations would equate to complicity in a moral and legal disaster.

Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: Middle East crisis, global diplomacy
- International Relations: Humanitarian law, genocide, foreign policy analysis
- Pakistan Affairs: OIC response, Pakistan's stance on Palestine
- Governance & Public Policy: War crimes, civilian protection, international obligations

Notes for Beginners:

Imagine a school where the headmaster keeps targeting certain students cutting their meals, destroying their belongings and locking them in a corner of the building. The students try to resist, but the headmaster has strong support from powerful outsiders who pretend to help but do nothing. This is similar to what's happening in Gaza. Palestinians are being pushed into a corner, denied food and water, and even shot while trying to survive. The world watches, some speaking out, others silently nodding. This is a powerful case of how global politics can turn human lives into bargaining chips.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 58,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 2023
- Nearly 900 people shot dead while queuing for aid
- 600,000 Palestinians to be relocated to Rafah under Israeli plan
- Two former Israeli PMs publicly condemned the relocation scheme
- UN official warned of "concentration camps" forming in Gaza

To wrap up, this article is a blistering exposé of state-sponsored brutality disguised as humanitarianism. It calls out the hypocrisy of international diplomacy, the calculated cruelty of military agendas, and the moral bankruptcy of those who stand by. In the face of such suffering, to remain indifferent is to betray every principle the global community claims to uphold. As history watches, this moment demands courage, not complicity.

SHATTERED STRIP

The article is a powerful indictment of the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, where over 650 days of siege have turned the region into a living nightmare. The Israeli onslaught continues unabated, laying waste to homes, hospitals and even places of worship like Gaza's only church, which was bombed while sheltering civilians. Starvation has tightened its grip, especially on children under five, with hospitals now unable to function due to fuel shortages. Internationally backed efforts, including a proposed 60-day ceasefire brokered by Qatar and the US, are hanging by a thread, while Israel shows no signs of easing its chokehold. It shows how systematic demolitions in Rafah and the West Bank amount to ethnic cleansing, and how accountability remains a far-fetched dream with even UN rapporteurs being sanctioned for speaking the truth. Gaza is not just bleeding—it's being erased, brick by brick, child by child, as the world debates in comfortable silence.

This editorial pulls back the curtain on the stark gap between global rhetoric and meaningful action. It urges readers to see beyond diplomatic posturing and realise that the very structures of international law and humanity are being dismantled before our eyes. Beginners can think of this as a school where the bullies are armed, the teachers look away, and the weakest students are locked out of the lunchroom, it's injustice institutionalised. The facts are sobering: over 58,000 Palestinians dead, one-year-olds dying of hunger, entire cities razed to the ground. The article's final word is a challenge to our collective conscience: history won't ask what the world said, it will ask what the world did, or failed to do when Gaza was shattered.

Overview:

The article portrays the devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza under relentless Israeli bombardment and siege. The editorial condemns the systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure, including homes, hospitals, and even sacred spaces like churches. It highlights the starvation, displacement, and suffering of Palestinians—particularly children—while criticising the world's silence and failure to intervene meaningfully. The author underscores that recent attempts at a ceasefire are frail and that the current aggression, especially in areas like Rafah and the West Bank, amounts to ethnic cleansing. The article also exposes the irony of international mechanisms like the UN, which are either helpless or penalised for speaking out. It warns that Gaza is on the brink of erasure, both physically and morally, as the world turns a blind eye.

NOTES:

This Article reflects how power dynamics shape conflict outcomes and expose the fragility of international law in the face of geopolitical bias. The editorial demonstrates the failure of the global order to uphold human rights, especially when superpowers are involved. The crisis in Gaza also ties in with themes of displacement, war crimes, and the responsibilities of global institutions like the UN. CSS aspirants can extract key analytical angles: the failure of ceasefire negotiations, misuse of veto power in the UN, sanctions on human rights advocates, and the politics of aid. This article gives a critical perspective on media narratives and policy hypocrisy.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations: Middle East Conflict, Humanitarian Law, War Crimes, Global Diplomacy
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's stance on Palestine, role in Muslim Ummah, and regional politics
- Current Affairs: Ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict, global humanitarian crises
- Governance & Public Policy: Role of international institutions, human rights violations
- Essay Paper: Global injustice, ethics in foreign policy, power and accountability in war

Notes for Beginners:

The article talks about how Gaza a region in Palestine is suffering badly because of Israel's continued military attacks. It says people especially children are dying from hunger and hospitals are not working because they don't even have fuel. Homes and churches are being bombed, and many families have nowhere safe to go. The article also says that countries like the United States are not doing enough to stop the war. Even when some countries try to help, their voices are ignored or punished. In simple words, the writer is saying the world is just watching while innocent people in Gaza are being hurt and killed. It also asks people to think about how unfair this is and how the international system is failing to protect the weak.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 58,000 Palestinian casualties have been reported.
- One-year-olds are dying of starvation due to blocked food supplies.
- Rafah and West Bank face severe destruction, termed as ethnic cleansing.
- Gaza's only church was bombed, killing civilians taking shelter.
- Fuel shortages have halted hospital operations, worsening the health crisis.

To wrap up, this article forces us to question the morality of modern geopolitics and the hypocrisy of global institutions that claim to uphold human rights. As students, readers, and responsible individuals we cannot be mere spectators to such suffering. It challenges us to be informed, empathetic, and courageous enough to speak truth in times of silence. Gaza's tragedy is not just Palestine's, it's a test for global conscience.

RESILIENCE OR RUIN

The article shows the brutal consequences of climate inaction in Pakistan. With over 200 lives lost and rainfall 80 percent above normal, this year's monsoon has swept away not just homes but also any lingering illusions that climate change is some distant threat. The article paints a dire picture of human suffering and economic havoc as floods erase crops, demolish infrastructure, and push already fragile communities deeper into despair. But what cuts deeper is the scathing critique of failed governance, disaster management marred by centralisation, underfunded local institutions, and a bureaucratic jungle thick with red tape. Climate change isn't knocking anymore, it has broken down the door and we're still patching up the roof with duct tape. Pakistan's leadership, the piece argues, needs to stop passing the buck and start investing in long-term resilience before the next wave washes away even the hope of recovery.

This isn't just about weather gone wild; it's about a broken system that keeps playing catch-up with catastrophe. The editorial throws the gauntlet at the political class, warning that their dithering is a betrayal of future generations. The cost of doing nothing is soaring, while the price of preparedness remains unpaid. The article urges the Living Indus Initiative to evolve from lip service to lifeline and demands annual disaster scorecards to name and shame those sitting on their hands. From glacier-fed floods in the north to drowned cities in the south. It challenges us to think of climate change not just as an environmental issue but as a national security threat that can unmake nations. If we don't wise up and act now, the next headline won't be about resilience, it'll be about ruin.

Overview:

The article addresses the alarming vulnerability of Pakistan to climate-induced disasters, spotlighting the deadly monsoon floods as a stark indicator of state failure in disaster preparedness. The article strongly criticises the government's reactive policies and symbolic climate campaigns, calling for deep-rooted reforms in governance, disaster planning, and climate adaptation. It urges a shift from short-term relief spending to long-term resilience, placing the climate crisis within the broader framework of national security and institutional accountability.

NOTES:

The article shows Pakistan's current climate vulnerability. It highlights the devastating impact of an 80% above-normal monsoon that has claimed over 200 lives and destroyed vital infrastructure. It underscores the failure of Pakistan's disaster management system, citing the dangers of centralised control, underfunded local institutions, and bureaucratic inertia. The floods are not presented as isolated weather events but as symptoms of a much larger crisis—a governance failure compounded by climate change. The editorial criticises the state's tendency to act reactively rather than proactively, spending billions on post-disaster relief while neglecting long-term climate planning and resilience. It calls for the Living Indus Initiative to move beyond symbolic gestures and advocates for annual disaster scorecards to hold officials accountable. The article also makes a compelling argument that climate change must be viewed not just as an environmental issue but as a national security threat capable of destabilising entire regions. It is a call to arms for urgent institutional reform, sustainable budgeting, decentralisation, and preparedness to ensure the next climate catastrophe does not wash away what little hope remains.

Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: Climate crisis, monsoon disasters, NDMA response
- Pakistan Affairs: Federal-provincial dynamics, disaster management frameworks
- Governance & Public Policy: Institutional reform, red tape, decentralisation

- Environmental Science: Glacial melt, rainfall variation, climate resilience
- Essay Paper: Climate change as national security threat, generational injustice

Notes for Beginners:

Think of climate change like a leaking roof. Instead of fixing it, we just mop the floor after every storm. This article says Pakistan is doing the same, waiting for disasters to strike and then scrambling to fix what could've been prevented. Glaciers melting up north are like ticking bombs, and floods are the fallout. Local governments are like powerless lifeguards watching people drown because they weren't given any tools to help. Beginners should focus on how poor planning, lack of coordination, and global ignorance are making Pakistan a climate hotspot with no real umbrella in the storm.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 200 lives lost in current monsoon season
- 80 percent higher rainfall than average
- NDMA confirms fatalities and flood-induced destruction
- Glacial floods reported in Gilgit-Baltistan
- Billions spent annually on post-disaster relief while preventive planning lags behind

To sum up, the article scorches complacency, exposes policy paralysis, and demands a bold shift from reaction to preparation. It's not a question of whether but when Pakistan will face another climate disaster. And when that time comes, the real question will be: did we build resilience, or did we choose ruin?

SHAMEFUL SILENCE

Summary:

The editorial rips the veil off the international community's timid response to Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza. While the UK and 28 other nations finally acknowledged that the war "must end now," their statement lands like a whisper in a storm. The article blasts this lukewarm rhetoric as dangerously misleading this is not war, it is genocide. With over 59,000 Palestinians killed, basic life structures obliterated, and famine stalking the land, Gaza has been turned into a graveyard. Yet, Western powers continue to tiptoe around accountability, using euphemisms to shield Israel from the consequences of its actions. The editorial screams what many whispers, this is state-led annihilation, not security defense.

This is a moral indictment. The piece draws a haunting parallel with the Holocaust, warning that the lesson "never again" has been abandoned by the very state that was born from genocide. Instead of learning peace, Israel has chosen violence as policy. The editorial demands more than performative outrage, it calls for sanctions, international trials, and an end to the diplomatic smoke screen. It's a rallying cry to the world: stop blinking in the face of barbarism. Because a world that rationalises genocide today may find itself tomorrow at the mercy of a similar silence.

Overview:

The editorial critiques the passive and diluted stance of global powers in response to the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. While acknowledging the recent diplomatic call for ceasefire, the article argues that such statements fall catastrophically short of confronting the scale and intent of Israeli actions, which it defines as genocide. It calls for a firm and unapologetic international response, including sanctions and accountability under international law, urging the world to abandon its moral cowardice.

NOTES:

The article shows reality in Gaza, portraying the Israeli assault not as a war, but as a deliberate campaign of genocide against a trapped and starving civilian population. With over 59,000 Palestinians already killed and critical

infrastructure like hospitals, homes, schools and mosques reduced to rubble, the article condemns global leaders for issuing watered-down diplomatic statements that fail to confront the severity of the violence. It criticizes the UK and its 28 partners for issuing a toothless call for ceasefire that sidesteps accountability, and lambasts the global community's tendency to hide behind euphemisms while civilians are massacred. The editorial underscores Israel's proposed forced displacements and illegal settlement expansion as direct violations of international law and a blow to the two-state solution. The silence of nations, it argues amounts to complicity as they fail to impose sanctions or pursue war crimes investigations. Drawing a striking parallel with the Holocaust, the article highlights the tragic irony of Israel formed in the wake of genocide now being accused of enacting similar horrors. The article ends with a call for moral clarity and decisive action, warning that a world that turns its back on genocide today may be unable to protect humanity tomorrow.

Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict, international diplomacy, Middle East peace process
- International Relations: UN inaction, Western double standards, use of soft power
- International Law: War crimes, humanitarian law violations, accountability mechanisms
- Essay Paper: Genocide, moral responsibility, failure of global conscience
- Pakistan Affairs (indirectly): Foreign policy stance, diplomatic positioning in Muslim world

Notes for Beginners:

Think of it this way: imagine someone sets fire to your home and your neighbors just watch and say, "We hope it stops soon." That's how the editorial views the world's reaction to Gaza. The article says it's not just a war, it's like watching a giant step on an ant hill, again and again, while others just nod. Israel is doing to others what it once suffered and the world's silence makes it worse. The article urges people not to confuse peace talks with justice but it demands real action not vague promises.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 59,000 Palestinians killed since Israel's military assault began
- 900 civilians killed while trying to obtain food
- Continuous Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank condemned
- Statement issued by UK and 28 countries, but lacked strong accountability measures
- UN reports widespread famine and displacement in Gaza

To sum up, the article is a punch to the conscience of a world that has turned away from genocide. It demands a reckoning not rehearsed sympathy. If global powers can't call out such bloodshed for what it is, they forfeit any moral authority to speak on human rights. This isn't just Gaza's tragedy, it's humanity's shame, written in blood, signed in silence.

PAKISTAN-INDIA RELATIONS

Author: Ashraf Jehangir Qazi

The article highlights the ever-deteriorating relationship between Pakistan and India. It laments how both countries, despite their shared history and geography, are locked in mutually exclusive narratives that fuel hostility instead of harmony. The prospect for meaningful dialogue remains dismal, as political leadership on both sides finds it more convenient to maintain the status quo than to risk political capital for peace. Even civil society seems paralyzed, with neither public pressure nor opposition momentum to demand talks. The fact that both countries are nuclear powers adds an ominous undertone, making their standoff not just a bilateral impasse but a potential regional catastrophe. The author drives home the point that without a deliberate and sustained effort to break free from entrenched positions, South Asia will remain hostage to conflict and missed opportunities.

The article does not merely dwell on what's wrong but puts forward a constructive, if ambitious, roadmap. It urges stakeholders from politicians and diplomats to artists and academics to realize the shared survival stake both nations have and push for people-centered governance. The piece proposes a revival of confidence-building measures and suggests high-level bilateral visits as a stepping stone toward trust. However, deep-rooted institutional mistrust, particularly Pakistan's military's alleged stranglehold on foreign policy and India's Hindutva politics, remain massive roadblocks. The article ends by stressing that improving ties with India shouldn't mean sacrificing strategic alliances like the one with China, and involving foreign powers in this sensitive relationship could be more harmful than helpful.

Overview:

This article assesses the bleak condition of Indo-Pak relations and outlines the barriers and potential steps toward meaningful engagement. It highlights how both states are trapped in zero-sum politics that stall regional progress and peace.

NOTES:

The article underscores the critical deterioration of India-Pakistan relations. It highlights the absence of political will on both sides to initiate or sustain dialogue. It reveals that the post-conflict environment has intensified mutual distrust, and neither ruling elites nor opposition parties show interest in resolving core issues diplomatically. The threat of escalation between two nuclear-armed nations looms large, especially with unpredictable technological capabilities in warfare. Despite this, both countries remain trapped in rigid, hostile narratives that make diplomatic breakthroughs politically risky. The article stresses that while civil society actors including intellectuals, journalists and artists have roles to play their impact is limited unless they are part of broader political movements focused on democratic governance and equitable development. The author suggests reviving confidence-building measures and promoting high-level engagements such as prime ministerial visits to foster trust. He warns against relying on foreign intervention, particularly from the US or Gulf countries, and urges that improved India-Pakistan ties should not come at the expense of Pakistan's strategic alignment with China. Ultimately, the article presents both a diagnosis of the prevailing diplomatic paralysis and a roadmap for transformation rooted in mutual recognition of shared regional stakes.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Regional cooperation, conflict resolution, South Asian geopolitics
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy, Indo-Pak relations, strategic challenges
- Current Affairs: Nuclear deterrence, foreign diplomatic engagement, peacebuilding efforts

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains that the rivalry between India and Pakistan is not just about borders or history but about deeply rooted political mindsets. For example, India views Pakistan as unstable, while Pakistan sees India as overly dominant in the region. Both sides believe the other supports activities that weaken regional peace. The writer suggests that to avoid nuclear conflict, both sides must return to the negotiation table. He also mentions SAARC, a regional group meant to promote cooperation, which is currently inactive due to these tensions. The author proposes that trust-building, such as mutual visits and confidence-building measures, can serve as initial steps toward peace. It's like two neighbors who keep their fences high because of past disputes, but unless one opens the gate, reconciliation remains impossible.

Facts and Figures:

- India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed states
- SAARC remains dormant since 2014 due to Indo-Pak friction
- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is often seen as a counterbalance to Indian regional influence
- Bilateral dialogue has remained frozen since the Pulwama-Balakot episode in 2019

To sum up, this article is a call for policymakers, scholars, and civil society in both India and Pakistan. It demands courage, foresight, and political will to shift from old hostilities to a future of cooperation. It doesn't just highlight the problems but throws open a window of possibility one that requires bold steps and genuine dialogue to build a better tomorrow for all of South Asia.

DIPLOMACY AS A MILLSTONE

Author: Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

The article dissects India's increasingly awkward foreign policy balancing act, spotlighting the ideological and strategic contradictions Prime Minister Modi faces on the global stage. Through the lens of a recent Pew survey, the piece reveals that India's middle class, driven by communal leanings and a longing for Western validation, has developed an unusual fondness for Israel, bucking global disapproval over Gaza. This alignment is not just diplomatic window dressing but rooted in Hindutva's ideological kinship with far-right Zionism. Modi's vocal support for Israel and silence on its war crimes put India at odds with BRICS partners, many of whom condemn Israeli aggression. With Modi gearing up to host the BRICS summit next year, the article warns that his pro-West tilt, embodied in his cozying up to Trump and Netanyahu, could backfire in a bloc where China, Iran, and even Pakistan command growing influence.

The article also exposes Modi's diplomatic dilemma as India juggles its loyalty to the US and Israel with its formal membership in anti-Western platforms like BRICS and SCO. With BRICS pushing de-dollarisation and challenging Western hegemony, Modi's continued tilt toward Washington looks increasingly out of step. Trump's recent snub of inviting Pakistan's army chief for lunch after India's failed Operation Sindoor, only rubs salt in the wound. Meanwhile, Modi is finding it harder to justify a ceasefire that seemingly yielded no strategic wins. The article ends on a sharp note, questioning whether Modi's foreign minister speaks for India or Washington and hinting that backroom pressures like US investigations into Indian tycoons may be pulling strings. At its heart, the article sounds an alarm that India's tightrope diplomacy, weighed down by ideological baggage and elite interests, may soon snap.

Overview:

This article is a critical take on India's current foreign policy, especially under Modi's leadership, and how it's becoming a burden rather than a strategic advantage. The piece connects India's ideological drift towards Zionist Israel and its dependence on the US with its discomfort inside platforms like BRICS and SCO, which represent a more anti-Western stance. It raises serious questions about whether India's diplomatic choices are sustainable or self-sabotaging.

NOTES:

The article underscores how India's foreign policy under Modi is increasingly coming apart at the seams due to its conflicting ideological leanings and strategic alliances. While publicly aligning with anti-Western blocs like BRICS and SCO, India's actions reveal a deep-rooted affinity with Western and Zionist powers, notably the United States and Israel. The middle class shaped by a post-Soviet identity crisis and influenced by Hindutva ideology is shown to glorify leaders like Bush and Netanyahu despite global criticism, further muddling India's diplomatic posture. The article brings attention to India's awkward silence on humanitarian issues like the Gaza invasion which is in direct contradiction to the collective stance of BRICS and the unease this creates within the bloc. It highlights Modi's diplomatic missteps, including his handling of the failed Operation Sindoor, Trump's symbolic snub by hosting Pakistan's army chief, and the questions raised in India's own parliament about these developments. The piece also suggests that Modi's reliance on foreign-pleasing rhetoric and elite interests could be setting India up for isolation within alliances meant to promote multipolarity. The mention of corruption probes tied to Modi's inner circle adds further complexity, hinting at coercive pressures shaping India's international decisions. The narrative

stitches together a web of ideological confusion, elite entanglements, and strategic imbalance that could ultimately cause India's diplomatic standing to unravel under the weight of its own contradictions.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- International Relations: US-India-Israel axis, BRICS-SCO alignment, bloc politics, strategic balancing
- Pakistan Affairs: India's foreign policy and regional behaviour
- Current Affairs: Middle East conflicts (Gaza), India's role in global diplomacy, emerging multipolarity
- Political Science (optional): Ideology in diplomacy, nationalist influence on international relations

Notes for beginners:

This article discusses how India's foreign policy seems to be caught between two stools: on one hand, it's part of global groups like BRICS and SCO that challenge Western dominance, but on the other, it's clinging to close ties with the US and Israel. For example, Modi is expected to host the BRICS summit next year, but many members especially China and Iran disagree with India's silence on Gaza and its friendship with Israel. These contradictions make India look confused and weak. Even Trump added to Modi's troubles by supporting Pakistan's army soon after a conflict. This shows how India's middle class love for the West and its right-wing ideology are getting in the way of clear and strong foreign policy decisions.

Facts and Figures:

- India is one of the few countries with a favourable view of Israel, according to a 24-nation Pew survey
- Modi will host the BRICS 2026 summit amidst rising tensions
- Modi faced backlash over Operation Sindoor and Trump's alleged snub involving Pakistan's army chief
- BRICS earlier passed a resolution condemning Israeli actions in Gaza—India stayed silent
- The article references India's past support for Bush's Iraq war as part of a longer ideological pattern

To sum up, the article shows the ideological tightrope Modi is walking. It's a timely critique of how nationalism, when mixed with personal loyalties and elite interests, can turn diplomacy into a noose. With mounting global challenges and shifting alliances, India's foreign policy is starting to look more like a burden than a blueprint. The message is clear: if India doesn't drop its obsession with pleasing the West and start listening to its regional allies, it may find itself friendless in the very clubs it helped build.

PEACE AND YOUTH

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

The article throws a spotlight on the ticking time bomb Pakistan sits on if it continues to overlook its youth. With over 60 percent of the population under 30, the writer emphasizes that this demographic can either be the nation's strength or its undoing. Left in the lurch by educational neglect, economic disparity, and digital manipulation, young people are increasingly falling prey to crime, extremism, and ideological exploitation. Militant groups, with the cunning of seasoned manipulators, fill the vacuum of identity and purpose for disillusioned youth, turning them into tools of destruction. Instead of being roped into narratives of peace, these young minds are pushed into the deep end of chaos. The author argues that investing in youth isn't a choice but a necessity if Pakistan hopes to break free from the shackles of extremism and foster a future rooted in peace, tolerance, and coexistence.

Babakhel doesn't stop at just diagnosing the problem. He lays down a concrete roadmap to steer this young generation toward peacebuilding. He stresses the importance of integrating peace education into school curriculums, using digital platforms to challenge hate speech, and giving young people real roles in local governance and decision-making. The article makes a strong case for leveraging social media and art to tell stories of hope and healing instead of hatred. Gender inclusion and employment opportunities are also cited as missing pieces of the puzzle. Youth-led forums, digital literacy, and cultural initiatives are presented as tools to reverse radicalization.

The message is loud and clear: if we keep turning a blind eye to the youth and let them slip through the cracks, we'll have no one to blame when they return as the face of the unrest we failed to prevent.

Overview:

The article focuses on the critical role of youth in peacebuilding and highlights how failure to engage and empower them is pushing Pakistan toward social instability. It provides a roadmap for reversing radicalization through education, digital peace campaigns, gender inclusion, and youth-centric policymaking.

NOTES:

The article emphasizes that Pakistan's youth, constituting over 60% of the population, are both its greatest asset and potential liability. The author highlights that neglecting the needs of this Demographic particularly in education, employment, civic participation and personal development, has led many to drift towards crime, extremism, and social unrest. Militant and criminal elements exploit this vacuum, offering the youth a false sense of identity and purpose. The lack of inclusive national dialogue, weak political engagement, gender disparities and limited peace education further fuel this alienation. The article stresses the urgent need for structured interventions such as introducing peace and civic education in schools, initiating youth-led dialogues, ensuring the participation of marginalized groups (especially young women), and promoting constructive use of digital platforms. The writer also proposes university-level peace projects during semester breaks, encouraging influencers and journalists to share stories of resilience and tolerance. By drawing attention to these gaps and suggesting practical strategies, the article makes a compelling case for urgent policy reform to engage the youth positively and prevent them from becoming agents of instability.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Youth issues, extremism, social cohesion
- Current Affairs: Role of media and digital literacy, youth and peacebuilding
- Governance and Public Policy: Policy gaps, institutional roles, participatory governance
- Gender Studies: Gender inclusion in peace processes and policy reform

Notes for Beginners:

This article helps to understand how youth can either build or break a society. For example, the author points out that when students drop out or feel left behind, they can fall into the hands of extremist groups looking for easy recruits. If a young person sees no future through education or job opportunities, they might pick up arms or get involved in crime. Instead of letting this happen, the article suggests providing skill development, digital literacy, and peace education. With over 125 million young people in Pakistan and 116 million internet users, the influence of online platforms is huge. But without guidance, youth may fall victim to hate speech or fake news. Teaching them how to use these platforms for spreading peace and truth is essential. The article also urges the inclusion of women in peace efforts, emphasizing that no real change can happen by sidelining half the population.

Facts and Figures:

- 125 million Pakistanis are under the age of 30
- 116 million internet users in Pakistan as of early 2025
- 4.5 million unemployed individuals according to Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-24
- Youth unemployment rate is 11.1 percent for ages 15-24
- 196 million mobile connections were active in 2023

To sum up, this article is a powerful reminder that the youth aren't just tomorrow's leaders but today's responsibility. It gives reflection as well as direction, urging educators and communities to stop playing with fire and start investing in the energy and ideals of the young. If ignored, they may continue to walk a dangerous path but if guided well, they can become the cornerstone of a peaceful, inclusive and progressive Pakistan.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

- Lure: To tempt or attract with the promise of reward. Synonym: entice. Antonym: repel
- Virulent: Extremely severe or harmful. Synonym: vicious. Antonym: mild
- Cohesion: Unity and togetherness. Synonym: solidarity. Antonym: fragmentation
- Narrative: A particular viewpoint or story. Synonym: account. Antonym: silence
- Polarisation: Division into sharply contrasting groups. Synonym: partisanship. Antonym: unity
- Mob violence: Violent acts carried out by a crowd. Synonym: rioting. Antonym: peacekeeping
- Disillusioned: Losing faith in something once believed. Synonym: disappointed. Antonym: hopeful
- Empowerment: Giving someone power or authority. Synonym: enablement. Antonym: oppression

NOBEL-CRAZY TRUMP HAS AN OPPORTUNITY

Summary:

This thought-provoking editorial dives into the ongoing Kashmir conflict and America's potential role in resolving it, particularly under the leadership of President Donald Trump. While Trump has been applauded by Pakistan for helping dial down tensions during a particularly volatile episode with India, the piece argues that mere de-escalation doesn't cut it. The writer puts it bluntly that temporary peace isn't enough to win the Nobel Peace Prize. A real contender would roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty in long-standing disputes like Kashmir, where deep-rooted oppression, political suppression, and decades of trauma continue to haunt generations. Since the revocation of Article 370 in 2019, the region has been locked in a digital and physical cage with blackouts, curfews, and surveillance turning everyday life into a living nightmare for Kashmiris.

The author makes a compelling case that if Trump is truly aiming for global statesman status, this is his moment to step up to the plate. With the US holding both economic clout and strategic leverage in South Asia, it's in a unique position to pull some diplomatic strings. The ball is in Washington's court to use trade, defense, and diplomatic channels to nudge India toward genuine dialogue. The piece doesn't sugarcoat the reality: resolving Kashmir is no walk in the park. But history favors those who fight for peace not because it's convenient, but because it's right. If Trump is serious about his Nobel ambitions, Kashmir isn't just a litmus test—it's the ultimate proving ground

Overview:

The article critically analyzes Donald Trump's prospects for a Nobel Peace Prize in light of his involvement in defusing tensions between India and Pakistan. It argues that while Trump's intervention was welcomed, real peace demands far more than a fleeting diplomatic gesture. The author emphasizes the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding **in Indian-held Kashmir and calls on the US to broker meaningful dialogue.**

NOTES:

The article discusses US President Donald Trump's recent attempt to ease tensions between India and Pakistan, an effort welcomed by Pakistan but not substantial enough to merit a Nobel Peace Prize. The writer argues that true recognition requires resolving long-standing conflicts, particularly the Kashmir dispute, where human rights violations are rampant under Indian occupation. Since the revocation of Article 370 in 2019, the region has endured military lockdowns, internet blackouts, and widespread repression, with generations suffering from political suppression, arbitrary arrests, and disappearances. The article asserts that temporary diplomatic gestures cannot replace genuine, lasting peace. It further highlights that Trump, known for his unconventional diplomatic approach, has a unique opportunity to influence meaningful change. With strong ties to both India and Pakistan, the US holds the leverage to promote dialogue, even though India resists third-party mediation while Pakistan remains open to it. The writer concludes that if Trump truly aspires to global recognition for peace, focusing on a just resolution to the Kashmir issue would be far more impactful than symbolic interventions.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-India relations, Kashmir issue
- International Relations: Conflict resolution, third-party mediation, global diplomacy
- Current Affairs: US foreign policy, peacebuilding, regional instability
- Essay Paper: Peace and conflict, South Asian geopolitics, role of superpowers in resolving global crises
- Governance and Public Policy: Human rights, state oppression, crisis management
- Political Science: Power dynamics, international intervention, sovereignty versus humanitarian obligation

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that President Trump helped cool down a tense situation between India and Pakistan, but that alone won't win him a Nobel Prize. The Kashmir region especially the part controlled by India has faced serious human rights abuses for decades. For example, many people have been arrested without reason, and internet blackouts have left people cut off from the world. The US being friends with both countries could help push India to talk to Pakistan about ending the conflict peacefully. However, India does not want any outsider involved. The writer believes Trump should use America's power to bring both sides to the table. If he succeeds, it could lead to lasting peace in South Asia.

Facts and Figures:

- Kashmir conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives since 1947
- India revoked Kashmir's special status under Article 370 in 2019
- Widespread lockdowns, curfews, and internet blackouts followed the revocation
- Human rights groups have reported numerous cases of torture, arbitrary arrests, and disappearances
- The US remains a major arms supplier and trade partner to both India and Pakistan
- Trump has previously expressed interest in mediating on Kashmir, but India rejected the offer

In essence, this article reminds readers that peace isn't a performance or a publicity stunt. True diplomacy requires grit, persistence, and moral courage. If President Trump is really gunning for a Nobel, Kashmir could be his crucible the place where ambition meets responsibility. For Pakistan, it's a reminder to keep seeking justice not just through military or political rhetoric, but through sustained, strategic global engagement. For the world, it's a test of whether human rights still hold weight in the theater of geopolitics.

KABUL 'BEING RECEPTIVE' TO CONCERNS OVER TTP HAVENS: FOREIGN OFFICE

Author: Baqir Sajjad Syed

Summary:

The article centers on the recent shift in the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship, particularly the growing willingness of the Afghan Taliban to address Pakistan's long-standing concerns over the presence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants sheltering in Afghan territory. For years, this issue has remained a thorn in the side of diplomatic ties, with Islamabad blaming Kabul for turning a blind eye to militant safe havens that have fueled deadly cross-border attacks. However, recent high-level visits and diplomatic engagements, including those by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, have thawed the ice. Talks have touched on disarmament, relocation of TTP fighters, border management, and trade. The Taliban's agreement, in principle, to a phased relocation of TTP operatives is a breakthrough, signaling that the two countries may finally be pulling in the same direction at least cautiously.

In parallel, the article covers the global diplomatic scene where Pakistan's Foreign Minister Dar is engaging with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to discuss regional issues, including the Kashmir flashpoint. A recent military exchange between India and Pakistan escalated tensions, which were cooled down only after US intervention. The

article shows how the US remains a key player in South Asian diplomacy, acting as a buffer between two nuclear-armed neighbors. The Foreign Office stressed that Pakistan remains open to dialogue and values peaceful conflict resolution, but the ball is now in India's court. This renewed US-Pakistan engagement, Pakistan's improved rapport with the Taliban, and Islamabad's strategic balancing act underscore a shifting diplomatic landscape where quiet perseverance may pay off more than loud threats.

Overview:

This article unpacks Pakistan's evolving diplomatic efforts on two fronts: one, mending fences with the Afghan Taliban over cross-border militancy, and two, engaging with the United States on broader geopolitical concerns including Kashmir. It reveals a renewed energy in Islamabad's foreign policy, where high-level meetings, both in Kabul and Washington, signal serious attempts to address decades-old conflicts and misunderstandings.

NOTES:

This article is full of observations into regional diplomacy, security policy, and strategic engagement. You should pay close attention to how Pakistan is recalibrating its Afghanistan strategy by pressing the Taliban on counterterrorism while using diplomacy with the US to manage India-Pakistan tensions. It also illustrates how global mediation, especially by the US, remains central to conflict resolution in South Asia.

Relevant to the CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, Pakistan-India conflicts
- International Relations: Cross-border terrorism, diplomacy, third-party mediation
- Current Affairs: Regional peace, US-Pakistan relations, South Asian geopolitics
- Essay Paper: Counterterrorism strategies, peacebuilding in conflict zones
- Governance and Public Policy: Bilateral cooperation, foreign policy formulation, crisis management
- Political Science: Power diplomacy, security challenges, state sovereignty vs regional cooperation

Notes for Beginners:

This article tells us that Pakistan has long been troubled by TTP militants hiding in Afghanistan, blaming the Afghan Taliban for not acting against them. This group has attacked Pakistani forces many times. For instance, over 3,000 fighters are believed to be operating from Afghan soil. But now, there's some light at the end of the tunnel. Recent meetings between top officials from both countries suggest the Taliban might finally be ready to push TTP members away from the border and possibly disarm them. On another front, Pakistan is also talking to the US about regional peace, especially after a fierce military clash with India in May that nearly spiraled out of control. The US stepped in and brokered a ceasefire. These diplomatic moves are signs that Pakistan is trying to handle multiple crises with a steady hand and through peaceful means.

Facts and Figures:

- Estimated 3,000 to 4,000 TTP fighters are based in Afghanistan
- Ceasefire between Pakistan and TTP collapsed in November 2022
- Deputy PM Ishaq Dar visited Kabul on April 19, 2025
- Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held talks with Afghan minister Haqqani in July 2025
- The US mediated a ceasefire between Pakistan and India on May 10, 2025
- High-level Pakistan-US meeting scheduled with Secretary of State Rubio

To sum up, this article suggests that diplomacy isn't just about handshakes and press statements; it's about rolling up your sleeves and getting into the thick of hard conversations. With the Afghan Taliban finally showing signs of coming around on TTP sanctuaries and the US once again playing the peacemaker in South Asia, Pakistan is navigating choppy waters with a blend of firmness and flexibility. For anyone watching the region closely, it's clear that these moves are not just reactive, they're part of a bigger game plan where dialogue, strategy, and timing could mean the difference between chaos and stability.

LITMUS TEST FOR UN

Summary:

Presiding over a pivotal UN Security Council debate, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar laid it on the line, condemning the unfolding horror in Gaza as a full-scale genocide happening in plain sight. He didn't tiptoe around the facts. He called Gaza a graveyard not just for innocent lives but for international law itself. With over 59,000 Palestinians killed, children starving, and hospitals flattened, Dar blasted the UN's silence and paralysis as nothing short of complicity. Aid convoys are being bombed, and humanitarian access is choked while veto politics keeps the Council in shackles. Pakistan's six-point roadmap—calling for an unconditional ceasefire, unhindered aid, support for UNRWA, an end to illegal settlements and forced displacements, a robust reconstruction framework, and a genuine two-state solution—was presented as the bare minimum the international community must rally behind.

While some glimmers of diplomacy flicker Hamas gave a thumbs-up to a 60-day US-backed truce plan and mediators like Qatar and Egypt are still at the Table and Israel is playing hardball, pulling its negotiators and digging in on military presence conditions. Time's running out, and the article paints a bleak picture of a world watching history repeat itself. The ghosts of Rwanda and Bosnia loom large, and the editorial warns that inaction now would be another moral stain on the UN's already battered credibility. The Paris Peace Conference may offer a narrow window of hope, but without bold, immediate steps, it's all just smoke and mirrors. If the world keeps looking the other way, the UN might as well turn out the lights on its own legacy.

Overview:

This article is a fiery indictment of the UN's failure to act in the face of a mounting humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. It captures Pakistan's urgent diplomatic appeal and highlights the global community's moral failure to uphold justice and international law when it matters most.

NOTES:

The article captures a searing moment at the UN Security Council where Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar condemned the Gaza conflict as a full-scale genocide, asserting that international law is being buried alongside innocent civilians. With over 59,000 Palestinians dead, including starving children and bombed hospitals, the humanitarian crisis has spiraled beyond tragedy into atrocity. Dar accused the UN of moral paralysis and complicity due to inaction driven by veto politics. Aid convoys are under attack, while a third of Gaza's population suffers from extreme food shortages. Pakistan's six-point plan demands an unconditional ceasefire, open humanitarian corridors, support for UNRWA, cessation of illegal settlements, a reconstruction framework, and a real two-state solution. Meanwhile, Hamas has responded positively to a US-backed 60-day truce proposal, though Israel's withdrawal from negotiations and insistence on maintaining a military presence threaten to derail talks. Diplomatic momentum remains fragile, with time running out. The editorial draws parallels to the UN's past failures in Rwanda and Bosnia, urging immediate global action before Gaza becomes yet another chapter in the world's history of moral collapse.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy and role in international diplomacy
- International Relations: United Nations system, international law, Middle East crisis
- Current Affairs: Gaza conflict, UN inaction, peace-building efforts
- Essay Paper: Humanitarian crises, justice in international relations, failures of global governance
- Political Science: State responsibility, veto power politics, ethical leadership

Notes for Beginners:

This article tells us how Pakistan boldly took a stand at the UN, calling out the world's failure to stop the suffering in Gaza. Imagine over 59,000 people killed, including babies dying from hunger, while the global body meant to protect peace does almost nothing. Why? Because powerful countries use their veto power to block any action. Pakistan offered a six-point plan that includes stopping the war and allowing food and medicine to reach those in need. While there are efforts from countries like Qatar and the US to get both sides to agree on a 60-day truce, Israel's hesitance is making the talks shaky. If nothing is done soon, history may remember this just like Rwanda and Bosnia where the UN stood by as tragedies unfolded.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 59,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza
- A third of Gaza's population goes without food for days
- Two children died of starvation recently, one just six weeks old
- UN schools and hospitals have been bombed
- Pakistan presented a 6-point peace plan at the UN Security Council
- Hamas responded positively to a 60-day ceasefire proposal
- Israel recalled its Doha-based negotiators for internal consultations

To sum up, The article throws cold water on any illusion that the world is doing enough to stop the bloodshed in Gaza. It's a chilling reminder that silence isn't neutral but it's complicity. While Pakistan punches above its weight morally the UN crippled by political deadlock is fast losing whatever credibility it had left.

SOUTH ASIAN QUAD IS A DEBATABLE IDEA

Summary:

The author casts a critical eye on the concept of a South Asian Quad, proposed as a naval alliance led by Pakistan and China, excluding India. The idea tries to mirror the original Quad comprising the US, India, Japan, and Australia which aims to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). These powers use high-tech naval drills and strategic messaging to reinforce maritime stability and curtail threats like piracy and terrorism. However, China sees the Quad as little more than a velvet-gloved attempt to contain its rise. The article points out that oceans, unlike land, offer uninterrupted mobility and connectivity, covering 71% of Earth's surface and handling over 90% of global trade. In this vast, frictionless space, naval forces are the real power players of the future, especially with AI-driven technologies and space warfare fast eclipsing traditional land armies.

As the article sails deeper, it becomes clear that the proposed South Asian Quad may be little more than smoke and mirrors. With China's geographic roots in East Asia and Afghanistan still lacking global recognition, the composition of this supposed strategic forum seems off-kilter. The title itself, the author argues, is misleading. While the original Quad is a calculated balancing act with real geopolitical clout, this South Asian version appears more symbolic than strategic. It raises more questions than it answers: What's the agenda? Who are the real stakeholders? And can it even take off without India? The piece lands a strong punch by questioning whether such a proposal is feasible or simply a diplomatic daydream.

Overview:

The article analyzes the concept of forming a South Asian Quad, likening it to a misplaced attempt at strategic posturing in a region already fraught with geopolitical complexity. It challenges the feasibility, composition, and purpose of such an alliance, particularly in the absence of India.

NOTES

The article highlights Many points regarding the feasibility and strategic weight of a proposed South Asian Quad involving Pakistan and China, while excluding India. It draws a clear contrast between this speculative alliance and

the existing Quad comprising the US, India, Japan, and Australia which actively works to ensure maritime stability in the Indo-Pacific through coordinated naval drills and interoperability among advanced fleets. The original Quad aims to uphold the concept of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP), ensuring freedom of navigation and collective resistance against threats like piracy and terrorism, largely under the international rules-based order. The South Asian variant, however, lacks both geographic coherence and diplomatic recognition, particularly with China’s roots in East Asia and Afghanistan’s international legitimacy still hanging in the balance. The article underscores how the oceans, covering 71% of the planet and facilitating 90% of global trade, have become the primary arena for future warfare that shifting the balance from land armies to high-tech, mobile naval forces empowered by AI, drones, and space-based assets. The article also criticizes the ambiguous agenda of the proposed alliance, arguing that the absence of India a dominant regional player, renders the concept strategically hollow and diplomatically unrealistic. Through historical references like the Malabar exercises and factual comparisons, the article stresses that symbolic coalitions without operational clarity are likely to collapse under their own contradictions.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan’s regional strategy and alliances
- International Relations: Quad alliance, FOIP strategy, alliance politics
- Current Affairs: Indo-Pacific security, naval diplomacy, strategic dialogues
- Essay Paper: Geopolitics, emerging warfare trends, alliance formation in the 21st century
- Political Science: Balance of power, regionalism, strategic realism

Notes for Beginners:

This article questions the idea of Pakistan and China forming their own version of the Quad without India. The original Quad (US, India, Japan, Australia) is a powerful naval group working together to keep the Indo-Pacific region safe and free. They conduct large naval exercises involving aircraft carriers, submarines, and advanced tech. On the other hand, the South Asian Quad doesn’t seem to have a clear direction or solid members. For example, Afghanistan’s role is shaky since many countries don’t even officially recognize its current government. And without India, a major regional player, the plan feels like building a ship without a rudder. The article argues that while the idea sounds bold, it may lack real-world value.

Facts and Figures:

- Quad includes US, India, Japan, and Australia
- FOIP supports 90% of global trade via sea
- China possesses the world’s largest navy by numbers
- Malabar naval drills started in 1992 between the US and India
- 71% of Earth’s surface is covered by oceans
- Over 90% of world trade moves through maritime routes

To wrap up, this article throws cold water on the lofty ambitions of forming a South Asian Quad without India, calling it a strategic misfire more than a masterstroke. While naval alliances are the new chessboard for global power, this article reminds us that in geopolitics, symbolism without substance is like a ship drifting without an anchor. It’s a timely lesson in strategic realism and a must-read to understand where military logic meets diplomatic illusion.

ISRAEL IS TRYING TO HIJACK THE BALOCH STRUGGLE

Author: Abdulla Moaswes

Summary:

This article reveals how Israel, under the guise of geopolitical strategy is attempting to hijack the Baloch liberation movement for its own ends. The article reveals that a Washington-based think tank MEMRI, which has deep roots in Israeli intelligence, launched the Balochistan Studies Project (BSP) shortly before Israel's surprise attack on Iran. This so-called research initiative paints Balochistan as a strategic counterweight to Iran and Pakistan, emphasizing its natural wealth and geostrategic ports. Yet, behind this academic smokescreen lies a clear agenda: using Balochistan to gain regional leverage while undermining solidarity among stateless peoples. What's more, the BSP's so-called experts, like the mysterious Mir Yar Baloch, seem like convenient mouthpieces. His proclamations of independence and praise for India and Israel are suspiciously amplified by Indian media while actual Baloch activists label him a fraud. This project isn't about liberation—it's about exploitation.

Digging deeper, the article calls out how Israel's strategic outreach to Baloch groups is neither accidental nor benign. It's a calculated attempt to carve influence in West Asia, especially by pairing up with India, a country that already champions the Baloch cause to needle Pakistan. The BSP works as a platform for Indian-Israeli synergy to shape narratives, weaken Iran, and suppress cross-border solidarity between the Baloch and other oppressed groups like Palestinians and Kashmiris. The author warns against resistance movements falling into the trap of "my enemy's enemy is my friend," showing how past alliances, like the PLO's support for Saddam, backfired. Instead, the piece champions a post-geopolitical, principle-driven approach one that doesn't sell its soul for short-term gain. Stateless peoples, the author argues, must build coalitions rooted in justice, not in the shaky hands of self-serving nation-states.

Overview:

The article exposes how Israel, through MEMRI's Balochistan Studies Project, is manipulating the Baloch nationalist struggle to serve its regional objectives. It dissects how this move, intertwined with Indian strategic interests, risks fragmenting solidarity among oppressed groups. The author urges liberation movements to move beyond opportunistic geopolitics and instead form alliances rooted in anti-colonial principles and long-term justice.

NOTES:

The article highlights how Israel under the façade of academic research is attempting to hijack the Baloch nationalist movement to act its own geopolitical interests. It centers around the launch of the Balochistan Studies Project (BSP) by the Washington-based think tank MEMRI, which has close ties to Israeli intelligence. This project paints Balochistan a resource-rich and geopolitically significant region shared by Pakistan and Iran as an ideal outpost to monitor and counter both countries. The author dissects how figures like the shadowy Mir Yar Baloch are being propped up in Indian media as representatives of the Baloch cause, despite being discredited by actual Baloch activists. These efforts by MEMRI are seen as part of a broader Israeli-Indian strategy to manipulate stateless struggles and undermine solidarity among oppressed peoples, including Palestinians and Kashmiris. The article warns that elevating geopolitics above principle risks repeating historical mistakes and alienating genuine resistance movements. Instead, it advocates for a post-geopolitical, justice-centered approach to building long-term, principled alliances that are not co-opted by self-serving state agendas.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Regional dynamics and Pakistan's geopolitical vulnerabilities
- International Relations: Proxy warfare, soft power, geopolitical exploitation
- Current Affairs: Israel-Iran-Pakistan relations, media and intelligence influence
- Political Science: State behavior, realpolitik vs idealism in resistance movements

- Essay Paper: Anticolonialism, transnational solidarity, modern diplomacy

Notes for Beginners:

Israel, through a think tank called MEMRI has launched a new “research” project on Balochistan that looks more like a political weapon than an academic study. MEMRI claim Balochistan could be used to watch over Iran and Pakistan, especially because of its rich resources like oil, gas, and access to seaports like Gwadar. But the real goal that the author argues is to use the Baloch cause to serve Israel’s and India’s interests. For example, a mysterious figure named Mir Yar Baloch popped up online, declared independence for Balochistan praised Modi and gained traction only through Indian media. Real Baloch activists, however, say he’s fake and warn others to avoid him. This shows how easily fake news and state propaganda can hijack freedom movements.

Facts and Figures:

- MEMRI was founded in 1998 and is tied to Israeli intelligence
- Balochistan spans both Pakistan and Iran, and both face insurgency there
- Gwadar and Chabahar are key deep-sea ports in the region
- Over 60 million Baloch people reportedly support independence, according to Mir Yar Baloch (a claim disputed by actual Baloch leaders)
- The article was published a day before Israel's surprise attack on Iran in July 2025
- MEMRI has a long history of pushing pro-Israel content through selective translation

To sum up, this article suggests that what appears as a well-packaged research initiative is, at its core a geopolitical sleight of hand. It challenges us to ask: who’s really pulling the strings in freedom struggles? And at what cost? For CSS aspirants, it’s a reminder that in global politics, the loudest voices often mask the deepest manipulations. True resistance, as the author makes clear, isn’t about choosing allies out of convenience it’s about standing firm on principle, even when the winds of power blow the other way.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

1. Co-opt – To take over or appropriate for one's own use
Synonym: Hijack | Antonym: Surrender
2. Geopolitical – Related to politics influenced by geography
Synonym: Strategic | Antonym: Apolitical
3. Counterinsurgency – Military or political action against rebellion
Synonym: Suppression | Antonym: Uprising
4. Delegitimise – Undermine or attack the validity of something
Synonym: Discredit | Antonym: Authenticate

POLITICS OF PERSONAL GLORY

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article shows how Punjab, the heart of Pakistan, has been reduced to a political dynasty’s playground. What should be a government of the people has become a family business run behind closed doors in Murree, where policy decisions are whispered over tea among Sharif family members. The author pulls no punches while exposing the brazen self-glorification campaigns that plaster the province with Maryam Nawaz’s life-sized posters and refer to her as Madr-i-Millat a title that reeks of authoritarian mimicry. This isn't governance; it’s a personality cult paid for by taxpayer money. From renaming projects to running sycophantic ad campaigns, the Sharifs seem to be rewriting the playbook of political vanity. What’s more disturbing is how a Supreme Court ruling against such misuse of state funds is being blatantly ignored, turning democracy into a farce and Punjab into a fiefdom. The real

kicker? The public mandate seems like a smokescreen, with the real puppeteers hidden behind the curtain of a hybrid regime.

But that's not where the story ends because it only gets murkier. The article walks us through the rollercoaster comeback of a family once disgraced and disqualified, now comfortably back in power thanks to backroom dealings and establishment blessings. Nawaz Sharif, once waving the banner of "respect the vote," now watches silently as that very vote gets trampled under the boots of manipulation. His disqualifications? Magically overturned. Convictions? Vanished like smoke. The article doesn't mince words when it says this isn't democracy, it's a managed script with the same old actors playing new roles. The return of the Sharifs isn't just a political comeback; it's a cautionary tale of how power, once lost, can be regained not through the people's will, but through the shifting sands of elite interests. It reminds us that when politics becomes personal theatre, the nation ends up paying the ticket price.

Overview:

This article critically dissects how political power in Punjab has become synonymous with the Sharif family's personal ambitions. It outlines how state machinery is being used to glorify individuals instead of serving the public, and it paints a sobering picture of how democracy is slowly being hollowed out by unchecked dynastic politics and establishment manipulation.

NOTES:

The article paints a disturbing picture of how Punjab's governance has been hijacked by dynastic politics, with the Sharif family firmly at the helm. It highlights how important policy decisions are no longer made through institutional mechanisms but are instead handled within private family meetings in Murree. A major focus is the Sharif-led provincial government's obsession with personal glorification, evident through widespread ad campaigns, renaming of public projects, and life-sized images of Maryam Nawaz, some even labelling her as Madr-i-Millat. All of this is allegedly bankrolled by taxpayers. The article criticises this excessive self-promotion, calling it reminiscent of authoritarian regimes. It also recalls a 2022 Supreme Court verdict that explicitly forbade such practices, declaring that public officials should not use state positions for personal or partisan gains. The article further delves into Nawaz Sharif's controversial return to politics after a lifetime ban and multiple corruption convictions, noting how his disqualifications were mysteriously reversed and his party reinstated to power with behind-the-scenes support from the establishment. Rather than standing by democratic principles like "respect the vote," Nawaz appears content with playing a background role, while his daughter takes the spotlight in Punjab's governance. The piece concludes by warning that this type of manipulated and hollow political structure erodes the foundations of democracy and exposes the dangers of politics driven by personal ambition rather than public service.

Relevant to the CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Dynastic rule, Punjab's political structure, institutional erosion
- Current Affairs: Governance crisis, hybrid regime, electoral manipulation
- Political Science: Democracy vs authoritarianism, state legitimacy
- Essay Paper: Power and accountability, political ethics, democratic decay

Notes for beginners:

The article talks about how the Sharif family, instead of running Punjab like a government, is treating it like their private company. For example, they're naming government projects after themselves and putting up huge posters with their faces using public money. Even though the courts said this is wrong, it's still happening. Nawaz Sharif was banned from politics in 2017, but somehow came back, had all his cases dropped, and now his daughter is running the biggest province. That's not how democracy is supposed to work. It's like if your school principal was fired for cheating, but then came back and made their own daughter the new principal. It just doesn't sit right.

Facts and Figures:

- Nawaz Sharif was disqualified for life by the Supreme Court in 2018
- The Sharif family faced multiple graft charges and jail terms
- Maryam Nawaz is now the first woman Chief Minister of Punjab
- Supreme Court's 2022 ruling forbade using public resources for self-promotion
- Posters naming Maryam as Madr-i-Millat have been seen across Punjab
- The ruling party is accused of running ads with public funds for political mileage

To sum up, this article highlights the cracks of Pakistan's political system and asks hard questions about who really holds power and why. It calls out the hypocrisy of political actors who cry foul when out of office but happily dance to the tune of power when back in it. For anyone preparing for the CSS exam or just trying to understand how politics in Pakistan really works, this is a must-read. It teaches us that true leadership isn't built on billboards or TV ads but it's earned through service, integrity, and accountability.

Difficult Words and Their Meanings:

1. Fiefdom – Territory controlled by one person or family
Synonym: Domain | Antonym: Democracy
2. Self-glorification – Excessive praise of oneself
Synonym: Narcissism | Antonym: Humility
3. Mandate – Official permission or support to govern
Synonym: Authority | Antonym: Illegitimacy
4. Aggrandizement – Making someone seem more powerful or important
Synonym: Elevation | Antonym: Humbling
5. Hybrid regime – A political system combining democratic and authoritarian traits
Synonym: Pseudo-democracy | Antonym: Liberal democracy
6. Partisan – Strongly supporting one side, often unfairly
Synonym: Biased | Antonym: Neutral

MAGA MELTDOWN

Author: Mahir Ali

Summary:

The article explores how Donald Trump trips over his own lies like seeing a magician caught hiding the rabbit up his sleeve. The article cuts through the chaos and shows us a man unraveling hoisted by his own delusions and betrayed by the very crowd that once chanted his name. What's happening now is political karma at full throttle. Trump's MAGA base, once mesmerized by his swagger, is now simmering with fury over his backpedaling on the Epstein files, a case they believed would expose a global elite of predators. Instead, they've been handed a steaming plate of "there's nothing to see here," and they're not swallowing it. The author doesn't tiptoe around; he lays it all out—Trump's decades-old friendship with Epstein, the grooming of a teenage girl from Mar-a-Lago, and the grotesque power circles where abuse was currency. Trump's lawsuit against The Wall Street Journal and his shallow

gestures to “release” documents are portrayed for what they are smoke and mirrors to keep the mob distracted while the truth rots in locked drawers.

But that’s not where the rot ends. The article dives headfirst into the absurd theatre of American politics, where Democrats scrambling to look relevant are fumbling around the Epstein saga like blind men with flashlights. The piece rightfully calls them out for relying on scandal over substance, turning the justice system into a political football while Trump rebrands himself as a martyr of the elite. Yet the irony is rich: Trump is the elite, and always has been. His policies have padded the pockets of billionaires while bleeding the working class dry. His MAGA movement was always a Trojan horse loud on nationalism, silent on justice. Now the cracks are visible and even his die-hard supporters are starting to smell the stench. The article warns us that if this circus continues, the United States is inching dangerously close to one-party dominance, an unholy trifecta of executive, legislative and judicial capture. It’s not just Trump on Trial, it’s the very soul of American democracy.

Overview:

This article delivers a scathing exposé of Donald Trump’s crumbling grip on his MAGA loyalists, focusing on his mishandling of the Epstein files scandal and the broader hypocrisy of American politics. It lays bare the rot in both Republican and Democratic camps, while exposing how powerful elites—from property tycoons to presidents—remain shielded by money, manipulation, and media gamesmanship.

NOTES:

The article meticulously dissects the unraveling of Donald Trump’s carefully crafted populist image, triggered largely by his betrayal of the MAGA base over the Epstein files scandal. It underscores how Trump, once seen as the anti-establishment maverick, is now entangled in the very elite networks he once vowed to dismantle. A key focus is the broken promise to release Epstein-related documents, which has caused disillusionment among even his staunchest supporters. The piece details Trump’s longstanding association with Epstein, including public praises and shared social circles, while highlighting the recruitment of a 17-year-old girl from Mar-a-Lago into Epstein’s network. It also emphasizes the hypocrisy of Trump’s stance—suing the Wall Street Journal over a scandal-linked drawing while pretending to seek “truth and justice.” Simultaneously, the article calls out the Democratic Party for opportunistically weaponizing the Epstein scandal rather than presenting meaningful political alternatives. The author warns that if unchecked, the current political landscape could allow Trump’s Republican bloc to gain complete control over all branches of government, thereby crippling the constitutional balance. The piece makes a strong case that Trump is not the disruptor he claims to be but rather a deeply embedded part of the reprobate elite that thrives on media manipulation, judicial evasion, and the exploitation of populist rage.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Comparative populism and elite control
- Current Affairs: Global political scandals, populist movements, and institutional decay
- Political Science: Populism, elite theory, democratic backsliding
- Essay Paper: Power, accountability, leadership crisis, political ethics

Notes for Beginners:

The article tells us that Trump’s supporters are turning on him because he promised to reveal everything about the Epstein child abuse scandal but backed out. They feel betrayed because he used to say he’d expose corrupt elites, yet now he’s acting like one of them. For instance, he used to be friends with Epstein and even praised him in interviews, but now denies any connection. A woman who worked at Trump’s club at 17 said she was groomed by Epstein’s people and Trump never took action. Meanwhile, Trump is suing a newspaper for showing evidence he once contributed a questionable drawing for Epstein’s birthday. It’s like he’s putting on a show and acting tough while hiding the truth. And Democrats instead of focusing on better leadership, are just cheering from the sidelines hoping this scandal brings him down.

Facts and Figures:

- Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein were friends for over a decade
- Virginia Giuffre was recruited at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club at age 17
- Giuffre died by suicide in April after speaking out against Epstein's network
- Trump promised to release Epstein files but later denied their existence
- He is now suing The Wall Street Journal for linking him to the scandal
- MAGA supporters are increasingly skeptical of Trump's integrity

To sum up, this article slices through the myths surrounding Trump's persona and leaves readers staring at the uncomfortable truth: he's not an outsider fighting the system; he is the system. For anyone preparing for the CSS exam this article is a reminder that populist leaders can talk about change while quietly preserving the same corrupt order. The moral? Don't fall for the smoke show. Look at the actions, not the applause.

Difficult Words and Their Meanings:

1. Petard – A small bomb used for blowing up gates or walls, often used metaphorically
Synonym: Trap | Antonym: Rescue

2. Travails – Painful or laborious efforts
Synonym: Struggles | Antonym: Ease

3. Nobbled – Undermined or sabotaged, often secretly
Synonym: Sabotaged | Antonym: Supported

4. Doddering – Trembling or feeble due to old age
Synonym: Senile | Antonym: Sharp

5. Reprobate – Morally unprincipled person
Synonym: Degenerate | Antonym: Saint

6. Stranglehold – Complete or overwhelming control
Synonym: Grip | Antonym: Freedom

PAKISTAN-US COOPERATION

The article signals a potential turning point in what has long been a rollercoaster relationship between Islamabad and Washington. The recent high-level meeting between Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has given a fresh lease of life to bilateral ties that had gone cold. Behind this diplomatic reset lies a quiet but significant move—Donald Trump's lunch with Field Marshal Asim Munir at the White House. That meeting may have seemed like optics, but it set the ball rolling for renewed engagement. The article points out that the current phase of talks isn't only about counterterrorism or security as in the past. Instead, the two sides are now zeroing in on economic revival, trade negotiations, investment in tech sectors like AI and IT, and joint interest in critical minerals and mining. What's more, the article suggests that we're just days away from a major breakthrough in reversing the steep 29% tariffs imposed under Trump's earlier economic policies. Dar's statement at the Atlantic Council shows Pakistan is no longer begging for aid but instead gunning for a balanced economic partnership.

The article highlights more than just surface-level reporting. It delivers a roadmap for future diplomacy. The US remains Pakistan's largest export market and its biggest fixed-investment partner. With Islamabad prioritising sustainable economic ties over transactional diplomacy, this shift could pay long-term dividends. The article hints

that this rekindled partnership might not just benefit trade but could naturally extend into counterterrorism and regional stability, especially as the US still plays an influential role in South Asia. There's also an underlying theme of strategic recalibration: Pakistan wants American support on issues like Kashmir but is wise enough to know that long-term partnership depends on shared economic goals, not just shared grievances.

Overview:

The article highlights a pivotal shift in bilateral relations following meetings between Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. This diplomatic revival, quietly initiated by Donald Trump's lunch with Field Marshal Asim Munir, marks a move away from a security-centric relationship toward one focused on trade, economic revival, and investment in emerging sectors like AI, IT, and critical minerals. The article signals an impending breakthrough on reversing the 29% US tariffs and portrays Pakistan's evolving stance—from seeking aid to pursuing balanced economic ties. It underscores the US's role as Pakistan's top export market and investor, suggesting that this renewed engagement could also spill over into regional security and diplomacy.

NOTES:

This article is a case study in diplomatic realism. Use it to illustrate how former adversarial ties can warm up with the right mix of strategic interest and economic incentives. It shows how trade becomes the foundation for wider cooperation. Understand the shift from a security-first mindset to an economy-first approach. This is modern foreign policy in action.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations (bilateral relations, diplomacy, strategic alliances)
- Current Affairs (Pakistan-US ties, economic cooperation, counterterrorism)
- Pakistan Affairs (foreign policy direction, economic diplomacy)
- Essay Paper (topics on diplomacy, economic partnerships, shifting global alliances)

Notes for Beginners:

Think of Pakistan and the US like two neighbors who had a long argument but are now talking again because they need each other's help. Instead of focusing only on fighting terrorism (like in the past), they are now trying to do business like selling goods, investing in technology, and working together on mining resources. That's like saying, let's stop arguing and start building something together. And it all began with a friendly lunch at the White House.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan faces 29% reciprocal tariffs from the US
- The US is Pakistan's largest export destination
- American firms are the top fixed investors in Pakistan

To sum up, this editorial doesn't just recap a diplomatic event, it paints a picture of possibility. For Pakistan, it's a rare window to pivot from aid-dependence to economic dignity. For the US, it's a chance to solidify its influence in a region where China is also making moves. If both sides play their cards right, this moment could mark the beginning of a more mature, mutually beneficial relationship.

THE WAR THAT WASN'T

Author - Najm us Saqib

Summary:

The recent Israel-Iran aerial clash turned out to be more smoke than fire. It's a theatre of power projection masked as a defensive move. Though Israel went in with guns blazing, hoping to cripple Iran's nuclear ambitions and rattle its regime, the end result fell short of its lofty aims. Iran absorbed the punches, mourned its martyrs, and kept its nuclear program afloat with its underground sites reportedly untouched. The international spectacle seemed less about stopping Iran and more about ticking geopolitical checkboxes. Trump's last-minute intervention to broker a ceasefire mirrored his uncanny knack for appearing at the eleventh hour and making it look like peace was his brainchild. For all the noise and fury, the scoreboard remained largely unchanged: Iran is still standing, Khamenei is still in charge, and the Middle East continues to simmer like a pot on the verge of boiling over.

The real takeaway lies not in the damage inflicted but in the message conveyed. The clash showcased how modern warfare has shifted missiles and drones now steal the show while boots on the ground grow irrelevant. The US and Israel reaffirmed their dominance but failed to shift the regional tectonics. Ceasefires are no longer negotiated; they are imposed. International law played the role of a silent spectator and global powers nodded in approval as Trump claimed victory. But the region is still walking a tightrope, and one misstep could light the fuse again. In a nutshell, the war that wasn't has only confirmed that the next big conflict won't necessarily be fought in the skies—it may unfold in cyberspace or through invisible hands pulling the strings from afar.

Overview:

This article critically examines the Israel-Iran aerial conflict, presenting it as a strategic performance rather than a full-scale war. It highlights the limited tactical outcomes of the assault, Iran's resilience and the geopolitical undercurrents driving the attack. The writer also reflects on Trump's timely ceasefire and how modern warfare is becoming more about optics and less about conquest. It underlines the shift toward aerial supremacy and proxy conflicts while questioning the effectiveness of international diplomacy and law in an increasingly polarised world.

NOTES:

The article unpacks the recent Israel-Iran aerial conflict, framing it as a spectacle of strategic symbolism rather than a genuine attempt at war. It highlights that despite Israel's aggressive strikes, Iran's nuclear infrastructure remains largely untouched, with key sites reportedly evacuated before the attack. Iran suffered significant losses, including the death of nuclear scientists and senior generals, yet its resolve and nuclear ambitions appear undeterred. The article points out that Trump's sudden ceasefire intervention was not aimed at peace but at preventing uncontrollable escalation, reflecting a growing trend in modern diplomacy driven by optics and short-term strategic breathing space. The article also critiques the failure of the operation's stated goals, such as regime change and nuclear disarmament and notes how groups like Hamas and Hezbollah emerged more emboldened. It underscores that despite US and Israeli efforts, the Middle East remains a highly volatile region where traditional warfare is giving way to precision strikes, proxy battles, and cyber operations. The author draws attention to how international law and multilateral bodies appear powerless against determined state actors, with ceasefires now being enforced rather than negotiated. The article ultimately paints a picture of a shifting global order, where hybrid conflict replaces conventional war, and political messaging takes precedence over actual military results.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics:

- International Relations – US-Israel strategic alliance, Iran's nuclear ambitions, evolving global power dynamics, deterrence theory, multipolarity.

- Current Affairs – Regional security developments, Middle East tensions, Trump-era diplomacy, modern warfare strategies.
- Pakistan Affairs – Implications of Middle East instability on Pakistan’s foreign policy, regional connectivity, and security calculus.
- Essay Paper – Topics like “New World Order and Emerging Strategic Realities” or “Modern Warfare and its Global Impact”.

Notes for Beginners:

This article helps explain how not every war is about winning land or destroying cities—some are about making a point. Israel attacked Iran’s nuclear sites but didn’t destroy them. Iran lost lives and assets but didn’t change its goals. The US stepped in at the last moment and forced both to stop, but peace wasn’t the real goal. It was about avoiding a bigger disaster. The article shows how today’s wars are less about soldiers and more about missiles, cyber attacks, and influence. It also explains how big powers like the US decide when a war should end, even if the reasons are unclear.

Facts and Figures:

- Iran’s nuclear programme remains intact despite strikes
- The conflict lasted twelve days before Trump’s ceasefire
- High-profile Iranian losses included generals and scientists
- Trump’s ceasefire mirrored his prior interventions, such as in the India-Pakistan aerial skirmish
- No evidence was found of the nuclear programme’s total destruction

To sum up, this article is a sharp dissection of modern conflict theatre, revealing the emptiness behind grand military gestures. While the missiles may have flown, the core objectives remained unfulfilled. It’s a powerful reminder that wars today are as much about narratives as they are about damage. In a world where politics is performance and diplomacy is a game of shadows, this piece pulls the curtain back to reveal the actors, the script, and the audience watching in silence.

Difficult Words with Meanings:

1. Decimation – Large-scale destruction
Synonyms: annihilation, devastation
Antonyms: preservation, restoration
2. Deterrence – The act of preventing an action through fear of consequences
Synonyms: restraint, hindrance
Antonyms: provocation, encouragement
3. Hullabaloo – A loud uproar or fuss
Synonyms: commotion, uproar
Antonyms: calm, tranquility
4. Obliterated – Wiped out or destroyed completely
Synonyms: eradicated, demolished
Antonyms: constructed, maintained
5. Supremacy – Dominance or superiority
Synonyms: authority, control
Antonyms: inferiority, subordination

The Express Tribune –

THE DANGEROUS NEW NORMAL IN MIDDLE EAST

Author - Kamran Yousaf

Summary:

In the thick of rising tensions, Israel took the plunge and launched a calculated assault on Iran's nuclear facilities, claiming it was a last-ditch effort to halt Tehran's alleged dash toward the bomb. What followed was a fiery exchange that shattered decades of indirect posturing between the two arch-rivals. Trump despite earlier US intelligence downplaying Iran's nuclear threat, jumped into the fray with an iron fist, unleashing B-2 bombers in a high-stakes gamble to cripple Iran's underground nuclear strongholds. He beat the war drums loud, proclaiming total victory. But behind the curtain, leaked intelligence whispered a different tale: Iran's core capabilities remained intact, and its deterrent power had simply been shuffled out of harm's way.

Iran's measured retaliation, including a symbolic strike on a US base in Qatar, paved the path for an orchestrated ceasefire that suited all parties staggering from the blowback. Trump wore the mediator's cloak briefly, praising Iran's "bravery" while simultaneously scolding Israel. Yet the real takeaway wasn't who won or lost this round. It was the alarming precedent set: a line crossed, a red zone now open to future flashpoints. The so-called ceasefire might've been a lull in battle, but the Middle East has entered a dangerous new normal where what was once unthinkable, direct military showdowns is now part of the playbook.

Overview:

This article critically dissects the recent Israel-Iran conflict and the abrupt US involvement under Trump's leadership. It scrutinizes the geopolitical risks of military escalation in the Middle East and questions the effectiveness and consequences of US foreign policy strategies, particularly when driven by political theatrics rather than strategic necessity.

NOTES:

The article provides critical analysis of contemporary international diplomacy, the role of misinformation in global politics and the ramifications of military interventionism. It evaluates how national interests are projected, manipulated, and at times sacrificed at the altar of populism. It also underscores the importance of understanding strategic narratives, the role of intelligence agencies and the fine line between deterrence and provocation.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- International Relations (Middle East conflicts, foreign policy strategies)
- Current Affairs (Geopolitical flashpoints and diplomatic crises)
- Pakistan Affairs (Regional implications of US-Middle East policies)
- Essay Paper (Themes: war and peace, diplomacy, US global role)
- General Knowledge (Strategic dynamics, deterrence, intelligence reports)

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how conflicts in international relations don't always follow open declarations. For example, although the US appeared uninvolved initially, it later bombed Iranian nuclear sites, showing how superpowers often act covertly before revealing their true hand. The term "deterrence" is central here, which means keeping your opponent in check without necessarily using force like when Iran signaled it might strike back, and that warning alone slowed down aggressive moves. Also symbolic acts in diplomacy such as Iran's pre-informed missile launch, show that even warfare can be staged to serve broader political goals. Facts like the use of 30,000-pound bombs or the role of Fordow nuclear site help build technical understanding.

Facts and Figures:

- The 12-day war between Israel and Iran marked the first direct military confrontation between the two countries after decades of indirect hostility.
- Israel launched strikes on June 13 targeting Iran’s nuclear facilities and assassinating senior Iranian military and nuclear personnel.
- The US B-2 bombers dropped over a dozen 30,000-pound bombs on three major nuclear sites: Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan.
- The Pentagon’s DIA report revealed that the US strikes only set back Iran’s nuclear programme by a few months, contrary to Trump’s claims of total destruction.
- There was no radiation leak from the bombed nuclear sites, suggesting Iran had preemptively secured its enriched uranium and materials.
- Iran’s missile strike on a major US base in Qatar resulted in zero casualties or damage, as the strike was coordinated in advance and all missiles were intercepted over Doha.
- Following the symbolic retaliation, Trump announced a ceasefire within hours, showing both sides were under domestic and international pressure to de-escalate.
- Iran’s survival and continued resistance indicated that Israel’s goal of regime change was not achieved, and Iran remains a significant regional actor.

To sum up, The article highlights how political grandstanding can steer the world to the brink of catastrophe. It brings into sharp focus the thin ice on which modern diplomacy skates, where misinformation, media optics and symbolic strikes blur the line between conflict resolution and war-mongering. The narrative not only unpacks a recent conflict but also shows how easily global powers can normalize high-risk engagements that once seemed unimaginable.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

1. Obliterated – completely destroyed; Synonym: annihilated; Antonym: preserved
2. Escalated – intensified rapidly; Synonym: aggravated; Antonym: deescalated
3. Precedent – an earlier event that sets a rule or example; Synonym: standard; Antonym: anomaly
4. Choreographed – carefully planned or orchestrated; Synonym: scripted; Antonym: spontaneous
5. Retaliate – to respond to an attack; Synonym: avenge; Antonym: forgive

ISRAEL'S DANGEROUS DELUSIONS

Author - Zamir Akram

Summary:

In a move straight out of his long-standing Zionist playbook, Netanyahu pulled the trigger on a war he had been planning for two decades, targeting Iran under the guise of dismantling its nuclear threat. But behind the smokescreen of “national security” lies a grand delusion—the dangerous dream of a “Greater Israel.” Backed to the hilt by Western allies and steered by powerful Jewish lobbies, this aggression has done little to change the strategic equation. Instead of folding, Iran punched back with surprising resilience, exposing cracks in Israel’s armor and putting to rest the myth of its military invincibility. Netanyahu's gamble, meant to be a swift knockout, has turned into a bruising war of attrition with no clear exit strategy. And while the US reluctantly dipped its toes in, sending bunker-busting bombs flying, it now finds itself in a catch-22, stuck between Israeli pressure and domestic opposition to another Middle Eastern quagmire.

As the dust settles, the region stands on the brink of catastrophe. Iran cornered but unbroken and is now eyeing countermeasures that could set the Middle East alight, from walking away from the NPT to blockading the Persian Gulf. The Houthis, Hamas and Hezbollah remain in the wings, ready to strike. Meanwhile China and Russia have thrown their weight behind Tehran, condemning Israeli aggression and pushing for de-escalation. For Pakistan, the writing's on the wall. As a neighboring state with deep historical ties to Iran and a target of Indo-Israeli subversion in the past, it must play both a watchdog and a peace-broker. Pakistan's national security demands vigilance, particularly along its western borders, which could flare up in the blink of an eye if this conflict spirals out of control. Netanyahu may have lit the match, but the wildfire that follows will not spare anyone.

Overview:

The article analyzes Israel's ongoing aggression towards Iran as part of a long-term strategy for regional dominance, backed by Western allies. It exposes the failure of Israel's war objectives, sheds light on America's reluctant involvement, Iran's defiant counter-response, and the broader regional and global consequences of this dangerous power play.

NOTES:

The ARTICLE highlights Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's long-standing ambition to establish a "Greater Israel" and how his latest war on Iran is a calculated step in that direction. It recounts his rejection of the two-state solution and his collaboration with Western allies, especially the US influenced by domestic Jewish lobbies. The author traces the historical context, citing post-9/11 regime change operations aimed at neutralising opponents of the Zionist agenda. Iran, the last on this list has now become the direct target. The strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities have not achieved the intended regime change or destroyed Iran's nuclear infrastructure. Instead, Iran has responded with surprising military resilience, shattering Israel's image of invincibility and turning the conflict into a prolonged war of attrition. The US, after hesitating, joined the strikes under pressure, yet no credible evidence supports claims of total destruction. The article warns that Iran might abandon its commitment to nuclear restraint, withdraw from the NPT, and escalate the conflict by closing the Persian Gulf or attacking US and Israeli targets. Meanwhile, Russia and China have backed Iran diplomatically, demanding a ceasefire. Pakistan, while supporting Iran, is advised to stay alert to Indo-Israeli subversion and to secure its border regions from potential instability spilling over from Iran.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Current Affairs: Middle East tensions, Israel-Iran conflict, US foreign policy moves
- International Relations: Nuclear diplomacy, regional power dynamics, alliances and blocs (China-Russia-Iran vs. US-Israel)
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy stance, border security, response to Indo-Israeli threats
- Political Science: The concept of regional hegemony, regime change strategies, and state sovereignty

Notes for Beginners:

Israel has long been accused of trying to expand its territory and influence under the concept of "Greater Israel." Since Netanyahu's return to power, this ambition has intensified. The latest attacks on Iran were not just about stopping nuclear weapons but asserting regional control. However Iran did not take the bait lightly. Despite American support to Israel, Iran retaliated, exposing vulnerabilities in Israel's strategy. Just like when America invaded Iraq thinking it would be a quick victory but got stuck for years, Israel now finds itself in a similar mess. China and Russia, siding with Iran, add more pressure and countries like Pakistan are directly impacted due to shared borders and security risks. It shows how wars between big players can affect neighboring countries and lead to global instability.

Facts and Figures:

- Israel's war against Iran began on June 13, 2025
- American B-2 Stealth bombers dropped 30,000-pound bunker-buster bombs on Iranian sites on June 21
- The nuclear facilities hit included Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan
- No evidence of nuclear radiation leak or significant damage to Iranian nuclear stockpiles
- Iran is backed by Russia and China; America is under pressure from the Israeli lobby
- Iran may exit the NPT and resume nuclear weapons development if provoked
- Pakistan demonstrated nuclear deterrence in May 2025 against regional threats

To wrap up, this article is a powerful commentary on how blind ambition and foreign manipulation can drag a region into the abyss. Israel's quest for supremacy and America's half-hearted complicity have lit a fire that might engulf the entire Middle East. Pakistan must keep its ear to the ground, stay out of the flames, and extend a diplomatic hand where it can. The storm may have started in Tel Aviv and Tehran, but its winds are blowing across every neighboring capital.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

1. Hegemony – Dominance or leadership by one country over others (Syn: supremacy / Ant: subordination)
2. Attrition – Gradual reduction in strength due to sustained attack (Syn: erosion / Ant: buildup)
3. Obliterated – Completely destroyed (Syn: demolished / Ant: preserved)
4. Machinations – Schemes or plots, often with deceit (Syn: conspiracy / Ant: honesty)
5. Procrastinate – To delay or put off something (Syn: postpone / Ant: expedite)

TRUMP DOCTRINE 2.0

Author - Dr Moonis Ahmar

Summary:

In a whirlwind of contradictions and grandstanding, Trump Doctrine 2.0 is less a doctrine and more a chaotic blend of bravado, political posturing, and snap decisions dressed as foreign policy. The article traces how, historically, presidential doctrines shaped America's global stance, but Trump's recent declarations deviate from any coherent framework. From suggesting the annexation of Greenland and Canada to renaming the Gulf of Mexico, Trump's makeshift ideas underscore his hunger for attention more than any long-term geopolitical vision. His unpredictable shifts of first denying US involvement in conflicts like Indo-Pak and Israel-Iran, only to later bask in ceasefire glory reveal a disturbing lack of consistency. Such abrupt about-faces aren't strategic pivots but rather reactive gimmicks, crafted to ride the headlines.

What sets Trump Doctrine 2.0 apart is not its originality, but its shallowness and self-contradictions. While he touts himself as a peacemaker, boasting about Nobel-worthy ceasefires, his doctrine thrives on ambiguity and one-upmanship. Vice President JD Vance attempts to package it into a formula: define American interest, try diplomacy and if that fails, unleash military might then get out. But the real danger lies in Trump's rash temperament which, the article warns, could spiral the US into internal chaos and ignite fresh confrontations with China and NATO. With no real structure and a heavy reliance on populist theatrics, Trump's approach could eventually backfire, paving the way for global players like China and Russia to challenge American supremacy on the world stage.

Overview:

The article outlines the erratic nature of Trump's foreign policy, challenging the traditional framework of American presidential doctrines. It analyzes the lack of coherence and stability in Trump Doctrine 2.0, noting how Trump's unpredictable personality and populist impulses dilute any serious strategic depth.

NOTES:

The article highlights the evolving nature of the Trump Doctrine 2.0, which is characterized more by impulsive decisions and erratic policy shifts than by a coherent strategic vision. It discusses how Donald Trump after reassuming power in 2025 began floating bizarre ideas like annexing Greenland, making Canada the 51st American state, and renaming the Gulf of Mexico. Despite his grandiose claims of ending wars and brokering peace, his actions in crises like the Israel-Iran war and the Indo-Pak conflict reveal a pattern of contradictory behavior. The piece critiques the doctrine as lacking structure, unlike past presidential doctrines, and labels it as more of a popularity stunt than a solid foreign policy framework. His tendency to take U-turns, first denying involvement and then claiming credit exemplifies the inconsistency that mars his presidency. Experts argue that Trump's actions are reactive rather than visionary, and his administration is more concerned with political optics than long-term global leadership. The article concludes by warning that Trump's impulsive nature may deepen US isolation, provoke internal chaos, and erode American influence globally, while offering rivals like China and Russia space to assert themselves.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Current Affairs: US foreign policy and global conflicts
- International Relations: Doctrinal influence in diplomacy, superpower behavior, US-China-Russia dynamics
- Political Science: Presidential powers, doctrine formulation, diplomacy vs populism
- Global Issues: Conflict resolution, role of the US in global peace and war

Notes for Beginners:

This article shows how the foreign policy of a country like the US can shift depending on who is in power. Trump's policy seems less planned and more reactionary. For example, he claimed he would not interfere in the Israel-Iran conflict, but hours later he ordered airstrikes. That kind of inconsistency shows how global peace can be affected by a single leader's mood or media focus. Beginners should understand that not all doctrines are rigid strategies; some, like Trump's, are loose and fluid.

Facts and Figures:

- Trump proposed annexing Greenland and Canada, taking over Panama Canal, and renaming the Gulf of Mexico.
- Trump claimed credit for the Indo-Pak ceasefire and Israel-Iran ceasefire despite initial denials of involvement.
- His March 4, 2025 address lasted 1 hour and 40 minutes, claiming historic progress in 43 days.

To sum up, the Trump Doctrine 2.0 reads more like a political campaign than a serious foreign policy blueprint. Built on inconsistencies and self-serving declarations, it reflects the chaos that can emerge when leadership lacks strategic clarity. While past doctrines defined eras, this one may be remembered more for its contradictions than its contributions to global order.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

• Doctrine: A formal statement of government policy or stance (syn: principle; ant: ambiguity)
• Maverick: An independent-minded person (syn: nonconformist; ant: conformist)
• Protracted: Lasting longer than expected (syn: prolonged; ant: brief)
• Fallacy: A mistaken belief (syn: misconception; ant: truth)
• Tutelage: Protection or authority over someone or something (syn: guardianship; ant: negligence)

CPEC TO CPAEC: ASPIRATION TO ACTUALISATION

Author - Dr Raza Muhammad

Summary:

The article paints a promising picture of transforming CPEC into CPAEC, should Afghanistan officially join hands with Pakistan and China under the Belt and Road Initiative. The recent tripartite meeting in Beijing has breathed new life into the aspiration of regional interdependence, peace and shared prosperity. With milestones like the Peshawar-Kabul motorway, the China-Iran strategic partnership, and the envisioned industrial corridors from Chabahar to Central Asia, this corridor is not just a road but a potential lifeline for Afghanistan's war-ravaged economy. The author's own PhD research reinforces this belief, with overwhelming support from respondents for the idea that economic cooperation breeds peace and stability.

The proposed CPAEC promises to be a game changer an engine for job creation, poverty alleviation, women empowerment and environmental protection. Drawing parallels with post-WWII Europe's ECSC, the author envisions economic interdependence as a strategic antidote to conflict. However, hurdles persist in the form of external threats and internal instability, yet the hope remains that mutual economic gain will silence the guns. As the author rightly points out, when people's livelihoods are tied to such projects, they will guard them with their lives. This corridor isn't just about connectivity, it's about collective destiny.

Overview:

This article highlights the strategic vision of transforming the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor into a trilateral initiative with Afghanistan rebranded as CPAEC. It emphasizes how shared economic interests and infrastructural integration can serve as a catalyst for peace, development, and long-term regional stability. The corridor is seen as a tool not just for trade, but for trust.

NOTES:

The article outlines the growing possibility of transforming CPEC into CPAEC by including Afghanistan, following recent positive developments like the China-Afghanistan-Pakistan tripartite meeting in Beijing. It recalls the 2019 trilateral agreement on the Peshawar-Kabul motorway and highlights China's \$400 billion comprehensive partnership with Iran in 2020, which aims to strengthen connectivity through Chabahar and Central Asia. The author argues that Afghanistan's inclusion in CPAEC would multiply benefits across Eurasia by fostering regional trade, industrial growth, and shared prosperity. Economic interdependence through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC and the proposed CPAEC could alleviate poverty, create jobs, empower women, protect the Environment and stabilize the region. The article draws historical parallels with post-war Europe's ECSC, suggesting that inclusive economic frameworks can prevent conflict. It also stresses the importance of public participation in protecting such projects, stating that when people's livelihoods are tied to development, they naturally become its guardians. Though external threats and internal instability persist, the article urges perseverance, emphasizing that collective economic gains can forge long-term regional harmony.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations
 - Regional and global integration frameworks (e.g., BRI, CPEC)
 - Geo-economics and regional cooperation
 - Pakistan-China relations
 - Role of economic corridors in diplomacy
- Pakistan Affairs
 - CPEC and its strategic importance
 - Pakistan's foreign policy and relations with neighboring countries

- Socio-economic development and regional connectivity
- Role of Pakistan in regional peace and economic collaboration
- Current Affairs
 - Afghanistan's role in regional development
 - Shifts in regional alliances and trade partnerships
 - Tripartite cooperation: China-Pakistan-Afghanistan
- Essay Paper
 - Regional Connectivity and Development
 - Geostrategic Position of Pakistan
 - The Future of Economic Corridors in Asia
- General Science and Ability (for MCQs)
 - Basic knowledge of international projects like BRI and CPEC

Notes for Beginners:

CPEC stands for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a major economic project connecting Gwadar Port with China's Xinjiang region. Now, there are talks of including Afghanistan to turn it into CPAEC. For instance, a road from Peshawar to Kabul will improve trade and connectivity. This is similar to how Europe formed strong economic links after World War II to avoid future wars. When countries depend on each other economically, they are less likely to fight. Afghanistan can gain jobs, industries and stability from this. Over 94% of people in a research study agreed that such cooperation can bring peace and prosperity.

Facts and Figures:

- China-Iran MoU: \$400 billion partnership over 25 years
- Over 94% survey respondents in PhD research supported CPAEC for peace and development
- CPAEC includes oil sector development, industrial zones, and transnational corridors

To sum up, this article is a roadmap of possibility, driven by diplomacy and shared interest. It urges the region to think beyond borders and conflicts, and to build a future grounded in economic interdependence. While challenges remain, the vision is clear only through collective growth can lasting peace take root in South and Central Asia.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Entwined – closely interlinked (Synonym: interwoven | Antonym: separate)
- Predicament – a difficult situation (Synonym: dilemma | Antonym: solution)
- Apprehensions – fears or concerns (Synonym: anxieties | Antonym: confidence)
- Complementing – adding to enhance (Synonym: supplementing | Antonym: contradicting)
- Inimical – harmful or hostile (Synonym: antagonistic | Antonym: friendly)
- Emancipation – liberation or release (Synonym: freedom | Antonym: captivity)
- Constituents – components or parts (Synonym: elements | Antonym: whole)
- Alleviation – relief or reduction (Synonym: mitigation | Antonym: aggravation)

SHOULD IRAN HAVE THE BOMB?

Author: Shahzad Chaudhry

Summary:

The nuclear chessboard of the Middle East seems more volatile than ever. Ten days after the Iran-Israel ceasefire, the clouds of potential catastrophe still hang thick in the air. Iran, by all accounts, is sitting on the brink of nuclear armament, its path lit by enriched uranium and geopolitical necessity. With two nuclear powers attacking Iran without provocation, voices across the Global South are whispering or shouting that Tehran has every right to arm

itself. North Korea's survival strategy is often held up as a textbook example: a rogue but untouchable state. If Iran crosses the nuclear threshold, the domino effect will begin, with Saudi Arabia next in line. And let's not forget the other players in the powder keg Pakistan, India, the UAE, Turkey all holding cards in a dangerous deck. The Middle East is turning into a live wire, where any spark might lead to full-blown Armageddon.

From where I stand, the only way to step back from this ledge is through collective sanity. A rule-based world order, fair and equitable must prevail. The Abraham Accords may have been a start, but they are a far cry from resolving deep-rooted tensions. Denuclearisation, not weaponisation, must be the buzzword. A denuclearised Gulf would be a blessing in disguise, not just for regional peace but for humanity at large. Iran, Israel, and the Arab states must be nudged but not shoved towards a future rooted in cooperation, not confrontation. Nuclear energy for clean power is welcome, but hiding bombs behind reactors is a recipe for disaster. As the author rightly argues, what this region truly needs is appeasement, diplomacy, and above all, a shared commitment to peace. Because if we don't rewrite the script, we may be writing humanity's obituary instead.

Overview:

This article unpacks the razor's edge Iran is walking on caught between national defence and nuclear ambition, and how its potential nuclear weaponisation may ignite a chain reaction in the Gulf, dragging in nations from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan and beyond. It advocates for a denuclearised Middle East rooted in rule-based diplomacy, equitable conflict resolution, and collective international effort.

NOTES:

The article shares the nuclear trajectory unfolding in the Middle East, particularly in the wake of the Iran-Israel ceasefire. It highlights Iran's rapid progress toward nuclear capability, driven by both regional insecurity and the precedent set by other nations like North Korea. With two nuclear-armed states attacking Iran, sympathy within the Global South has shifted, granting Tehran perceived legitimacy in seeking its own deterrent. The domino effect is clearly laid out: should Iran weaponise, Saudi Arabia is poised to follow suit, and other regional powers like Turkey, the UAE, and even Pakistan may be pulled into the vortex. The article underscores the existential threat posed by such a regional nuclear arms race and warns of the catastrophic implications of turning the Gulf into a nuclear minefield. The author strongly advocates for a denuclearised Middle East, grounded in diplomacy, collective restraint, and a fair rule-based international system. Denuclearisation is framed not merely as a strategic goal but a moral imperative, essential for safeguarding global security and humanity's future. The narrative calls for meaningful dialogue, mutual trust, and responsible leadership before the region reaches a point of no return, echoing the necessity of genuine cooperation over confrontation.

CSS Relevant Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Nuclear diplomacy, arms race, regional balance of power
- Current Affairs: Middle East conflict, Iran-Israel relations, Saudi foreign policy
- Pakistan Affairs: Nuclear policy, strategic regional alliances
- Essay Paper: Global security, non-proliferation, collective security, rule-based world order
- Political Science (optional): Balance of power theory, conflict resolution

Notes for Beginners:

This article illustrates how nuclear strategy is shaped by regional rivalries and historical animosities. For example Iran's suspected nuclear motives stem not just from ambition but also from a sense of vulnerability having faced direct aggression. Similarly, Saudi Arabia's interest in nuclear technology isn't just about energy but about keeping pace with regional adversaries. This tit-for-tat mentality can quickly snowball into a nuclear arms race, especially in regions like the Middle East where long-standing conflicts exist. Beginners should focus on understanding the broader impact: how a single nation's decision can affect global security and international diplomacy.

Facts and Figures:

- Iran possesses enough enriched uranium for weaponisation within weeks or months.
- North Korea reportedly holds a dozen nuclear weapons yet avoids direct attacks.
- Saudi Arabia is exploring nuclear energy options with US support.
- UAE already operates four Korean-made nuclear reactors.
- Pakistan, India, Israel are already declared nuclear powers in the broader region.

To put it simply, the Middle East long a hotbed of political and religious conflicts, is dangerously close to becoming the most nuclearised region on Earth. The time for reactionary policies is over. Now is the hour for proactive diplomacy, honest dialogue, and a commitment to peace before the mushroom clouds become more than just metaphors. Humanity must tread carefully—or risk lighting the match to its own funeral pyre.

ECO'S WAY FORWARD

Summary:

The 17th ECO Summit in Khankendi pulled no punches as it pushed for genuine regional cooperation and economic integration in a region riddled with old grudges and fresh flashpoints. Pakistan took the bull by the horns, spotlighting the Iran-Israel conflict, India's belligerent stance on the Indus Waters Treaty, and terrorism spillover from Afghanistan as major roadblocks standing in the way of lasting peace. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif didn't mince words—he urged the 10-nation bloc to close ranks, ditch reactionary posturing, and embrace a collective path forward. With proposals like low-emission corridors, regional climate platforms, and a robust disaster resistance system on the table, the summit wasn't just talk, it was a blueprint for action.

Yet, the real elephant in the room remains the thorny India-Pakistan dynamic. Without burying the hatchet between these two, the dream of full-scale regional connectivity will remain pie in the sky. Despite frosty diplomatic ties, the trade figures paint a different picture \$211.5 million in imports from India in just 11 months and a mind-boggling \$10 billion in unofficial exports routed via third countries. The article makes it abundantly clear: the region is sitting on untapped potential. But unless the politics of confrontation give way to cooperation, infrastructure projects like TAPI, CASA-1000, and the IP pipeline will stay stuck in neutral. It's time for the region to stop chasing its tail and get serious about a shared future rooted in geo-economics, not geopolitics.

Overview:

This article emphasizes the urgent need for meaningful regional cooperation within the ECO framework, highlighting Pakistan's active diplomatic pitch for economic integration, climate resilience, and peaceful coexistence. It also underscores the missed opportunities resulting from bilateral tensions, particularly between Pakistan and India, and calls for translating connectivity dreams into ground realities.

NOTES:

This article provides observations into Pakistan's regional diplomacy, the evolving climate agenda, and multilateralism within Eurasia. The references to stalled mega projects and climate proposals are useful examples for essays and policy analysis questions. It also shares a diplomatic perspective on Indo-Pak ties, and also showcases how economic indicators can contradict political narratives.

CSS Relevant Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs: ECO Summit, regional integration, Pakistan's foreign policy
- Pakistan Affairs: Indo-Pak relations, economic diplomacy, connectivity projects
- International Relations: Regional organizations (ECO), climate diplomacy, multilateral cooperation
- Essay Paper: Regionalism, South Asian peace, sustainable development, economic connectivity

Notes for Beginners:

This article is a clear example of how diplomacy plays out on the regional stage. For instance, the ECO Summit shows that nations are trying to shift focus from political quarrels to mutual economic gains. However, long-standing rivalries like that between Pakistan and India keep throwing a wrench in the works. When Pakistan speaks of stalled projects like TAPI or the trans-Afghan railway it's a sign that potential exists but remains locked behind distrust. Understanding how trade data and informal routes reveal economic interdependence, even amidst political tension, is essential for beginners studying international trade and diplomacy.

Facts and Figures:

- ECO comprises 10 Eurasian nations
- Pakistan imported \$211.5 million worth of goods from India in FY25
- In May alone, amid conflict, \$15 million worth of Indian goods were imported
- India unofficially exports nearly \$10 billion to Pakistan annually through third countries

To sum up, the article is a timely reminder that while the road to regional peace and prosperity is paved with potential, it's also riddled with potholes of mistrust. It's no longer enough to talk the talk; it's time to walk the walk. The economic map is already drawn, what's missing is the political will to ink it into reality. Whether it's climate cooperation, trade corridors or ending regional isolation, the choice is clear: move forward together or remain stuck in the quicksand of old grudges.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

- Sine qua non – An essential condition or element
- Buoying – Supporting or uplifting
- Frictions – Conflicts or tensions
- Unilateral – Done by one side without agreement
- In limbo – In a state of uncertainty or neglect

SAARC ALTERNATIVE: MYTH OR REALITY?

Author: Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan

Summary:

The article addresses the burning question: Can a China-led regional alliance truly replace SAARC, or is it merely a pipe dream? With SAARC stuck in the mud due to the longstanding Indo-Pak tensions, whispers of a new alliance minus India are gaining traction. But here's the catch — China, although powerful and deeply tied with Pakistan, doesn't fit neatly into the South Asian puzzle. It's geographically East Asian and ideologically distant from South Asia's regional priorities. Hence, forming a China-centric bloc would be like fitting a square peg into a round hole. Even if SCO exists with overlapping ambitions, trying to duplicate that under a new name may only muddy the waters further.

On the flip side, the geopolitical and strategic consequences of such a shift are more than just ripples in the pond. Most SAARC nations, tightly roped in with India through aid, trade, and diplomacy, would think twice before jumping ship. Afghanistan, for instance, despite its rocky ties with Pakistan, sees India as a steady partner in development. And while economists may chase the golden goose of prosperity through a new alliance, realists in the international system know that survival and power trump all. The EU, bolstered by NATO's security net, is a case in point. Without similar safeguards, a China-led SAARC substitute risks being a house of cards. Unless the hard questions of sovereignty, allegiance, and independence are addressed, this alternative will remain more illusion than reality.

Overview:

The article critically evaluates the feasibility of replacing SAARC with a new regional organization led by China and Pakistan, highlighting geographic inconsistencies, geopolitical challenges, and economic-realistic conflicts. It questions whether such a structure could function effectively when most South Asian countries maintain deep-rooted ties with India, and China lies outside the geographical boundary of South Asia. The piece ultimately suggests that while the idea may appear economically sound, the realist foreign policy concerns and regional power dynamics make its success doubtful.

NOTES:

The article highlights the ongoing dysfunction of SAARC, attributing its ineffectiveness largely to persistent tensions between India and Pakistan. It explores the recent suggestion of creating an alternative regional organization led by China and Pakistan, excluding India. However, the writer argues that this proposition faces critical challenges, primarily because China is geographically and ideologically outside South Asia. The article points out that most SAARC countries including Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka have deep economic and strategic ties with India and are unlikely to join any anti-India bloc. Afghanistan too maintains cordial relations with India due to its development aid and shared projects, making it hesitant to align with an alliance perceived as anti-India. While the economic logic of a new organization may appeal to some states, the realist logic of national security and strategic autonomy takes precedence in international politics. Drawing on the example of the EU-NATO alliance, the writer warns that such organizations only thrive when both economic interests and security guarantees align. Without addressing the strategic concerns of the member states, any alternative to SAARC, particularly one dominated by China, risks being unsustainable and strategically divisive.

Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: SAARC, regional diplomacy, Indo-Pak relations
- International Relations: Regionalism, Realism vs Liberalism, Geopolitics of South Asia
- Current Affairs: China's growing influence, alternative alliances
- Political Science: Theoretical frameworks in foreign policy
- Essay Paper: Regional cooperation, multipolarity, and power shifts

Notes for beginners:

The article discusses how SAARC an organization meant for cooperation among South Asian countries has become ineffective mainly due to tensions between India and Pakistan. Some suggest forming a new group led by China and Pakistan, but there's a big hurdle because China isn't even part of South Asia. Moreover, many SAARC countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka are closely tied to India for trade and support. For example, India gave \$4 billion in aid to Sri Lanka during its 2022–23 crisis. Afghanistan, despite not having good ties with Pakistan, maintains a friendly relationship with India because of development projects like roads, schools and dams. So building a new group without India might not work unless countries also get security and economic benefits like those the EU received from the US through NATO.

Facts and Figures:

- India invested \$3 billion in Afghanistan, building infrastructure like Salma Dam and Afghan Parliament
- Sri Lanka received \$4 billion in aid from India during its 2022–23 economic crisis
- China is not a South Asian country but shares borders with four SAARC nations
- Afghanistan is part of INSTC, which rivals China's BRI
- SCO already serves as a regional cooperation body led by Russia and China

To wrap up, this article shows that replacing SAARC is no walk in the park. It's not just about removing India from the equation but confronting the bitter truths of geography, power politics and national interests. While economic cooperation is a tempting carrot, it's the stick of realism that ultimately drives foreign policy decisions. Unless the

right questions are addressed with clarity and foresight, the idea of an alternative to SAARC may remain more of a myth than a regional miracle.

Difficult Words and Meanings with Synonyms and Antonyms:

- Dysfunctional: Not operating normally (Syn: broken, ineffective | Ant: functional)
- Premise: A foundational idea or assumption (Syn: basis, assumption | Ant: conclusion)
- Geopolitical: Relating to politics influenced by geography (Syn: strategic, territorial | Ant: non-strategic)
- Ideological: Based on a set of beliefs (Syn: doctrinal, philosophical | Ant: neutral, pragmatic)
- Cordial: Warm and friendly (Syn: amiable, warm | Ant: hostile, cold)

INDIA IN BRICS: FACILITATOR OR SPOILER?

Author: Imtiaz Gul

Summary:

The BRICS summit is rolling out a new financial guarantee fund via the New Development Bank to amp up investment and tame instability linked to unpredictable Western policies and global tensions. Over the years, BRICS has delivered heavyweights like the NDB and a \$100 billion Contingent Reserve Arrangement, while intra-bloc trade soared to around \$1 trillion by mid-2025. China is steering the ship, acting as the main trading platform with over \$210 billion flowing through it early this year, and it ranks fourth globally in financial competitiveness .

Still, BRICS faces a crossroads India's role remains a puzzle. Though the bloc has grown more diverse, India's tight embrace of Western alliances and reliance on the US dollar system casts doubt over its commitment to de-dollarisation, currency swaps, and trade in local currencies. India's refusal to condemn Israel during the Iran–Israel conflict only fueled suspicions that it may be undercutting BRICS from within. This strategic ambiguity raises the question: Is India helping BRICS achieve its goals or quietly sabotaging them?

Overview:

The article tracks BRICS's evolution into a global economic powerhouse with bold financial architecture, and highlights the brewing tensions caused by India's western leanings that could fracture its united front.

NOTES:

This article gives a striking example of the clash between economic integration and geopolitical strategy. It spotlights BRICS's attempt to forge fearless financial autonomy through instruments like NDB-backed guarantees, realistic trade figures, and de-dollarisation. At the same time, it exposes how a single member nation's external allegiances can derail collective aspirations—vital material for sections on International Relations, Global Institutions, and Foreign Policy.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations: Multipolar world, bloc politics
- Current Affairs: BRICS expansion, global economic shifts
- Political Science: Realism vs Liberal economic strategy
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic stance in changing global alliances
- Essay Paper: Economic governance, challenges in supranational organisations

Notes for Beginners:

BRICS includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. With trade hitting \$1 trillion by June 2025, China is the biggest player, handling over \$210 billion and ranking fourth in financial muscle globally. The group is building new financial tools like the BMG fund to reduce risks tied to global politics. But India's simultaneous alignment with Western powers and its failure to take a solid stand during the Iran–Israel clash have raised doubts about whether it's a true partner in pushing forward BRICS's agenda to challenge Western dominance.

Facts and Figures:

- \$1 trillion: Total intra-BRICS trade volume as of June 2025, showing the bloc's deepening economic integration.
- \$210 billion: China's trade volume within BRICS by mid-2025, making it the bloc's leading trade facilitator.
- \$100 billion: Size of the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) created by BRICS to shield members from financial shocks.
- \$50 billion: Initial capital of the New Development Bank (NDB), established to fund infrastructure and development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies.
- 4th rank: China's current global ranking in financial competitiveness, reflecting its expanding influence in international finance.
- 2023 BRICS Summit: The event where discussions on de-dollarisation and trade in local currencies intensified.
- 5 founding members: BRICS was initially formed by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Recent summits aim at further expansion.
- Western dominance challenged: BRICS aims to counterbalance institutions like the IMF and World Bank, which are largely Western-controlled.

To sum up, BRICS has moved beyond rhetoric into real financial territory, aiming to redefine global economic rules and challenge dollar supremacy. But its future rests heavily on political unity. If India stays entrenched in Western ties while pursuing BRICS initiatives, the bloc's vision for a truly independent Global South could fizzle out. It's a high-stakes balancing act either BRICS rises as a credible alternative or its momentum is derailed from within.

INDO-PAK STAND-OFF

Author - Dr Moonis Ahmar

Summary:

This article lays bare the ongoing tug-of-war between India and Pakistan following their brief military engagement from May 7 to 10, 2025. At the heart of the matter is a dispute over who truly brokered the ceasefire. While former US President Donald Trump is hell-bent on claiming credit, India flatly denies any external intervention, asserting that it directly contacted Pakistan to halt hostilities. Trump, in typical fashion, flip-flopped—first ruling out involvement, then boasting about arranging peace talks to boost his diplomatic image. India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar shot down Trump's narrative, reinforcing New Delhi's preference for bilateralism. Meanwhile, Pakistan aligned with Trump's version, eyeing his offer to mediate on Kashmir. This episode unearths the fragility of South Asian diplomacy, where egos clash, narratives compete and backchannels often trump podium declarations. The article cleverly dissects the political theatre surrounding the Indo-Pak standoff, warning that if cooler heads don't prevail, both sides risk sleepwalking into disaster. Modi's hardline stance, laced with jingoism, leaves little room for dialogue. With threats like choking Pakistan's maritime lifeline and bold rhetoric about unfinished operations, India's approach reeks of hawkish brinkmanship. On the flip side, Islamabad, though cornered, extends olive branches, urging talks. Historical examples of direct military communication between the two nations offer a ray of hope. However, with leaders driven by populism and pride rather than pragmatism, the path to lasting peace remains treacherous. The article calls for professional crisis management, robust communication channels and a return to statesmanship if South Asia is to avoid being dragged into the vortex of conflict once more.

Overview: This write-up untangles the complex narrative of Indo-Pak military tensions, Trump's diplomatic self-praise, India's rejection of third-party involvement and the growing need for mature crisis diplomacy. It draws

parallels from history, throws light on the dangers of miscommunication and offers a sobering reminder that modern warfare is often one misstep away.

NOTES:

The article highlights the clash between bilateralism and third-party mediation, with India rejecting Trump's claim of brokering peace while Pakistan endorses it, revealing contrasting diplomatic agendas. Aspirants should take note of how international figures like Trump use global conflict narratives to bolster domestic political gains, and how such assertions affect regional stability. The article also highlights the strategic use of backchannel diplomacy such as DGMOs' communication and the significance of crisis de-escalation mechanisms. Moreover, it reflects how media statements and diplomatic posturing can shape public perception, international relations, and national policy stances. For students, understanding the mechanics of crisis communication, the role of ego in diplomacy, and the impact of populist rhetoric on conflict resolution is vital when analyzing foreign policy behaviors of regional powers like India and Pakistan.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects:

- International Relations
 - This article is closely linked to IR topics such as conflict resolution, diplomacy, backchannel negotiations, international political behavior, and the role of major powers in regional disputes. It highlights real-world dynamics of India-Pakistan relations and US involvement in South Asia.
- Pakistan Affairs
 - The piece touches upon Pakistan's foreign policy, civil-military relations, and strategic interest in raising the Kashmir issue on global platforms. It also demonstrates how Pakistan navigates diplomatic spaces under pressure from regional hostility.
- Current Affairs
 - The article discusses recent developments in Indo-Pak tensions, Trump's controversial statements, and their implications for South Asian peace and security. This makes it directly relevant for analyzing ongoing geopolitical shifts.
- General Knowledge / Essay
 - The subject matter can help frame essays or arguments on global peace efforts, diplomacy versus conflict, and the evolving role of great powers in bilateral disputes between developing nations.

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how India and Pakistan, two nuclear-armed neighbors, often experience military tensions, but manage to avoid full-scale war through diplomatic and military communication channels like hotlines between army officers. When Donald Trump claimed he arranged peace between the two, Pakistan agreed, seeing it as a chance to raise the Kashmir issue, while India denied it to maintain its image of self-reliance. Beginners should understand that such differences often come from each country's political needs rather than actual facts. The article also shows that sometimes world leaders use international issues to gain attention or popularity at home. Most importantly, it teaches that even during tense moments, talking directly, through official or unofficial channels can help prevent bigger conflicts.

Facts and Figures:

- Indo-Pak conflict occurred from May 7–10, 2025
- Over 500,000 troops were mobilized during the 2001 Parliament attack crisis
- Trump claimed mediation in both Indo-Pak and Iran-Israel conflicts
- Hotline between DGMOs of India and Pakistan established as part of CBMs (Confidence Building Measures)

To sum up, the article is a potent reminder that in geopolitics, perception often overshadows reality. While Trump tries to polish his legacy with peace badges, South Asia teeters on a razor's edge. As long as nationalism trumps dialogue and leaders trade barbs instead of handshakes, lasting peace will remain elusive. But history offers hope when diplomacy is done right, even the fiercest enemies can step back from the brink.

PRIORITISING PEOPLE

Author: Dr Ali M Mir

Summary:

In the thick of our mounting crises from rising poverty to child malnutrition and an overwhelmed healthcare system one glaring truth stares us in the face: we're failing our people. The article paints a sobering picture of how national priorities have slowly drifted away from individual welfare. Rather than questioning our population size, we should be asking whether we're doing justice to the people already here. Each child's birth should spark hope, but instead, it's too often met with neglect, broken promises, and bitter realities. This negligence is not just systemic; it's a moral failure. When anaemic mothers face deadly pregnancies or malnourished children battle for scraps of care, the state's silence screams louder than words. This isn't simply a health or education crisis, it's a crisis of values. If a nation is to be measured by how it treats its people, then we're missing the mark by miles. The article calls for a total mindset shift: stop treating social welfare as charity and start recognizing it as a responsibility. Access to family planning, reproductive health, education, and protection must become a shared mission between state and society. The road to national dignity begins by treating every life like it matters. And if we want a future worth its salt, we need to act now not with hollow slogans but with rooted reforms that make 'every life counts' more than a catchphrase.

Overview:

This article highlights the moral and practical failure of the Pakistani state and society to prioritize human development. It criticizes the apathetic response to rising social issues and calls for bold, people-centered reforms in health, education, and reproductive rights, urging policymakers to put citizens before numbers.

NOTES:

This article sharpens your understanding of population dynamics, human development, and public policy. The article's tone and framing provide excellent examples of critical thinking, evaluative judgment, and argument construction. It touches upon reproductive health rights, population policy, and national planning, the themes often explored under governance, social welfare, and development sections of the CSS syllabus.

Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs – Social development, public health, population issues
- Current Affairs – Human development, reproductive rights
- Essay – Human rights, demographic challenges, governance
- Gender Studies – Women's reproductive autonomy, gender equality
- Sociology – Family planning, social inequality, population welfare

Notes for Beginners:

This article helps beginners understand how poor planning and a lack of compassion hurt national progress. For example, a woman giving birth to children in quick succession without proper health care risks her life, and the children's future is compromised due to malnutrition and poor schooling. Fact: Pakistan has nearly 22 million out-of-school children and ranks low on human development indexes. The article explains that solving problems isn't about reducing population numbers, but about managing resources and caring for each life. Think of a garden. It's not the number of plants that matter, but how well each is nurtured.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in South Asia.

- Over 40% of children under five are stunted due to malnutrition.
- Approximately 22.8 million children are out of school in Pakistan.
- Contraceptive prevalence rate in Pakistan remains below 35%.

To sum up, this article is a call to conscience. It presses us to shift from seeing people as burdens to valuing them as assets. The writer reminds us that slogans won't feed the hungry or heal the sick, only serious commitment will. If we wish to move the needle on development, we must rebuild our national priorities around one undeniable truth: every life truly counts.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Dismal – extremely bad (Syn: gloomy, bleak | Ant: hopeful, bright)
- Indictments – strong expressions of disapproval or accusations (Syn: criticism | Ant: praise)
- Apathy – lack of interest or concern (Syn: indifference | Ant: enthusiasm)
- Autonomy – independence or self-governance (Syn: freedom | Ant: dependence)
- Equitable – fair and impartial (Syn: just, unbiased | Ant: unfair, biased)

WANING US POWER

Summary:

The article sounds the alarm on America's gradual but glaring fall from global dominance, driven not by external threats but by its own self-inflicted wounds. From fiscal recklessness to abandoning humanitarian aid, the US seems to be digging its own grave with a golden shovel. With its debt ballooning to \$36 trillion and interest payments outpacing defense spending, even agencies like Moody's have had to step back and issue a historic downgrade. The article argues that by backing out of global commitments like NATO and USAID, the US is handing the reins of global leadership to countries like China, Russia, and Brazil, who are stepping up to fill the void with strategic alliances like BRICs and initiatives like China's Belt and Road.

What's striking is not just the economic mismanagement, but the moral retreat. Cutting foreign aid, especially USAID, could trigger a humanitarian disaster, with an estimated 14 million additional deaths by 2030. Meanwhile, China is winning hearts and minds with vaccine diplomacy and infrastructure investments. The US, once the world's compass, now appears adrift, shouting threats it can't back up. This is more than just a changing of the guard — it's a shift in how global power is earned and sustained. The message is loud and clear: when a superpower stops showing up, someone else takes the spotlight.

Overview: This editorial dissects the United States' declining role on the global stage due to internal fiscal chaos, weakening alliances, and withdrawal from international aid and diplomacy. It highlights how other nations, especially BRICs and China, are seizing the opportunity to rise while America falters.

NOTES:

The article lays bare the alarming reality of America's declining global influence driven by its own financial mismanagement and policy blunders. It highlights how the US has willingly stepped back from its leadership role by cutting essential international commitments such as foreign aid through USAID, which experts warn could cause up to 14 million additional deaths by 2030. The country's debt has soared to \$36 trillion, with net interest payments surpassing defense spending for the first time, a red flag historically associated with waning global power. Moody's unprecedented downgrade of the US credit rating since 1919 further underlines the economic instability. Meanwhile, emerging powers like China, Russia, and Brazil are capitalising on this vacuum, using strategic alliances like BRICs and initiatives like the Belt and Road to expand their geopolitical footprint. The article paints a vivid picture of how the US, once a beacon of global leadership, now finds itself isolated and ineffective, reduced to issuing hollow threats as others quietly take the reins of international influence.

Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Current Affairs – Global power shifts, US foreign policy
- International Relations – Multipolarity, BRICs, international alliances
- Essay – Decline of American hegemony, rise of China
- Political Science – Changing world order, foreign policy analysis
- Global Issues – Economic crises, humanitarian impact of aid withdrawal

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how the US is losing its grip as the world's leading power due to poor financial choices and stepping away from global responsibilities. For example, cutting USAID, a US-based aid program, could lead to millions of deaths by 2030. Meanwhile, countries like China are jumping in to help developing nations through projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, gaining influence along the way. Think of it like a sports match: if the captain stops playing, someone else will take charge.

Facts and Figures:

- US national debt reached \$36 trillion
- Net interest payments now exceed defense spending (3.1% of GDP vs 2.9%)
- Moody's downgraded US credit rating, first time since 1919
- \$3 trillion added to debt through tax cuts and funding reductions
- Estimated 14 million additional global deaths due to cuts in USAID by 2030

To sum up, this editorial pulls no punches in showing how the US is becoming a shadow of its former self. As it fumbles its leadership role, emerging powers are seizing the moment to rewrite global influence. The world is watching a giant stumble, and others are more than ready to fill the shoes it's left behind. The stakes are high, and the clock is ticking.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Waning – gradually decreasing (Syn: fading, diminishing | Ant: growing, rising)
- Fiscal – related to government finance (Syn: economic, financial | Ant: non-financial)
- Erratic – unpredictable or inconsistent (Syn: unstable, irregular | Ant: steady, reliable)
- Gut (verb) – to destroy or drastically reduce (Syn: dismantle, remove | Ant: preserve, enhance)
- Humanitarian – concerned with human welfare (Syn: compassionate, altruistic | Ant: brutal, ruthless)

WIDENING DIPLOMATIC SPACE FOR TALIBAN 2.0

Author – Dr. Moonis Ahmar

Summary:

The Taliban regime in Afghanistan, once a global pariah and symbol of repression, has gradually chipped away at its isolation and carved out a growing space for diplomatic recognition. Russia became the first major power to extend formal recognition to Taliban 2.0 in July 2025, setting the ball rolling for other regional powers to possibly follow suit. Despite serious allegations of human rights violations and non-compliance with the Doha Accord of 2020, the Taliban have played their cards wisely, engaging key neighbors like China, Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asian republics, countries that prioritize geopolitical interests over ideological alignment. The Taliban are banking on the world's fatigue with prolonged instability and terrorism, pitching themselves as a necessary evil and a bulwark against IS-K to legitimize their rule. With 17 embassies now operating in Kabul, albeit without full diplomatic recognition (barring Russia), the regime has managed to project itself as a stable, even if authoritarian, governing authority.

But make no mistake this diplomatic opening is not the fruit of reform or moderation. Rather, it is the result of realpolitik, as countries prioritize security, trade, and regional leverage over democratic ideals. The West may still shun them, but the Taliban have learned to navigate the cracks of a divided international order. Their pitch: we may not be perfect, but we are better than chaos. However, critics warn that embracing a regime that systematically denies women and political opponents their rights sends a dangerous signal globally. What's worse, Pakistan, despite being directly affected by cross-border terrorism linked to Afghan soil, finds itself walking a diplomatic tightrope. The road ahead is steep, and unless there's pressure to adopt inclusive governance, Taliban 2.0 might succeed in gaining legitimacy without ever earning it.

Overview:

This article explores how the Taliban have expanded their diplomatic outreach despite international condemnation. Russia's formal recognition in 2025 marks a pivotal moment, signaling a shift from isolation to cautious engagement by various countries. Strategic interests, particularly concerning terrorism and regional stability, are driving nations to overlook the Taliban's repressive policies. The article also cautions that this shift might embolden other authoritarian regimes globally.

NOTES:

The article examines how the Taliban, once considered a pariah regime, are gradually being accepted into mainstream diplomatic circles despite their regressive internal policies. It discusses how countries like China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan, and even Central Asian republics are engaging with the Taliban regime, focusing on geopolitical and security concerns over human rights. The writer highlights that the Taliban have hosted multiple delegations, attended regional dialogues, and have been included in platforms like the Moscow Format and UN meetings. This evolving recognition is not rooted in ideological alignment but in pragmatic interests such as border security, trade routes, counterterrorism cooperation, and regional stability. The article also points out that humanitarian needs, like aid delivery and economic recovery, are used as justification by international actors to maintain contact with the Taliban. However, while diplomatic engagement has increased, the Taliban have shown little flexibility on inclusive governance, women's rights, or lifting the bans on female education and employment. The article warns that legitimizing such a regime without accountability could set a dangerous precedent globally. It urges global powers to coordinate their engagements to ensure human rights conditions are not completely sidelined in the pursuit of regional stability or strategic advantage.

Related CSS Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations – Diplomatic recognition, foreign policy shifts, great power competition
- Current Affairs – Afghanistan's political situation, Taliban's governance, counterterrorism
- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan-Afghan border security, TTP threat, regional diplomacy
- Political Science – Authoritarianism vs. democracy, legitimacy, recognition theory
- Governance & Public Policy – Implications of non-inclusive regimes on global governance norms

Notes for Beginners:

This article tells us how the Taliban are being accepted by some powerful countries even though they don't follow international rules. For example, Russia officially said the Taliban are the true government of Afghanistan, even though they don't allow girls to go to school or women to work. Countries like China and Pakistan are talking to the Taliban because they want peace and trade, not because they support their strict rules. This means countries are more focused on their interests than on helping Afghan people. Pakistan is in a tricky spot because while it talks to the Taliban, it also suffers from attacks by groups that hide in Afghanistan.

Facts and Figures:

- Russia gave formal recognition to Taliban on July 3, 2025
- 17 countries have embassies in Kabul, but only Russia has recognized the regime

- IS-K's Crocus City Hall attack in March 2024 killed 145 people, pushing Russia closer to the Taliban
- China appointed a Taliban ambassador in December 2023 but stopped short of full recognition
- Taliban's rule began after August 2021, but no UN seat has been given to them

To wrap up the article highlights the tension between global ideals and ground realities. As countries cozy up to the Taliban out of convenience, they risk sending a dangerous message: you don't need to respect rights if you have strategic value. If nations like Pakistan aren't careful, they may find themselves dealing with a neighbor emboldened, not reformed. The world must decide do we reward regimes that silence women and dissent, or do we hold the line for justice and inclusion? The Taliban may be winning space, but the real question is: at what cost?

INDIA'S GREAT-POWER DELUSIONS

Author: Inam Ul Haque

Summary:

The article reveals India's ambition to rise as a global power while avoiding the burdens of alliances, behaving like a trapeze artist walking a tightrope between multipolarity and strategic autonomy. It dissects how India wishes to call the shots on the world stage without signing up for the duties that come with it. Despite its charm offensive and improved GDP numbers, India's dreams of overtaking China or emerging as a lone Asian giant seem more smoke than fire. The irony is unmistakable: while India tiptoes around the US, dodges military pacts, and courts both the West and its rivals, it ends up painting itself into a diplomatic corner.

Yet what truly hits home is the ideological drift within India itself. The rise of Hindutva, marginalisation of minorities, and growing illiberalism act like termites hollowing out India's once-prized democratic foundations. The country's inability to shoulder real military or economic leadership in Asia, its discomfort with aligning too closely with the US, and its weakening internal cohesion all dim the light of its so-called 'Shining India' narrative. For all the talk of strategic realism and playing both ends against the middle, India appears stuck between post-colonial nostalgia and modern-day geopolitical ambition. The article makes a compelling case that India's dreams of grandeur, without deep reform and commitment, are castles built on sand.

Overview:

This article critically analyzes India's ambition to emerge as a great power and the contradictions embedded in that pursuit. It draws from Ashley J. Tellis's observations and builds a case around India's reluctance to form rigid alliances, its preference for multipolarity, and its ideological shift away from secularism. It argues that India's strategic autonomy, ideological backsliding, moderate economic growth, and regional entanglements all undermine its global aspirations.

NOTES:

The article examines India's aspirations for great-power status. It exposes the stark contradictions between its ambitions and its internal realities. It argues that while India seeks global influence through diplomatic manoeuvring, space missions, and hosting high-profile events like the G20, it simultaneously grapples with deep-rooted poverty, social inequality and a fragile democratic structure. The author emphasizes how the Hindutva-driven leadership has damaged India's secular and democratic image, both domestically and internationally, by promoting intolerance and repressing minorities. Furthermore, the article notes that India's regional policies are increasingly hegemonic, marked by strained relations with neighbours and an aggressive posture toward Pakistan and China. Its attempts to portray itself as a counterweight to China are undermined by economic disparity, military limitations, and internal instability. The article ultimately questions the sustainability of India's global ambitions, arguing that soft power optics cannot mask hard power weaknesses and governance failures.

Relevant CSS subjects and syllabus topics:

- International Relations: Multipolarity, strategic autonomy, alliance systems

- Current Affairs: Indo-US relations, rise of China, South Asian geopolitics
- Pakistan Affairs: India's regional behavior, ideological transformation in India
- Political Science (Optional): Illiberalism, democracy vs majoritarianism

Notes for beginners:

India wants to be seen as a global power like China or the United States, but it doesn't want to commit to global military alliances or fixed partnerships. Instead, it prefers to stay neutral and friendly with both powerful countries like the US and rivals like Russia and Iran. This approach is called 'strategic autonomy' and reflects India's belief in a multipolar world, where power is shared among many countries. However, India's slow economic growth, unresolved regional tensions with China and Pakistan, and its internal religious and political divides are creating roadblocks. For example, while India claims to be the world's largest democracy, its treatment of Muslims and Christians has raised red flags globally. This contradiction weakens its international image and ability to lead.

Facts and figures:

- India's GDP grew 3.5 percent annually from 1950 to 1980
- GDP rose to 5.5 percent in the 1990s and has averaged 6.5 percent since
- To match China by mid-century, India would need 8 percent annual growth while China slows to 2 percent, a highly unlikely scenario
- India is home to 200 million Muslims and 30 million Christians, many of whom face increasing discrimination
- India avoids military alliances like NATO and prefers forums like BRICS and SCO

To sum up, this article is a striking dissection of India's great-power ambitions through a realist lens. It masterfully highlights how India's desire to rise on its own terms while noble in theory is weighed down by internal contradictions and strategic hesitations. The article forces readers to ask whether India truly wants to lead or simply appear like it is doing so. It shows that without consistency in values, a bold foreign policy, and economic dynamism, the dream of becoming a global giant will remain just a dream.

GAZA, ISRAEL AND THE INFINITE GAME

Author: Aneela Shahzad

Summary:

I'm writing this to unpack the layered narrative in Aneela Shahzad's article Gaza, Israel and the Infinite Game, which unravels the enduring conflict between Gaza and Israel not as a political episode with a clear ending but as an "infinite game" where players change, but the struggle persists. The article makes a compelling case that this confrontation isn't just about borders or ceasefires—it's a civilisational saga fueled by deep-rooted historical grievances, religious symbolism, and shifting global alliances. From the destruction of the Temple centuries ago to the modern geopolitical theatre, Shahzad threads through time to show how today's bombs and blockades are echoes of millennia-old tensions. Both Gaza and Israel are playing for something far more profound than territory: Gaza for the liberation of Bait al-Quds (Jerusalem) and Israel for the grand Zionist dream stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates.

The article doesn't shy away from connecting the dots. It examines how the Shia-Sunni divide, triggered after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, fragmented Arab unity and enabled Israel to strike peace with some Arab states while continuing its occupation. Now, with a new wave of Arab-Iran rapprochement, the ground beneath Israel's feet is shifting. October 7 was not just another flare-up; it marked a historical shift that put Israel in a reactive, almost desperate, mode stretching the battlefield to Lebanon, Yemen, Iran, and Syria. Shahzad brilliantly paints the picture of a wounded Netanyahu fighting for personal and national survival. Even in the face of internal dissent and

international pressure, Israel barrels ahead not because it can win in a conventional sense, but because losing is not an option. In this infinite game, the rules morph, the players rotate, but the fire never really Dies.

Overview:

The article presents the Gaza-Israel conflict as an eternal geopolitical and ideological struggle shaped by ancient history, modern power games, and evolving alliances. It moves beyond surface-level analysis and delivers a philosophical yet grounded assessment of how civilisations engage in wars that outlive individual leaders or generations. Ceasefires may come and go, but the deeper game of existential identity continues.

NOTES:

The article casts the Gaza-Israel conflict as an unending "infinite game" rooted in centuries-old religious, historical, and ideological struggles rather than a short-term geopolitical clash. She traces the roots of the conflict from the destruction of the Jewish Temple by Babylonians and Romans, to the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem, and finally to the modern occupation of Palestine. The Jews, long persecuted across Europe through pogroms and ghettoisation, kept alive the dream of returning to the Promised Land eventually hijacked by secular Zionists with imperial ambitions beyond biblical promises. On the other hand, the Muslims, historically protectors of the Jews, turned hostile when the Zionist project displaced Palestinians. The article critiques how the 1979 Iranian Revolution fractured Arab unity, creating a Sunni-Shia rift that enabled Israel to make peace with some Arab states while isolating the Palestinian cause. Now, with a Saudi-Iran thaw, the regional chessboard is shifting again, giving Gaza renewed symbolic power. The October 7 escalation is presented not as a tactical decision but a calculated historic moment, pushing Israel into a desperate expansion of war zones to Lebanon, Yemen, Iran, and Syria. Netanyahu, mired in legal battles and political disarray, symbolizes Israel's existential anxiety. This article describes, has no finish line—players change, tactics shift and rules evolve but the fire of civilisational conflict smolders eternally beneath the surface, flaring up at moments when history and politics collide.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Middle East conflicts, Game Theory, ideological wars
- Current Affairs: Gaza-Israel war, Iran-Saudi rapprochement, Netanyahu's leadership crisis
- Political Science: Political identity, civilisational conflict, personal politics in statecraft
- Pakistan Affairs: Muslim world's stance on Palestine, shifting alliances in the Muslim bloc
- Essay Paper: Use of history in contemporary politics, enduring conflicts, infinite game theory in geopolitics

Notes for Beginners:

Gaza and Israel aren't just fighting for land today but they've been tangled in a struggle for centuries. For example, Jews were kicked out of their land nearly 2,000 years ago and were mistreated all across Europe. That built a deep desire to return, which later turned into Zionism. On the flip side, Muslims once protected Jews, but turned against them when Palestine was taken over. Fast forward to now the fighting isn't just about Gaza, it's about historical dreams, lost identity, and big political agendas. When Saudi Arabia and Iran made peace recently, it gave new strength to Gaza's cause, and Israel, feeling cornered, lashed out even more. It's not just war, it's a game that never ends.

Facts and Figures:

- The Gaza War has been ongoing for nearly 2 years
- The occupation of Palestinian lands began 77 years ago in 1948
- The Second Jewish Temple was destroyed in 70 CE
- The conquest of Jerusalem by Muslims happened around 638 CE
- The 1979 Iranian Revolution shifted Arab-Israel dynamics
- Israel has signed peace deals with Jordan and Egypt, but not with Palestinians
- October 7 marked a major escalation in the Gaza-Israel conflict



To wrap up, The article invites the reader to see the Gaza-Israel conflict as part of a never-ending, ever-changing historical game. It urges us to grasp that what's unfolding isn't merely a clash of arms but a collision of centuries-old narratives. It is a reminder that realpolitik often runs deeper than treaties and troops. It's about ideas, myths and memories about games played not just on maps, but in hearts and histories

CSS PLATFORM

Arab News Pakistan –

PAKISTAN’S GRIM ARITHMETIC: WHY STABILITY IS NOT ENOUGH

Author: Javed Hassan

Summary:

Reading this piece feels like watching a country walk a financial tightrope with no safety net beneath. Pakistan’s economic woes aren’t just a passing phase; they’ve sunk deep roots into the lives of millions. Nearly half the population now lives below the poverty line, and with 16.8 percent languishing in extreme poverty, the numbers paint a bleak picture. The youth are particularly hard hit, with a record 29 percent unemployment rate and an education system that leaves 26 million children out of school. Inflation has eaten away at incomes, slashing purchasing power by over half in just three years. What’s worse, these aren’t temporary setbacks but symptoms of a broken system where “stability” has become code for stagnation.

Zooming out, the comparisons sting even more. India and Bangladesh, once on equal footing with Pakistan, have pulled ahead with smart policies and investments in human capital. Meanwhile, Pakistan has leaned too heavily on remittances and foreign labor markets especially the Gulf which are now drying up as those countries prioritize their own young populations and pivot toward high-skilled sectors. Javed Hassan lays out a no-nonsense roadmap: invest in education, broaden the tax net, restructure debt, and create jobs through SMEs and vocational training. He warns that without bold reforms, Pakistan’s arithmetic will keep spiraling downward and what we call “stability” will merely be slow decay in disguise.

Overview:

This article takes a hard look at Pakistan’s worsening poverty crisis. It links economic stagnation with poor governance, inadequate investment in human capital and a broken education system. It critiques the illusion of macroeconomic stability, highlighting how rising poverty, unemployment and illiteracy have combined to trap the country in a cycle of despair. The writer calls for deep structural reforms and strategic shifts to escape this downward spiral, using India, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia as examples of successful poverty reduction through targeted policies.

NOTES:

The article identifies key failures in Pakistan’s fiscal management including an overreliance on regressive taxes, bloated debt and misallocated spending. It recommends urgent steps like expanding conditional cash transfers, improving tax collection from untaxed sectors, and restructuring external debt to prioritize education and health. The writer highlights the need for skill development to meet both domestic and global labor market demands, especially as Gulf economies shift gears. He cautions that without such reforms, Pakistan risks locking itself into a permanent low-growth trap where poverty becomes normalized. This article is essential reading for understanding economic development, governance failures, and the poverty-employment nexus in Pakistan.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Current Affairs – Economic crisis, poverty, unemployment, fiscal policy, regional comparisons
- Pakistan Affairs – Governance, social justice, youth bulge, remittances, labor migration
- Essay Paper – Topics like “Poverty in Pakistan: Structural Causes and Solutions,” “Is Stability Enough for Growth?”
- Economics (Optional) – Macroeconomic indicators, labor market dynamics, taxation reforms
- Governance and Public Policy – Public investment, institutional failures, human capital development

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how Pakistan's economy isn't just moving slowly, it's also going backward for many people. For example if someone earns less than 1,000 rupees a day, they're now part of the 102 million living below the poverty line. Youth are finding it harder to get jobs and families are struggling to buy basic items due to inflation. Imagine 26 million children not going to school that's like every child in a big city like Karachi missing out on education. The writer says that to fix this, we need better schools, tax collection from the rich, and fewer loans that eat up money needed for healthcare and jobs. Without these steps, the country can't move forward, even if the numbers say it's "stable."

Facts and Figures:

- 102 million Pakistanis live below the \$3.65-a-day poverty line
- 16.8 percent live in extreme poverty (under \$2.15/day)
- 29 percent youth unemployment
- 26 million children out of school
- Purchasing power dropped by 58 percent in three years
- External debt is close to \$130 billion
- Fiscal deficit and twin imbalances rely heavily on borrowed funds
- Female labor force participation is 23 percent, behind South Asia's 27 percent average
- India's extreme poverty down to 5.3 percent, Bangladesh at 14 percent
- Gulf remittances lead to short-term spending, not long-term development

To sum up, this article is a thunderclap across Pakistan's policy landscape. The article highlights a nation at a crossroads. The statistics may chill the spine, but the real message is one of urgency and potential. The country must stop papering over cracks with borrowed money and start investing in its people. With courage, vision, and discipline, Pakistan can still turn this ship around. But make no mistake because time is not on its side.

Difficult Words with Meanings:

1. Malaise – A general feeling of discomfort or illness

Synonym: Unease | Antonym: Comfort

2. Subsist – To maintain or support oneself at a minimal level

Synonym: Survive | Antonym: Thrive

3. Euphemism – A mild or indirect word substituted for one considered harsh

Synonym: Politeness | Antonym: Directness

4. Stark – Severe or bare in appearance

Synonym: Harsh | Antonym: Gentle

5. Bulge – A sudden increase or rise

Synonym: Surge | Antonym: Decline

RUSSIA'S RECOGNITION OF THE AFGHAN TALIBAN GOVERNMENT HAS IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS

Author: Mansoor Khan

Summary:

Russia's official recognition of the Afghan Taliban government marks a diplomatic turning point with wide geopolitical ripples. Unlike previous gestures of quiet engagement by countries like China, Pakistan, and the UAE, Russia has openly acknowledged the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" in its official statement. This move, shaped by Russia's desire to bolster regional cooperation, fight terrorism, and counter drug trafficking, reflects a hard-nosed realism. With the Taliban holding firm control over Afghanistan post-US withdrawal, Moscow seems to be cutting its cloth according to the prevailing power structure, aligning its interests with on-the-ground realities rather than idealistic prescriptions. At the heart of this pivot is Russia's anxiety about security spillovers across Central Asia and its strategic bid to secure influence amid its own isolation due to the Ukraine war and waning clout in the Middle East.

Despite criticism from ousted Afghan politicians and Western powers, Russia has pressed on, likely calculating that time is on the Taliban's side. Countries bordering Afghanistan, such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, have avoided antagonism and instead focused on economic cooperation, hinting at a regional consensus forming around practical engagement. While recognition at the UN level still hinges on the Taliban's behavior, particularly regarding human rights and inclusivity, the fact that both China and Russia two permanent UN Security Council members support increased engagement puts the ball squarely in the Taliban's court. Russia's move may well foreshadow a broader recalibration of international diplomacy with Kabul, where pragmatism speaks louder than principles.

Overview:

This article outlines Russia's strategic decision to formally recognize the Taliban government in Afghanistan. It examines how geopolitical pressures, regional security imperatives, and the shifting balance of power have compelled Moscow to prioritize engagement over isolation. The piece frames Russia's move as both a tactical calculation and a regional signal of acceptance of Taliban dominance, while also highlighting the potential consequences for global diplomacy and counterterrorism efforts.

NOTES:

Russia's formal recognition of the Taliban government marks a critical shift in global diplomacy, becoming the first country to explicitly refer to the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" in its official communication. This step underscores Moscow's intention to deepen bilateral cooperation with Kabul in areas such as regional security, Counterterrorism and combating drug trafficking. The Taliban's firm grip over Afghanistan since their takeover in August 2021 has reshaped regional calculations, prompting nations like China, Pakistan, UAE and Uzbekistan to upgrade diplomatic ties, albeit without using the term "recognition." Russia's historical engagement with Afghanistan rooted in the Soviet invasion era and concerns over transnational threats, has now matured into strategic pragmatism, especially amid Russia's own geopolitical challenges in Ukraine and the Middle East. The Moscow Format initiated in 2016 laid the groundwork for this evolving approach. One of Russia's key priorities is addressing the threat of Daesh, which both Moscow and the Taliban perceive as a mutual enemy. Additionally, Central Asian neighbors such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan have adopted a non-confrontational approach, focusing on economic ties rather than supporting anti-Taliban proxies. Kazakhstan and Russia have already delisted the Taliban from terrorist designations, and Tajikistan may follow suit. Although Russia's move drew criticism from Western-aligned Afghan politicians and some global actors, it aligns with a broader trend of engagement over

isolation. The Taliban's full inclusion in the UN system, however, remains contingent on improvements in governance, human rights, and counterterrorism commitments. Nonetheless, Russia's recognition may set the stage for a gradual normalization of the Taliban regime on the world stage.

CSS Relevant Subjects and Topics

- Current Affairs: Afghanistan's evolving diplomatic status
- International Relations: Recognition of regimes, Russia's foreign policy, regional security
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's role and proximity diplomacy
- Governance & Public Policy: State legitimacy, international law, and counterterrorism cooperation

Notes for Beginners:

Think of this situation like a classroom where a new student (Taliban) has taken over as class monitor without the teacher's approval. Some classmates (like the West) refuse to work with them, saying the student doesn't follow rules. But others (like Russia and China) see that this student controls the classroom anyway and think it's better to work with him to avoid more chaos. Russia believes that by cooperating with the Taliban, it can stop dangerous gangs (like Daesh) from spilling trouble into neighboring areas. It's less about liking the new monitor and more about managing the classroom before things go out of hand.

Facts and Figures:

- Russia officially recognized the Taliban government in July 2025
- Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021
- Russia launched the Moscow Format in 2016 to discuss Afghan peace
- Three Central Asian countries share a border with Afghanistan: Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan
- Russia and Kazakhstan have removed the Taliban from terror lists
- UN recognition still pending due to Taliban's human rights record

To sum up, Russia's decision to recognize the Taliban is not just about Afghanistan, it's a statement of shifting global allegiances and practical diplomacy in an era defined more by chaos than consensus. As the Taliban tighten their grip over Afghanistan, global powers must choose between waiting for perfection or engaging with reality. Russia has opted for the latter, signaling a larger realignment in international relations where outcomes not ideals dictate recognition. Whether this paves the road to peace or legitimizes authoritarianism depends on how the Taliban respond to the growing chorus demanding inclusivity, stability, and reform.

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN SIGN PREFERENTIAL TRADE DEAL TO SLASH TARIFFS ON KEY FRUITS, VEGETABLES

Author: Fatimah Amjad

Summary:

The article presents a multifaceted snapshot of Pakistan's current social, economic, and geopolitical landscape, brimming with both progress and tragedy. On the economic front, a landmark Preferential Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan breathes new life into bilateral trade, slashing tariffs on eight key fruits and vegetables to bolster cross-border commerce. While political tensions linger, this accord dropping tariffs from 60% to 27% works as a rare glimmer of cooperation and mutual benefit. However, challenges persist: frequent border closures, security issues, and logistical hurdles still undercut the full trade potential, estimated to touch \$8–10 billion annually. Meanwhile, flash flood warnings loom large over Pakistan's northern regions as intense monsoon spells batter Punjab, KP and Gilgit-Baltistan, with the death toll climbing to a staggering 279. It's a grim reminder of Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change and the urgent need for robust disaster management systems.

Alongside these developments, the article sheds light on deeply entrenched societal injustices. A viral video capturing a brutal “honor killing” in Balochistan sparks a nationwide uproar, revealing the persistent stranglehold of tribal customs and parallel justice systems in Pakistan. Despite the 2016 ban on such killings, enforcement remains a far cry from adequate, with jirgas often operating with impunity. In a parallel public health effort, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterates his commitment to combating hepatitis, announcing a mass screening plan to eliminate hepatitis C by 2030. A polio drive in Balochistan also targets over 500,000 children amid a recent uptick in cases, underscoring Pakistan's ongoing battle against preventable diseases. On the global stage, Pakistan hopes to gain traction at a high-level UN summit advocating for Palestinian rights—another diplomatic moment where words must lead to real action. The article paints a picture of a nation at a crossroads, juggling progress and paralysis, hope and heartbreak.

Overview:

This article combines key developments across diplomacy, climate, public health and human rights in Pakistan. It highlights trade cooperation with Afghanistan, climate-related emergencies, public health campaigns, and the horrific consequences of entrenched tribal practices. Each segment represents a strand of Pakistan's broader challenges and efforts to respond through policy, awareness, and international engagement.

NOTES:

The article outlines several pressing developments in Pakistan. A major economic breakthrough came with the signing of a Preferential Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan, reducing tariffs on eight essential fruits and vegetables from over 60% to 27%, starting August 1, 2025. Despite political tensions, this agreement marks a rare moment of cooperation and opens the door for expanded bilateral trade. Simultaneously, Pakistan faces a severe monsoon crisis, with over 279 lives lost and flood alerts issued across Punjab, KP, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir, indicating the gravity of the situation. In Balochistan, a viral video of an honor killing has sparked nationwide outrage, exposing the persistent influence of illegal tribal jirgas and the failure of formal law enforcement in rural regions. While the culprits have been arrested, the state's delayed response underscores systemic weaknesses. On the public health front, Pakistan marked World Hepatitis Day by launching a campaign to eliminate hepatitis C by 2030, aiming to screen over 165 million people. At the same time, a new polio vaccination drive was launched in Balochistan to immunize over 500,000 children following a fresh spike in cases. The article concludes with Pakistan's diplomatic efforts at the UN summit on Palestine, showing its intent to play a meaningful role in international humanitarian discussions.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Governance, socio-political issues, public health, climate change, regional cooperation
- International Relations: Pakistan-Afghanistan ties, UN and Palestine, humanitarian diplomacy
- Current Affairs: Honor killings, tribal justice systems, health and disaster management
- Gender Studies: Violence against women, tribal customs, legal enforcement
- Environmental Science: Climate impact, floods, disaster preparedness
- Public Administration & Governance: Parallel justice systems, jirgas, policy failures

Notes for Beginners:

Pakistan signed a special trade deal with Afghanistan to reduce heavy taxes on fruits and vegetables like mangoes, grapes, bananas and tomatoes. This step could help farmers and boost trade. However, natural disasters are hurting the country badly. Recent rains killed over 279 people. In health Pakistan is trying to stop diseases like hepatitis (a liver infection) and polio (a disease causing paralysis) by launching big awareness and vaccination campaigns. Sadly in Balochistan a shocking video showed a woman being killed by her brother for family “honor.” This act is illegal but still happens in some tribal areas due to old traditions, showing the need for stronger laws and better justice.

Facts and Figures:

- Tariffs on 8 key exports cut from over 60% to 27%
- Pakistan-Afghanistan trade (Jan–Jun 2025): \$989 million
- Deaths from monsoon-related incidents: 279 (as of July 28, 2025)
- Hepatitis patients in Pakistan: 12 million
- Polio cases in 2025: 17 (up from 6 in 2023)
- Honor killings reported in 2024: at least 405
- Flood-related displacement in 2022: 30 million+ affected

To sum up, the article reveals the paradoxes Pakistan lives with hopeful bilateral agreements and proactive health initiatives on one side, and deep-rooted tribal violence and natural calamities on the other. From fruits crossing borders to lives being snuffed out in deserts, the piece highlights how much work remains to build a just, safe, and thriving Pakistan.

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