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**11<sup>TH</sup> EDITION**

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## Contents

Dawn – .....	5
This is Not Us   Author: Muna Khan .....	5
Time for Palestine .....	6
Return of hard power   Author: Maleeha Lodhi .....	7
TTP footholds.....	9
India's waning star?   Author: Touqir Hussain .....	10
Rethinking national security   Author - Zahid Hussain .....	12
Peace and justice   Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel .....	13
Building peace in South Asia   Author: Ashraf Jehangir Qazi .....	15
Pak-India stalemate must end   Author: Asif Durrani .....	16
Frayed relations   Author: Maleeha Lodhi.....	18
Killing the messengers   Author: Zahid Hussain.....	19
War on truth   Author Maleeha Lodhi.....	20
Counterterrorism synergy   Author: Muhammad Amir Rana .....	22
New provinces?   Author: Ahmed Bilal Mehboob .....	23
The eternal wait for Godot   Author: Sakib Sherani.....	25
Alaska optics win for Putin   Author: Abbas Nasir .....	26
Frayed relations   Author: Maleeha Lodhi.....	27
Muslim collectivism   Author: Ghulam Shabbir.....	29
China and shifting geopolitics   Author: Zahid Hussain.....	30
Flooding in Punjab.....	32
The Express Tribune –.....	34
Pakistan — between Beijing and Washington .....	34
Author: Inam Ul Haque .....	34
Advantage China, Pakistan   author kamran yousaf .....	35
Learning beyond classrooms in higher education.....	36
Author: Dr Asghar Zaidi.....	36
'New realignments won't dent Sino-Pak partnership' Author: Kamran Yousaf .....	38
Why Pakistan did not become an Islamic state Author: Shahid Javed Burki.....	39

<b>Social media and fracturing of Pakistan's political discourse Author: Durdana Najam .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Comprehending Iran Author: Inam Ul Haque .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Reframing Alaska Summit Author: Dr Shazia Anwer Cheema .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Paradigm shift in China, India relations Author: Dr Moonis Ahmar.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Arab News Pakistan –.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Is the Indus Waters Treaty really under threat? Author: Javed Hafeez.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Safeguarding biodiversity in a warming world Author: Adnan Masoudy &amp; Hassan Alzain .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Global South can claim climate mantle at COP30 Authors: Maiara Folly, Jayati Ghosh and Jorg Haas.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Climate change can potentially exacerbate militancy in Pakistan's conflict-hit areas Author: Abdul Basit Khan .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>The Nation – .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Prioritising Gawadar.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Aug 5: Dismantling of Kashmir's special status fuels struggle Author - Sardar Abdul Khaliq Wasi.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Reforming the civil service Author - Maleeha Lodhi.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>The Rise of Multipolarity in the 21st Century.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Honour Our Past and Build Our Future .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Alaska and Beyond Author: Albert P. Khorev.....</b>	<b>60</b>



## Dawn –

### THIS IS NOT US

**AUTHOR: MUNA KHAN**

#### Summary:

The article dismantles the layers of apathy, complicity, and toxic cultural norms surrounding gender-based violence (GBV) in Pakistan, triggered by the recent ‘honour’ killing of a Baloch couple. Khan critiques both mainstream and social media’s role in shaping and manipulating public perception—highlighting how, without a viral video, the state likely wouldn’t have acted at all. The media, she argues, often reinforces misogyny through selective coverage, romanticized narratives, and victim-blaming tropes. She denounces the disturbing framing of the woman’s murder as a "dignified death for love" and raises alarm over the Balochistan chief minister revealing the couple’s unmarried status, subtly justifying their murder. Khan calls out the jirga system, failed judiciary, and patriarchal state alliances as enablers of GBV. Her piece stresses the cumulative effect of repeated misogynistic messaging in media and how it warps societal attitudes over time, ultimately demanding institutional reform and cultural reckoning.

#### Overview:

The article focuses on a brutal gender-based murder in Balochistan and uses it to explore Pakistan’s broader failure to confront systemic violence against women. It critiques state inaction, media irresponsibility, and societal desensitisation to GBV. The writer highlights how media narratives often romanticize or justify such crimes and argues that only viral outrage sparks temporary justice, while institutional mechanisms remain broken.

#### NOTES:

The article analyzes the systemic enablers of gender-based violence (GBV) in Pakistan, using the recent honour killing of a Baloch couple as a case study to expose the depth of societal complicity. It presents alarming statistics, 32,000 GBV cases and 547 honour killings in 2024, with only one conviction in Balochistan to show how rare justice is. Muna Khan denounces the media’s selective outrage and its romanticizing or moralizing tone that often blames victims and normalizes patriarchal violence. She criticizes the Balochistan Chief Minister for disclosing the couple’s unmarried status, which seemed to justify their murder in the public eye. The piece also condemns the role of the jirga system and a judiciary that routinely fails survivors. By highlighting how cumulative media messaging perpetuates misogyny, the article warns of a society becoming desensitized to brutality. Khan calls for urgent structural reforms and a cultural reckoning to dismantle deeply entrenched misogynistic norms, stressing that denying these injustices as unrepresentative of society is part of the problem itself.

#### Related CSS Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Judicial failures, tribal systems, state governance, GBV in provincial contexts
- Current Affairs: Gender justice, media ethics, digital activism, social psychology
- Essay Paper: Patriarchy, media's influence, justice system reform
- Sociology: Cultural conditioning, role of state in reinforcing inequality

#### Notes for Beginners:

This article is a strong critique of how Pakistani society and institutions handle violence against women. It says that unless a case becomes viral, no one takes action. The media and state often blame the victims and support traditional systems like jirgas that allow such crimes. Even the mother of the murdered woman agreed with the killing, showing how society itself accepts this violence. The article urges Pakistanis to stop saying “this isn’t us” and instead admit that if it is part of our culture, we must actively work to change it.

#### Facts and Figures:

- 32,000 GBV cases reported in 2024
- 547 honour killings recorded, 32 in Balochistan

- Only one conviction reported from Balochistan
- Baloch couple murdered in May 2025; state acted only after video went viral

In essence, Muna Khan's article is a challenge to Pakistani society, media, and state institutions to confront a reality we've grown dangerously used to. Until misogyny is rejected in both culture and law, every "this isn't us" rings hollow.

### **Difficult Words and Meaning:**

1. Cumulative Effect – Long-term impact built through repetition (Syn: compounding | Ant: isolated impact)
2. Romanticism – Idealizing or glorifying something (Syn: glorification | Ant: realism)
3. Misogyny – Hatred or distrust of women (Syn: sexism | Ant: feminism)
4. Muzzled – Silenced or restricted from expression (Syn: suppressed | Ant: amplified)
5. Moralising – Imposing a judgmental standard on others' behavior (Syn: preaching | Ant: neutrality)

## **TIME FOR PALESTINE**

### **Summary:**

The article spotlights a decisive turning point in international diplomacy, as France becomes the first G7 country to formally support the recognition of the State of Palestine at the UN General Assembly. This bold gesture comes amid increasing international frustration over the unresolved Israel-Palestine conflict. France's move, co-supported by Saudi Arabia at a UN conference attended by 123 nations, signals that symbolic solidarity is now giving way to concrete action. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, also reaffirmed the country's longstanding commitment to the two-state solution, demanding an end to Israel's brutal siege of Gaza and emphasizing that lasting peace requires recognition of Palestinian statehood based on the pre-1967 borders.

The article points to a shifting global consensus where even longstanding Western allies of Israel, like France, are beginning to openly challenge the status quo. It underscores the growing diplomatic isolation of Israel and the US as they resist such recognition. While opposition remains strong, particularly from traditional Western powers, the editorial argues that moral responsibility and international law demand swift and unified global action. The piece closes with a call to the international community to turn symbolic support into enforceable outcomes, suggesting that the time for hesitation has passed, and the global order must now champion justice for the Palestinian people.

### **Overview:**

The article presents the growing international recognition of Palestine as a pivotal moment in Middle Eastern diplomacy. It underscores the role of France and Pakistan in challenging the long-standing impasse and calls for turning diplomatic will into action. The article positions Palestine's recognition not just as a political necessity, but as a moral and historical obligation.

### **NOTES:**

The article outlines a growing diplomatic shift as France, becoming the first G7 country to take such a step, pledges to recognize Palestine at the UN, breaking years of Western reluctance. Pakistan, reinforcing its historical stance emphasized that peace in the Middle East hinges on recognizing a viable Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders. This came during a significant UN conference co-hosted by France and Saudi Arabia, which gathered representatives from 123 nations and global organizations. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, advocated for a ceasefire in Gaza, unhindered humanitarian aid, and a clear path toward Palestinian sovereignty. As Pakistan chaired the UN Security Council session on the Gaza crisis, it stressed that displacing people and erasing statehood cannot replace dialogue and diplomacy. The editorial points out that while Israel and the US oppose this growing movement, they now face increasing diplomatic isolation. With over 140 countries already recognizing Palestine,

France's move may accelerate wider international acknowledgment. The editorial concludes that global recognition is not just a political act but a moral and legal imperative that must now be translated into lasting policy and justice.

**Related CSS Subjects and Topics:**

- International Relations: Diplomacy, Middle East politics, recognition of states
- Current Affairs: UN conferences, two-state solution, Western foreign policy
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy on Palestine
- Essay Paper: Justice in global politics, statehood and sovereignty
- Political Science: Legitimacy, moral diplomacy, multilateralism

**Notes for Beginners:**

This article explains how many countries are now supporting the idea of Palestine becoming its own independent country. France has taken a bold step by saying it will officially recognize Palestine at the UN, and Pakistan is also pushing hard for peace in Gaza and for Palestine to be treated fairly. A big UN meeting with over 100 countries shows how serious the world is about finding a peaceful solution. The article says that the time for only talking is over, it's time to act and give the Palestinian people the justice they deserve.

**Facts and Figures:**

- France is the first G7 country to formally support Palestinian statehood.
- Over 140 UN member states already recognize Palestine.
- 123 countries and organizations attended the UN conference in New York.
- Pakistan chaired the UN Security Council session on Gaza.

To wrap up, the editorial emphasizes that Palestine's recognition is no longer just a political choice, it is a historical and moral necessity. France's recognition may pave the way for more Western countries to follow as the two-state solution gains real diplomatic momentum. Pakistan's steadfast role highlights how diplomacy and international cooperation, not force, are the keys to lasting peace.

**Difficult Words and Meanings:**

1. Inertia – Lack of movement or progress (Syn: stagnation | Ant: momentum)
2. Viable – Capable of working or being successful (Syn: feasible | Ant: unworkable)
3. Precedent – An earlier action that serves as a guide (Syn: model | Ant: anomaly)
4. Diplomatic Isolation – Exclusion from international cooperation (Syn: alienation | Ant: engagement)
5. Multilateralism – Coordination among multiple countries (Syn: collaboration | Ant: unilateralism)

**RETURN OF HARD POWER****AUTHOR: MALEEHA LODHI****Summary**

The article reveals today's power politics. Once thought to be on its way out, hard power has returned with a bang, elbowing diplomacy and soft influence to the sidelines. The world, it seems, is walking back into the shadow of gunboat diplomacy, where military muscle and economic coercion are the new tools of persuasion. Wars are no longer last resorts; they're becoming the first step in policy moves by major powers. From Israel's brutal offensive in Gaza and cross-border attacks to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Trump-era trade wars, brute force is muscling its way back into mainstream statecraft. This growing appetite for coercion is ripping apart the already fragile threads of international law and cooperation, pushing us toward a Hobbesian jungle where might is right.

But it's not all doom and gloom. The article throws a lifeline to soft power, insisting it hasn't lost its shine. Countries like China are quietly but steadily flexing their soft power muscles investing in diplomacy, cultural engagement, and economic partnerships. China's rise to the No. 2 spot in the global soft power index isn't a fluke; it's the outcome of strategic long-haul efforts, from Belt and Road to brokering peace between Iran and Saudi Arabia. While America

under Trump chose to swing a big stick, China built bridges. Drawing on insights from Joseph Nye, the piece argues that in an interdependent world, trust and attraction are not optional luxuries but strategic imperatives. If a country earns goodwill, it won't have to twist arms to get cooperation. In the long run, charm may win more wars than cannons.

### **Overview:**

This article dissects the rising global trend of using military and economic power to settle disputes, bypassing diplomacy and cooperation. It critiques how powerful states have returned to hardline tactics, while also defending the continued relevance of soft power, citing China's strategic global influence as a success story.

### **Notes for CSS Aspirants:**

#### **Notes (Comprehensive Paragraph Form):**

The article provides in depth analysis of the resurgence of hard power in contemporary geopolitics, spotlighting how coercion such as military force and economic pressure has taken center stage in global statecraft. It highlights the decline of multilateral diplomacy and soft influence, as powerful nations increasingly resort to aggression and arm-twisting to achieve their strategic goals. Real-world instances like Israel's attacks on Gaza, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the U.S.'s use of economic sanctions and trade wars underscore this pivot towards raw, unfiltered power. Lodhi emphasizes that this trend is not only undermining international law but also destabilizing global norms, nudging the world back into a chaotic, Hobbesian state where might defines right. However, she balances this outlook by underlining the endurance of soft power, particularly through China's calculated rise in global influence via peaceful tools such as diplomacy, infrastructure investments under the Belt and Road Initiative and cultural outreach. Drawing from Joseph Nye's theories, the piece reiterates that trust, legitimacy, and moral leadership remain invaluable in an interconnected world. Ultimately, the article underscores the necessity of recalibrating global politics, urging a return to cooperative engagement before force becomes the default setting in international relations.

#### **Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:**

- International Relations: Power dynamics, diplomacy, coercion vs cooperation
- Pakistan Affairs: Regional conflicts, India-Pakistan military posture
- Current Affairs: Gaza war, Ukraine conflict, US-China competition
- Essay Paper: Use of force in global politics, soft power vs hard power, military dominance
- Political Science: Realism, neoliberalism, and power politics

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

Think of hard power as using force like military or economic threats to get what you want, like the US using trade tariffs to pressure other countries. In contrast, soft power is like making friends at school—using kindness, culture, and ideas to win people over. For example, China invests in poorer countries and shares technology, gaining allies without firing a shot. This balance between fear and friendship shapes today's world politics. The article warns that if everyone keeps choosing the stick over the handshake, global peace might go out the window.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Global defence spending has reached record highs
- China is ranked No. 2 in global soft power index (Brand Finance)
- Over 150 countries are part of China's Belt and Road Initiative
- The US imposed trade tariffs on allies and adversaries alike under Trump
- Multiple international laws prohibit the first use of force, but violations are on the rise



To sum up, the article highlights the world's dangerous tilt toward hard power. In a landscape where force trumps dialogue and might often overrides right, the need for balance becomes all the more urgent. She argues that while the sword may win battles, it's soft power that builds empires of trust and stability. Countries would do well to remember: in a world bristling with weapons, influence, not intimidation, could be their greatest asset.

### **Difficult Words and Meanings:**

- Abjure – To renounce or reject (Syn: forsake | Ant: embrace)
- Impunity – Exemption from punishment (Syn: immunity | Ant: accountability)
- Hobbesian – Chaotic and lawless, like a “war of all against all” (Syn: anarchic | Ant: orderly)
- Coercion – Force or threats to make someone act (Syn: compulsion | Ant: consent)
- Rapport – A harmonious relationship (Syn: connection | Ant: conflict)

## **TTP FOOTHOLDS**

### **Summary**

The article highlights the unending war footing in KP especially the former FATA regions where terrorism is like a weed that just won't die. Despite decades of military campaigns, the banned TTP still holds sway, deeply rooted in places like Tirah with command structures alive and well across the border in Afghanistan. It stings to see the people of Bajaur caught once again in the crossfire as Operation Sarbakaf unfolds, without even a warning. The protests by locals aren't just noise, they're cries of exhaustion. After twenty years of fighting, the question isn't just why the TTP still exists, but why civilian efforts have failed so miserably to follow up on military success.

What struck me most is how the article peels back the layers of this flawed counterterrorism approach. It doesn't hold back in pointing out that while soldiers have fought tooth and nail to clear regions, the government hasn't stepped up to build lasting peace. The ‘build’ phase of the very heart of post-conflict recovery has been nothing but an empty promise. And now, yet again, we're talking about fresh strategies and multipronged plans like revised NAP and “Harden the State” initiatives. But unless they actually take root in the soil where people bleed and mourn, we're just going in circles. This isn't just about defeating militants, but it's also about restoring faith. And right now, KP's people are being asked to survive without much hope of ever living peacefully.

### **Overview:**

This editorial addresses the persistent hold of the banned TTP in KP's ex-FATA regions, despite repeated military operations spanning over two decades. It sheds light on the continued command structure of the TTP in Afghanistan, civilian discontent with ongoing operations, and the failure of the state to deliver post-conflict development. The piece calls for a multipronged and humane counterterrorism response, beyond mere kinetic action, to reestablish the state's writ and protect citizens.

### **NOTES:**

The article brings attention to the lingering threat of terrorism in KP's former FATA regions, despite over two decades of relentless military campaigns. It highlights the TTP's persistent presence, especially in Tirah, and reveals how their command remains operational in Afghanistan. It highlights the recent launch of Operation Sarbakaf in Bajaur where once again civilians are caught off guard without prior warning, sparking protests and fears of renewed displacement. The article criticizes the repeated failure of the post-operation “build” phase, arguing that while security forces succeed in clearing areas, the civilian side of governance lags far behind. It points out the need for a balanced, multi-pronged approach that goes beyond military might to include effective legislation, public engagement, and robust institution-building. The article also stresses the importance of implementing the revised National Action Plan in full, warning that without these broader steps, the fight against terrorism will remain incomplete and the affected regions will continue to suffer in an endless loop of violence and neglect.

### **CSS Syllabus Relevance:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Counterterrorism, ex-FATA integration, National Action Plan
- Current Affairs: Security challenges, Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, internal displacement
- International Relations: Cross-border militancy, Taliban regime impact, regional security
- Essay Paper: Civil-military balance, sustainable peace, insurgency and governance

### Notes for Beginners:

This article talks about how terrorism still affects parts of Pakistan, especially the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region. Although the army has fought hard, the banned group TTP still operates from nearby areas in Afghanistan and attacks different parts of Pakistan. A new operation in Bajaur has again caused fear among local people, who say they were not informed and are tired of being caught in the middle. The article says the military alone cannot fix things—after clearing out terrorists, the government must help local people by building schools, roads, and police stations. Otherwise, the same problem will keep coming back, and people will keep suffering without real peace.

### Facts and Figures:

- TTP remains active in ex-FATA despite over 20 years of military operations
- Operation Sarbakaf launched in Bajaur due to militant presence
- Tribes in Tirah requested TTP to withdraw; militants seek Afghan leadership's advice
- Civilian protests erupt due to lack of warning and fear of displacement
- PM discusses multipronged strategy under 'Harden the State' committee
- National Action Plan implementation remains incomplete

To sum up, this article highlights a painful truth that despite countless sacrifices, we've fallen short of delivering peace to our own people. Until we stop treating counterterrorism as a checklist and start treating it as a commitment to our citizens' lives and dignity, these cycles of violence will keep repeating. If KP is to heal, it needs more than soldiers. It needs solutions rooted in governance, empathy, and resolve.

### Difficult Words and Meanings:

1. Entrenched – Firmly established and difficult to remove  
Syn: Ingrained | Ant: Superficial
2. Infiltration – Secret movement into an area, usually for hostile purposes  
Syn: Penetration | Ant: Withdrawal
3. Collateral – Indirect or unintended, especially damage  
Syn: Secondary | Ant: Primary
4. Fiefdom – Area controlled by a single person or group with autonomy  
Syn: Dominion | Ant: Public space
5. Kinetic – Related to physical force or motion  
Syn: Active | Ant: Passive

## INDIA'S WANING STAR?

**AUTHOR: TOUQIR HUSSAIN**

### Summary:

India once seen as the poster child of Western geopolitical dreams seems to be losing its shine on the global stage. The very Indo-Pacific strategy that thrust India into a spotlight of strategic relevance now lies in shambles, thanks largely to Trump's wrecking-ball approach to global norms and his America First doctrine. With the war in Gaza and the Ukraine crisis unraveling the so-called "rules-based order," India finds itself navigating a choppy sea without a compass. Once allowed to play both sides with its strategic autonomy, juggling relations with both the West and Russia, India is now caught in a tightening web of pressure, particularly over its Russian oil imports. Meanwhile,

shifting alliances, crumbling institutions like BRICS, and Trump's bare-knuckle bilateralism have exposed India's vulnerabilities, leaving it groping for relevance in a global game it no longer controls.

What really knocks the wind out of India's sails is its own overconfidence or hubris as the writer calls it. Once the darling of both East and West, India now finds itself increasingly isolated, its global standing chipped away by internal contradictions and external shocks. Trump doesn't take kindly to mixed loyalties, and India's insistence on going its own way has put it in his crosshairs. Even within platforms like BRICS and SCO, India appears to be out of sync, squeezed between China's ambitions and Russia's recalibrated priorities. As the writer argues, the days of India calling the shots while sitting on the geopolitical fence may be coming to an end. The world is changing fast, and India must either adapt to the new rules of the game or be left watching from the sidelines. It might bounce back but not without swallowing some bitter pills first.

#### **Overview:**

This article provides a sharp analysis of India's declining influence in global affairs amid changing power dynamics, particularly under Donald Trump's foreign policy approach. It discusses how India's geopolitical prominence once elevated by the Indo-Pacific strategy, has taken a hit due to crumbling alliances, shifting Western priorities, and India's uneasy fit in blocs like BRICS and SCO. It also underscores how Trump's transactional diplomacy, the war in Gaza, and the pressure over Russian oil imports have cornered India into unfamiliar terrain, forcing it to rethink its global strategy.

#### **NOTES:**

The article outlines how India's once-soaring global stature is facing a decline amid a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape. India's rise, earlier fueled by the Indo-Pacific strategy under leaders like Biden and Abe, has been disrupted by Donald Trump's transactional and unilateral approach to international relations. The collapse of the so-called "rules-based order" due to the wars in Gaza and Ukraine has further muddled the waters. India's long-held strategic autonomy—balancing ties with both the West and Russia is under strain, especially as the US pressures India to reduce oil imports from Moscow. Furthermore, India's position in alliances like BRICS and SCO is being challenged by the China-Russia partnership and the broader fragmentation of multilateral blocs. Trump's emphasis on loyalty and bilateralism has further isolated India, exposing its limited maneuverability. The article suggests that India must reassess its diplomatic strategy, as it can no longer comfortably straddle multiple global power centers without facing consequences. The shifting tides require India to move away from past hubris and adapt to a world where old alliances and privileges can no longer be taken for granted.

#### **CSS Subject Relevance:**

- International Relations: Shifting alliances, Indo-Pacific strategy, US-India-China triangle
- Current Affairs: Global power reordering, Trump's impact on multilateralism, India's diplomatic struggles
- Political Science: State behavior, hubris in foreign policy, bilateralism vs multilateralism
- Essay Paper: Decline of global institutions, realignment of world powers, future of strategic autonomy

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

This article explains how India once favored by both the West and Russia is now losing that status due to changing global politics. For example, it used to buy oil from Russia freely, but now the US is unhappy about it and might impose penalties. India also tried to stay friends with everyone like China, Russia, and the US but now that's not working so well. It's like trying to please too many people at once and ending up pleasing no one. The world is changing, and India must change with it or risk being left behind.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- India's strategic autonomy is under pressure due to Russian oil purchases amid US sanctions
- BRICS and SCO losing cohesion due to internal rivalries and China-Russia dominance
- Trump's America First policy weakening traditional alliances and institutions

- Indo-Pacific strategy sidelined in favor of economic nationalism and bilateral deals

To wrap up, the article calls out the tectonic shifts shaking the global order. It's a reminder that international politics isn't just about playing your cards right, it's also about knowing when the rules of the game have changed. India's old playbook of strategic autonomy may no longer cut it in a world where transactional diplomacy is the new norm. As great powers realign and emerging blocs fragment, India must rethink its posture and purpose if it wants to stay in the race. The shine may have dulled, but the game's not over yet.

#### **Difficult Words and Their Meanings:**

1. Hubris – Excessive pride or self-confidence  
Syn: Arrogance | Ant: Humility
2. Ambivalent – Having mixed or contradictory feelings  
Syn: Uncertain | Ant: Clear-cut
3. Protégé – Something or someone developed under the guidance of another  
Syn: Disciple | Ant: Rival
4. Overweening – Showing excessive confidence or pride  
Syn: Presumptuous | Ant: Modest
5. Reinvigorated – Made strong, fresh, or active again  
Syn: Revived | Ant: Weakened

## **RETHINKING NATIONAL SECURITY**

**AUTHOR - ZAHID HUSSAIN**

#### **Summary:**

For years, we've been obsessed with building up our military muscle, flexing our might every time there's tension with India, and yet we've turned a blind eye to the slow rot eating away at our foundations. What's the point of having nukes and jets if nearly half our population lives in poverty, if 23 million kids are out of school, and if more than 65% of people in Balochistan's vulnerable districts are living in makeshift homes? I couldn't shake the irony while we claim to be securing the nation, the real threat is imploding from within. The article pulls no punches, showing how extractive institutions, elite capture, and regional inequality are hollowing out the very core of our national security.

What really got under my skin was how little has changed despite two decades of fighting militancy. We've been beating the same drum, a kinetic operation without addressing the root causes like lack of healthcare, education, political rights, or even basic dignity for millions. And then we act surprised when insurgency persists. The article lays it out plain and simple: Pakistan's national security strategy is stuck in the past. We're guarding the walls while the foundation is cracking. If we don't reboot our priorities, this powder keg of social injustice, economic stagnation, and population explosion is going to blow. Being a nuclear state might protect us from foreign enemies, but it won't save us from our own collapse.

#### **Overview:**

The article critically explores the need to redefine Pakistan's national security paradigm by shifting the focus from traditional military defense to socioeconomic development. It highlights how internal Weaknesses such as poverty, regional disparities, and failed human development pose a more imminent threat than any foreign power. Through hard facts and examples, it argues that the over-reliance on kinetic force in insurgency-hit areas like Balochistan and former FATA has failed because the root causes remain unaddressed. It calls for a shift toward inclusive governance, equitable development, and investment in health, education, and political rights.

#### **NOTES:**

The article provides in depth analysis of Pakistan's outdated national security approach, emphasizing that internal threats like poverty, illiteracy, regional disparities, and poor public service delivery are far more dangerous than any



external enemy. It highlights how extractive institutions and elite capture have led to mass disenfranchisement, especially in areas like Balochistan and former FATA, where over-reliance on military operations has done little to address the grievances of the local population. Despite fighting militancy for decades, the root causes such as lack of education, healthcare, jobs, and political inclusion remain untouched. The article underlines the urgent need to reallocate resources from defense to human development, pointing to alarming statistics such as 23 million out-of-school children, 45% of the population living below the poverty line, and only 1% of GDP spent on health and education. It calls for a reimagined security paradigm that includes social justice, inclusive governance, and economic equity as cornerstones of long-term national stability.

#### **CSS Syllabus Relevance:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Regional inequalities, insurgency in Balochistan and KP, population explosion, national integration
- Governance & Public Administration: Elite capture, extractive vs. inclusive institutions, public service delivery
- Current Affairs: Human Development Index, education crisis, economic vulnerabilities
- Essay Paper: Redefining national security, social justice as state stability, population and governance crisis

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

This article says that while Pakistan has a strong army, it is still a weak country because most of its people are poor, uneducated, and don't even have clean water or toilets. For example, in Balochistan, many people live in tents and kids walk over 30 kilometers to reach a clinic. The government keeps using force to control these areas instead of giving people schools, jobs, and rights. Just like fixing a broken roof won't help if the walls are collapsing, focusing only on defense won't help if our people are suffering. The article says we must fix education, health, and the economy to really make Pakistan strong.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Pakistan ranks 168th out of 193 on the UN Human Development Index
- Over 23 million children are out of school
- Around 45% of the population lives below the poverty line
- 65% in Balochistan's vulnerable districts live in makeshift homes
- Only 1% of GDP is spent on education and health combined
- Population grows at 2.5% annually, projected to hit 320 million by 2040

To sum up, it is the alarming piece of writing that forces us to ask the hard questions about where we're headed as a nation. If we continue pouring all our resources into defense while ignoring the rot in our economy, education, and institutions, we're basically setting the stage for our own downfall. A nuclear arsenal won't protect a starving, angry, and disenfranchised population. It's time to change gears and think of national security not just in terms of borders and bombs but in terms of dignity, justice, and opportunity for every citizen. That's the only way to prevent a slow-motion collapse.

## **PEACE AND JUSTICE AUTHOR: MOHAMMAD ALI BABAKHEL**

#### **Summary:**

The article suggests how the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 16 like Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions is both a noble ideal and a thorny challenge in today's fractured world. It underlines how violence and insecurity choke the life out of economic growth and tear at the fabric of peace. Examples from Rwanda's community courts to South Korea's legal aid networks show how nations have rolled up their sleeves to tackle the justice gap, proving that ingenuity and grassroots engagement can bridge divides. Yet, for countries like Pakistan, still grappling with

terrorism, poor rule-of-law rankings, and fragile governance, the gap between policy and practice remains stubbornly wide. Federal commitments, internal security policies, and the revised National Action Plan may look promising on paper, but without provincial buy-in and coordinated action, they risk gathering dust rather than delivering change.

The writer drives home the message that peace and justice aren't just feel-good slogans but investments in sustainable development. Turning lofty UN commitments into on-the-ground reality demands tailored strategies that acknowledge local contexts, especially in rural and marginalized communities. The path forward lies in cutting red tape, fighting corruption with transparency, empowering women and youth in governance, and tapping into the digital revolution for accountability. The article makes it clear that building strong institutions is not a luxury for developing nations, it is the very foundation on which lasting peace and prosperity stand.

### **Overview:**

The article explores the global and local dimensions of implementing SDG 16, highlighting success stories worldwide while candidly examining Pakistan's lagging performance in peace, justice, and governance. It stresses the need for coordinated action across federal and provincial levels, customized approaches for vulnerable communities, and a shift in perception that views justice reforms as core to development rather than an optional extra.

### **NOTES:**

The article underscores the significance of SDG 16, the peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions as a core pillar for global stability and sustainable development. It highlights how violence and insecurity undermine peace and economic growth, calling for coordinated global and national action. Key targets under SDG 16 include reducing violence, strengthening judicial systems, fighting corruption, ensuring access to justice, promoting inclusive governance, and protecting human rights through legal frameworks. International examples, such as Rwanda's community courts, South Korea's legal aid programs and Argentina's access-to-justice centres demonstrate how tailored approaches can yield tangible results. In Pakistan's context, the National Action Plan, National Internal Security Policies, and the 2024 National PVE Policy reflect policy-level commitments, but weak provincial implementation and poor rankings in terrorism impact, rule of law, and human development reveal deep structural gaps. The article stresses the need for locally adapted strategies, rural justice accessibility, transparency via digital tools, anti-corruption bodies, and youth and women's engagement in governance to achieve lasting peace and institutional strength.

### **Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Pakistan Affairs: National Action Plan, internal security policies, governance reforms
- International Relations: UN Sustainable Development Goals, peacebuilding, global cooperation
- Governance and Public Administration: institutional strengthening, anti-corruption measures, legal reforms
- Current Affairs: Pakistan's global rankings and peace-related challenges

### **Notes for beginners:**

SDG 16 is part of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals aimed at making the world safer, fairer, and more prosperous by 2030. It focuses on reducing violence, ensuring justice for all, and building strong institutions like police, courts, and anti-corruption bodies. For example, Rwanda used community courts to handle genocide crimes, and South Korea set up legal aid services for millions of people. Pakistan has policies like the National Action Plan and the National Internal Security Policy, but struggles persist. In 2025 it ranked 2nd worst in terrorism impact, 129th in rule of law, and 168th in human development. This shows why reforms must reach every corner especially rural areas where courts and police are far away.

### **Facts and figures:**

- UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted: 2015, target year: 2030

- SDG 16 includes: 12 targets and 23 indicators
- Pakistan's Global Terrorism Index 2025 ranking: 2nd most impacted country
- Rule of Law Index ranking: 129th
- Human Development Index ranking: 168th
- Rwanda's Gacaca community courts addressed post-genocide justice
- Argentina established 90 access-to-justice centres
- South Korea and Sierra Leone legal aid programs assisted millions of cases
- Georgia's juvenile justice reforms reduced child incarceration and recidivism rates

To sum up, the article tells us that peace, justice, and strong institutions are not decorative words in a UN document but essential pillars for sustainable growth. The choice before nations especially Pakistan is stark, either treat justice reform as an afterthought and remain mired in instability or embrace it as the foundation of a brighter, more secure future.

#### **Difficult words and meanings:**

- Prosperity – state of being successful or flourishing; synonyms: wealth, success; antonyms: poverty, failure
- Insecurity – lack of safety or stability; synonyms: instability, uncertainty; antonyms: security, stability
- Recidivism – repeated criminal behavior; synonyms: relapse, backsliding; antonyms: reform, improvement
- Transparency – openness in governance; synonyms: clarity, accountability; antonyms: secrecy, corruption
- Inclination – a tendency or preference; synonyms: disposition, leaning; antonyms: aversion, disinterest
- Incarceration – imprisonment; synonyms: confinement, detention; antonyms: freedom, liberation

## **BUILDING PEACE IN SOUTH ASIA    AUTHOR: ASHRAF JEHANGIR QAZI**

#### **Summary:**

The article highlights South Asia's fractured journey toward peace, tracing the dashed hopes of SAARC's regional cooperation dream. Four decades on, political rivalries, India's hegemonic tendencies, and the Kashmir dispute have turned that dream into a mirage. While ASEAN soared, SAARC stumbled, bogged down by mistrust, limited trade, and institutional weakness. The rise of China as a military, economic, and strategic player has thrown India off balance, opening new possibilities for smaller states but also heightening geopolitical tensions. The author argues that peace will remain a pipe dream as long as India clings to dominance rather than cooperation, and as long as regional politics are entangled with US-China rivalry.

From Pakistan's perspective, the road to regional credibility runs through better governance, stronger democracy, human rights protections, and a clear-eyed foreign policy. Balancing between the US and China is portrayed as a dangerous illusion, especially in a post-Operation Sindoor landscape where Washington views Pakistan through the prism of its China-containment strategy. The author urges Pakistan to mend fences with India where possible, revive SAARC's spirit, and craft a robust "Rest of South Asia" policy to counterbalance Indian dominance. Only through wise diplomacy, domestic reform, and consistent strategic alignment can Pakistan hope to play a leading role in shaping a peaceful and prosperous South Asia.

#### **Overview:**

This article gives vision into regional diplomacy, SAARC's structural failure, China's strategic inroads and the US-China rivalry's impact on South Asia. It also gives a nuanced view of Pakistan's foreign policy dilemmas, governance deficits, and strategic priorities.

**NOTES:**

The article is a comparison between SAARC and ASEAN. It shows how the former has failed to achieve meaningful regional cooperation despite having similar objectives. India's hegemonic approach and unresolved disputes particularly over Kashmir have discouraged smaller South Asian states from genuine collaboration. Meanwhile, China's strategic footprint through the Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC, and BRICS offers alternative development opportunities, challenging India's dominance. The US-Indo-Pacific strategy directly clashes with China's integration vision, creating a complex geopolitical environment for the region. For Pakistan, improving governance, safeguarding human rights, and ensuring democratic strength are just as critical as military capabilities for earning regional credibility. The article also proposes that a well-structured "Rest of South Asia" policy could act as a strategic counterbalance to Indian influence, helping to revive cooperation in the region.

**Related CSS syllabus topics:**

- International Relations: Regional Cooperation and Conflicts
- Current Affairs: South Asian Politics, US-China Rivalry
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign Policy, Governance, SAARC's Role
- Political Science: Hegemony vs Cooperation in International Politics

**Notes for Beginners:**

SAARC, formed as South Asia's version of ASEAN, has been largely unsuccessful due to deep-rooted political conflicts among its members, especially between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Unlike ASEAN countries that resolved disputes to promote trade and economic integration, SAARC has remained stagnant, with intra-regional trade still minimal. China's involvement through CPEC has given smaller South Asian nations more leverage, much like a skilled new player joining a struggling sports team to boost performance. However, Pakistan's attempts to balance relations between the US and China are risky, similar to trying to serve two rival masters, eventually one will question your loyalty.

**Facts and figures:**

- SAARC founded: 1985, with 8 members
- ASEAN's economic success contrasts with SAARC's low intra-regional trade (less than 5%)
- China's Belt and Road Initiative spans 150+ countries, including South Asian states
- Pakistan's governance rankings among the lowest globally
- Operation Sindoor reshaped regional perceptions of India-Pakistan dynamics

To sum up, the article reminds us that military muscle alone won't win friends or influence nations — sound governance, principled diplomacy, and an unwavering vision for regional cooperation are the true game changers. In the chessboard of South Asia, those who master both internal stability and external strategy will call the shots, while others will be left moving pawns in someone else's game.

**PAK-INDIA STALEMATE MUST END AUTHOR: ASIF DURRANI****Summary:**

The article shows the fragile state of India-Pakistan relations following a brief but intense four-day war, which ended through US mediation despite Indian attempts to downplay Washington's role. While Pakistan demonstrated air superiority and diplomatic resilience, India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and hints at resuming hostilities have left both nations standing on a powder keg. A widening generational gap, inflamed by toxic narratives and amplified by social media, has deepened mistrust, pushing both nuclear powers into a dangerous cycle of one-upmanship. The article warns that without a credible mechanism for dialogue, the two sides risk letting mutual hatred spiral into irreversible catastrophe.



Moving forward, the writer urges practical steps to thaw the ice, from reviving Track II diplomacy and restoring high-level contacts to reinitiating trade and religious tourism. Addressing terrorism grievances and exploring a trilateral dialogue with China could break the deadlock, provided both sides abandon hegemonic pretensions. For India, the policy of ignoring Pakistan has backfired, as seen in the recent conflict and global sympathy for Islamabad's transparent approach. The article closes with a call for pragmatism over brinkmanship, stressing that repeated failed tactics will only tighten the noose on regional stability, while genuine détente could offer a way out of the deadlock.

**Overview:**

This article examines the aftermath of a short India–Pakistan war, the role of US mediation, and the entrenched mistrust fueled by politics, media, and generational disconnection. It blends historical context with contemporary challenges, offering policy proposals for conflict resolution and peace-building in South Asia.

**NOTES:**

The article highlights the tense state of India–Pakistan relations after a brief but intense four-day War which ended due to US mediation despite India's attempts to minimize Washington's role. Pakistan showcased military readiness and diplomatic composure, while India escalated tensions by suspending the Indus Waters Treaty and signaling possible renewed hostilities. A growing generational divide fueled by hostile narratives and amplified through social media has deepened mistrust between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. The writer warns that without a credible dialogue framework, the rivalry could spiral into an irreversible crisis. Suggested measures include reviving Track II diplomacy, restoring high-level contact, resuming trade and religious tourism, addressing terrorism-related concerns, and exploring trilateral discussions with China. The article stresses that India's policy of ignoring Pakistan has proven ineffective, and only pragmatic engagement can prevent future conflicts.

**Related CSS Subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Indo–Pak tensions, US mediation, and regional diplomacy.
- International Relations: Multipolarity in conflict mediation and trilateral mechanisms.
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy priorities, water disputes, and Track II diplomacy.
- Political Science: Conflict resolution strategies, diplomacy, and statecraft.

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article talks about how India and Pakistan had a short war that ended because the US stepped in. Pakistan showed it could defend itself, but tensions are still high especially after India stopped some water flows. People in both countries especially the younger generation are growing apart and believing negative stories about each other. The writer suggests ways to fix this, like restarting talks, trading goods, allowing religious visits, and solving terrorism issues. He even suggests that Pakistan, India, and China should sit together to sort problems. The main point is that both sides should talk, not fight, because wars between them could harm millions.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Duration of conflict: 4 days
- Mediation: United States played a decisive role
- Indus Waters Treaty: Signed in 1960, suspended by India post-conflict
- Both nations: Nuclear-armed with history of multiple wars since 1947
- Proposed initiatives: Track II diplomacy, trade resumption, religious tourism, trilateral dialogue with China

To wrap up, the article is a reminder that Indo–Pak relations are a high-stakes game where the cost of miscalculation is catastrophic. While political posturing and hardened narratives fuel the fire, history and geography dictate that dialogue, not disengagement is the only path toward lasting peace.

## FRAYED RELATIONS

**AUTHOR: MALEEHA LODHI**

### Summary:

This article unpacks the astonishing speed with which the once-celebrated US–India “mega-partnership” has crumbled, plunging into a diplomatic freefall in less than half a year. What began with hugs and glowing speeches between Donald Trump and Narendra Modi quickly turned sour when Trump, laser-focused on trade rather than strategic camaraderie, slammed India’s high tariffs, slapped on punishing 25% to 50% levies, and targeted New Delhi’s oil imports from Russia. His transactional style left no room for sentimental alliances; instead, he used tariffs as weapons, tied them to geopolitical bargaining, and lumped India in with “dead economies” alongside Russia. Modi’s government, blindsided by misplaced faith in India’s strategic importance to Washington, underestimated the fallout of tariff disputes, failed to read Trump’s ego-driven politics, and mismanaged sensitive moments like denying his role in mediating the India–Pakistan ceasefire. An act that bruised his pride and hardened his stance. As the crisis deepened, New Delhi found itself boxed in by a no-win choice: concede on tariffs and face domestic political humiliation or resist and risk lasting economic and diplomatic damage. Trump’s indifference to India’s counterweight role against China further exposed New Delhi’s miscalculations, especially as Washington courted Beijing and Russia. India’s nationalist pushback, refusing to halt Russian oil purchases, vowing to protect farmers, and even warming up to China may play well at home, but it doesn’t answer the question of how to steady a partnership now riddled with mistrust. For the foreseeable future, the “strategic alignment” stands on shaky ground, with New Delhi scrambling for a playbook that can match Trump’s unpredictable, hardball diplomacy.

### Overview:

The article is a post-mortem on the rapid deterioration US–India ties under Trump’s second term, spotlighting three critical Indian miscalculations: overestimating its strategic immunity from trade disputes, antagonizing Trump over the Pakistan ceasefire narrative, and failing to adapt to his fluid, transactional geopolitics. The fallout is not just about tariffs, it’s about pride, misread intentions and a shifting world order where yesterday’s allies can become today’s bargaining chips.

### NOTES:

The article details the sharp and rapid breakdown of US–India relations during Trump’s presidency, moving from warmth and strategic optimism to trade-driven confrontation in less than six months. Initially marked by strong public camaraderie between Trump and Modi, ties soured when Trump, prioritizing economic interests over alliances, imposed steep tariffs of 25% to 50% on Indian goods and criticized India’s purchase of Russian oil. Modi’s government miscalculated by assuming India’s strategic role against China would shield it from such disputes and further strained relations by denying Trump’s claim of mediating the India–Pakistan ceasefire, which offended his ego. The crisis forced India into a lose-lose decision, concede on tariffs and risk domestic political backlash or resist and face long-term economic and diplomatic harm. Meanwhile, Trump’s shifting approach toward China and Russia, and his disregard for India’s balancing role, exposed New Delhi’s strategic vulnerabilities. India responded with nationalist defiance, continuing Russian oil imports, promising to protect farmers, and exploring improved ties with China, but these moves failed to address the erosion of trust. The relationship now faces deep uncertainty, with both sides struggling to find a stable basis for cooperation amid Trump’s unpredictable diplomacy.

### Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subject:

- Current Affairs: US–India relations, trade wars, strategic diplomacy
- International Relations: shifting alliances, transactional foreign policy
- Political Science: leadership miscalculations, state behavior under realism
- Pakistan Affairs: indirect benefits and risks to Pakistan from US–India friction
- Essay: topics on trade diplomacy, power shifts, and multipolarity

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains how relations between India and the US quickly turned from friendly to tense. At first, both leaders praised each other, but Trump soon complained about India's high trade taxes and punished it with extra tariffs. He also didn't like India buying oil from Russia. India thought its importance in US strategy against China would protect it from such disputes, but it was wrong. Things got worse when India denied Trump's role in stopping a fight with Pakistan, which hurt his pride. Now India is stuck. If it agrees to lower tariffs, it looks weak at home; if it refuses, relations with the US might suffer for a long time.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Conflict timeline: deterioration in under six months
- Initial tariffs: 25% on Indian imports
- Increased penalty tariffs: up to 50%
- Oil imports: over one-third of India's crude from Russia
- Ceasefire mediation mentions: Trump claimed credit over 24 times

To sum up, this article shows how overconfidence, misreading a leader's priorities, and ignoring shifting power currents can unravel even the most high-profile partnerships. In the high-stakes game of global politics, handshakes may open doors, but tariffs can slam them shut twice as fast.

**Difficult Words and Meaning:**

- Hubris – excessive pride or self-confidence (Syn: arrogance | Ant: humility)
- Obdurate – stubbornly refusing to change opinion (Syn: inflexible | Ant: compliant)
- Transactional – based on practical exchanges, not ideals (Syn: pragmatic | Ant: idealistic)
- Invective – insulting or abusive language (Syn: abuse | Ant: praise)
- Quandary – state of uncertainty or dilemma (Syn: predicament | Ant: certainty)

## **KILLING THE MESSENGERS AUTHOR: ZAHID HUSSAIN**

**Summary:**

The article highlights Gaza's ongoing tragedy through the lens of Anas al-Sharif's final words before he and three fellow journalists were killed in an Israeli strike. It chronicles his unwavering courage in reporting atrocities such as starvation, bombardment, and mass killings despite knowing he was on Israel's hit list. Statistics from the Committee to Protect Journalists show Gaza has become the deadliest place for journalists in modern history, surpassing casualties in multiple past wars combined. The article condemns Israel's systematic silencing of independent voices, its blockade on aid, and the tacit backing from Western powers, particularly the United States, whose repeated UN vetoes have shielded Israel from accountability. It also underscores the deafening silence of Arab nations, whose passivity amounts to complicity in the face of relentless civilian suffering.

The narrative then shifts to Israel's far-right government's plan to permanently occupy Gaza, a move the UN warns will dangerously escalate an already catastrophic situation. While some Western allies have condemned the plan as a violation of international humanitarian law, Washington remains silent, with speculation about Trump's tacit approval and even a bizarre Nobel Peace Prize nomination from Netanyahu. The article closes by questioning whether the world will act decisively to end the genocide, or whether the voices of journalists like al-Sharif will vanish into the fog of political convenience and global apathy.

**Overview:** This article is a powerful blend of investigative reporting, political critique, and human tragedy. It interweaves first-hand testimonies, historical parallels, and data to show how Gaza's conflict is not just a military campaign but a systematic erasure of truth and humanity.

**NOTES:**

The article focuses on the killing of Palestinian journalist Anas al-Sharif in an Israeli airstrike, highlighting his determination to report on Gaza's humanitarian crisis despite threats to his life. It details Israel's military actions such as indiscriminate bombings, blockade of food and aid, and systematic targeting of journalists while noting the unprecedented death toll among media workers, making Gaza the deadliest conflict zone for journalists in modern history. The article condemns the US for shielding Israel at the UN through repeated vetoes, criticises Arab states for their silence, and warns about Israel's far-right government's plan to permanently occupy Gaza, which the UN and several countries deem illegal. It raises concerns about double standards in the global order and questions whether the international community will act to halt the genocide or allow political convenience to overshadow justice.

**Relevant to the CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Ongoing Gaza conflict and humanitarian crises
- International Relations: Role of UN, US foreign policy, multipolar responses to conflict
- Political Science: State sovereignty, international law, war ethics
- Journalism and Mass Communication (optional): Press freedom in war zones
- Essay: Human rights violations, genocide, and moral responsibility of nations

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article tells the story of Anas al-Sharif, a journalist in Gaza who continued reporting the truth despite life-threatening danger. He exposed how Israel's military was not only bombing civilians but also blocking food and aid, leaving millions starving. Over 186 journalists have been killed in Gaza since October 2023, making it the deadliest place for reporters in recent history. Israel plans to take over Gaza permanently, which the UN and some countries say is against international law. However, the US has not opposed this plan, and some leaders, like Trump, appear to support it. Arab countries have mostly stayed silent, even as thousands of civilians, including children, are being killed.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Journalists killed in Gaza since Oct 2023: Over 186 (Committee to Protect Journalists)
- Status: Deadliest war for journalists in recorded history
- US role: Multiple UN Security Council vetoes blocking resolutions critical of Israel
- Israeli plan: Permanent occupation of Gaza announced by far-right government
- UN position: Declared such occupation a violation of international humanitarian law
- Arab response: Largely muted or passive despite ongoing civilian casualties

To wrap up, this is more than a story about a journalist's death; it's a searing indictment of a global order where truth is collateral damage and human life is bartered for political gain. The article is both a memorial and a call to conscience, urging readers to see Gaza not as a distant warzone but as the frontline in the battle for humanity's moral compass.

**WAR ON TRUTH****AUTHOR MALEEHA LODHI****Summary:**

Israel's brutal campaign in Gaza has not only unleashed widespread destruction but also turned into a war on truth. The deliberate targeting of journalists, including the killing of Al Jazeera's Anas al-Sharif, speaks volumes about Israel's intent to silence voices that shed light on its war crimes and man-made famine. With 242 journalists killed in two years, the UN has called it the deadliest conflict for the press in history. Yet, despite bans on international media, local reporters have made this genocide one of the most documented in modern times. Israel justifies its acts



by labelling journalists as militants, a ploy exposed by credible sources, while international outrage from the UN, human rights bodies and worldwide protests paints Israel into a corner. But US backing keeps Tel Aviv's hands untied, enabling it to bulldoze international law while the cries of starving children echo louder than ever across screens worldwide.

At the political front, Netanyahu has doubled down on his plan to seize Gaza City, a move denounced globally but greenlit by Washington. The tide of Western opinion is shifting, with European nations and Australia moving towards recognition of a Palestinian state—147 UN members already acknowledge Palestine. Still, the US stance, hardened under Trump, blocks consensus and emboldens Israel's expansionist dream of "Greater Israel." Even the talk of a ceasefire has proven hollow as American military, diplomatic, and financial support flows steadily to Tel Aviv. The irony is stark that Israel stands globally isolated yet invincible because of unwavering US cover. The article shows not only the destruction of Gaza but also the collapse of moral responsibility on the world stage, where outrage remains high but meaningful pressure is absent.

#### **Overview:**

The article highlights Israel's systematic war on truth by targeting journalists, the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the global divide over recognition of Palestine. It underscores the complicity of US policy, which enables Israel to continue defying international law and carrying out its genocidal war.

#### **NOTES:**

The article portrays Israel's war in Gaza as both a military and an information Assault, where deliberate targeting of journalists, including the killing of Al Jazeera's Anas al-Sharif reflects a broader attempt to silence reporting on atrocities and famine. With 242 journalists killed in two years, the UN has called it the deadliest conflict for the press, yet local reporters have made this one of the most documented genocides in history. Despite global outrage and condemnation by the UN, human rights organisations, and widespread protests, Israel continues with impunity, shielded by unwavering US support. Netanyahu's plan to capture Gaza City has been condemned worldwide, yet Washington's backing emboldens Israel while 147 UN member states already recognise Palestine and more Western nations are moving towards recognition. Still, American policy under Trump blocks consensus, supports Israel's vision of "Greater Israel," and weakens global accountability. The article highlights how humanitarian catastrophe, famine, and war crimes have turned Gaza into a symbol of moral failure at the international level.

#### **Related CSS Syllabus/Subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Global conflicts, humanitarian crises, US foreign policy.
- International Relations: Role of UN, Security Council, multipolar diplomacy.
- Political Science: State sovereignty vs humanitarian intervention.
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic stance on Palestine.
- Essay Paper: Topics on war crimes, international law, global silence, and recognition of Palestine.

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

This article explains that Israel is not only attacking Gaza militarily but also trying to stop the world from knowing the truth by targeting journalists. In just two years, 242 reporters have been killed including well-known figures like Anas al-Sharif, making this the deadliest conflict for journalists. Even though global organisations and the UN call this a war crime, Israel keeps acting freely because it has strong support from the United States. Many countries, including 147 UN members, already recognise Palestine as a state, and more are now moving in that direction due to the humanitarian crisis and famine in Gaza. However, the US stands firmly with Israel, which allows it to ignore global pressure. In short, the article shows that while the world condemns what is happening, little real action has been taken to stop the suffering of Palestinians.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- 242 journalists killed in Gaza in two years (UN report).

- 4 Al Jazeera journalists, including Anas al-Sharif, killed in one attack.
- 147 of 193 UN member states recognise Palestine.
- Over 1,400 Palestinians killed while seeking food at Israeli-controlled aid points.

To sum up, the article is a indictment of Israel's war on both people and truth, exposing the silence of global powers and the complicity of the US. It shows how Gaza has become not only a humanitarian tragedy but also a test of international morality, where outrage is abundant but effective action remains absent.

#### **Difficult Words with Meanings:**

- Onslaught: Fierce attack (Synonyms: assault, offensive; Antonyms: defense, retreat)
- Genocidal: Relating to the mass killing of a people (Syn: extermination; Ant: protection)
- Impunity: Exemption from punishment (Syn: immunity; Ant: liability)
- Disingenuous: Lacking sincerity (Syn: deceitful; Ant: honest)
- Extrajudicial: Outside legal authority (Syn: unlawful; Ant: lawful)
- Calamity: Great disaster (Syn: catastrophe; Ant: blessing)

## **COUNTERTERRORISM SYNERGY AUTHOR: MUHAMMAD AMIR RANA**

### **Summary:**

The article shows the ebb and flow in Pakistan-US counterterrorism relations, showing how mistrust once dug a gulf but recent cooperation has breathed new life into the dialogue. Pakistan's quiet yet calculated support in countering IS-K not only rebuilt American confidence but also opened doors for training, border security upgrades and advanced investigative tools. By designating groups like the Resistance Front and the Majeed Brigade as terrorist outfits, Washington sought to strike a balance between Indian and Pakistani concerns, signalling that its decisions were grounded in internal security assessments rather than diplomatic favoritism. Yet this new-found synergy has not come cheap for Islamabad, which has had to recalibrate its Afghanistan policy, downgrade ties with the Taliban and tread carefully between Beijing and Washington.

At the heart of the matter lies a tug-of-war between short-term tactical wins and the pressing need for a long-term strategy. While Pakistan celebrates renewed American praise, including Gen Kurilla's endorsement of it as a "phenomenal partner," the article warns against resting on laurels. Afghanistan remains a thorn in Pakistan's security fabric, and India's eventual recalibration could pose new challenges. Counterterrorism cooperation may have steadied the ship for now, but without strategic foresight Pakistan risks being caught off guard once the tide turns.

### **Overview:**

This article highlights that counterterrorism dialogue between Pakistan and the US is both a strategic lever and a delicate balancing act, demanding foresight and consistency rather than reactive policymaking.

### **NOTES:**

The article highlights how Pakistan and the US have revived their counterterrorism cooperation after years of mistrust, mainly rooted in Afghanistan-related disagreements and Pakistan's tilt toward China. Recent steps, such as Pakistan's effective actions against IS-K and the US designating groups like the Resistance Front and the Majeed Brigade as terrorist outfits, signaled renewed trust and balance in the relationship. This cooperation has yielded tangible benefits for Pakistan, including training for over 300 police officers, technological assistance, and improved border security measures. However, it has also come at a cost with Islamabad recalibrating its Afghanistan policy, distancing itself from the Taliban, and carefully managing ties with both Washington and Beijing. The article cautions that while short-term gains appear promising, Pakistan risks future setbacks if it continues to prioritize tactical victories over long-term strategic planning, especially given Afghanistan's volatile dynamics and India's eventual policy recalibration.

**Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- International Relations: Pak-US relations, global security cooperation
- Current Affairs: Counterterrorism efforts, regional geopolitics
- Pakistan Affairs: Internal security, Afghanistan's role in Pakistan's stability
- Governance and Public Policy: Institutional reforms in CT frameworks
- Essay Paper: Terrorism, foreign policy, strategic cooperation

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that Pakistan and the US are working together again against terrorism. For example, the US trained 300 Pakistani police officers and supported border security to fight militants. Pakistan helped America by targeting IS-K and handing over a terrorist. In return, America now recognises Pakistan's sacrifices and is also considering technology-sharing to deal with threats like drones.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Over 300 Pakistani police officers and frontline responders trained with US support.
- US designated the Majeed Brigade and the Resistance Front as terrorist groups in 2025.
- Centcom chief Gen Michael Kurilla praised Pakistan as a "phenomenal partner in counterterrorism."
- President Donald Trump acknowledged Pakistan's role in handing over an IS-K terrorist.
- US support included development of border security infrastructure and enhanced investigative tools.
- Pakistan cancelled Afghan FM Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit under US advice due to Taliban-Russia ties.

To wrap up, the article is a reminder that while Pakistan may bask in short-term gains from US recognition, the road ahead demands clarity of vision and steadiness of purpose. Counterterrorism cooperation has indeed offered a breather, but without long-term strategic depth, Pakistan risks being a pawn in shifting global rivalries rather than a player shaping its own destiny.

**Difficult Words with Meanings:**

- Synergy: Combined power of groups working together. Synonym: cooperation. Antonym: discord.
- Designation: Officially assigning a status. Synonym: classification. Antonym: neglect.
- Assertiveness: Confidence in stating one's position. Synonym: firmness. Antonym: hesitation.
- Pragmatic: Focused on practical outcomes. Synonym: realistic. Antonym: idealistic.
- Calibration: Adjustment for balance. Synonym: alignment. Antonym: misbalance.

**NEW PROVINCES?****AUTHOR: AHMED BILAL MEHBOOB****Summary:**

The article cuts to the chase by questioning whether carving out new provinces in Pakistan is the silver bullet for better governance or merely a costly illusion. It shows recent chatter about turning 32 divisions into provinces or reverting to the 12 divisions of early West Pakistan, showing how such grandiose proposals are often floated as quick fixes. While proponents paint a rosy picture of efficiency and devolution, the writer warns that these ideas may be driven more by vested interests than genuine public demand. Drawing comparisons with India's language-driven statehood movements, the piece points out that Pakistan lacks such burning impulses today, and unlike India's union model, Pakistan's federation requires near-impossible constitutional majorities to alter provincial boundaries. At a time when terrorism, economic fragility, and geopolitical storms already keep the country on a knife-edge, plunging into a divisive province debate risks opening a Pandora's box.

The article suggests that creating new provinces is not just politically cumbersome but also economically reckless, as it would saddle the nation with hefty bills for new assemblies, governors, cabinets, and courts. Instead of barking up the wrong tree, he urges that Pakistan should bite the bullet and empower local governments through

constitutional guarantees, funding, and continuity, just as India did decades after independence. Large provinces are not inherently problematic but what cripples governance is the failure to devolve power down to the grassroots. Therefore the way forward is not to split provinces but to strengthen municipalities and councils, ensuring governance that is responsive, inclusive, and cost-effective.

**Overview:**

The article stresses that dividing provinces is a distraction; true devolution lies in giving teeth to local governments. It compares Pakistan's rigid constitutional structure with India's more flexible model and concludes that Pakistan must resist quick-fix solutions and opt for meaningful reforms at the grassroots.

**NOTES:**

The article carefully examines the ongoing debate over creating new provinces in Pakistan, highlighting that while proposals to transform the existing 32 divisions into provinces or revert to the original 12 divisions sound promising, they are neither timely nor practical. The author underlines that Pakistan is grappling with terrorism, economic instability and volatile geopolitics, making the pursuit of new provinces a misplaced priority. Comparisons with India's state reorganisation show pivotal differences, India's states were created after fierce language-based movements, while Pakistan lacks such urgent impulses today. Moreover, Pakistan's federal structure makes boundary changes constitutionally cumbersome, requiring two-thirds majorities both at the provincial and national levels. Beyond legal hurdles the idea carries a heavy economic burden as new provinces would demand separate assemblies, cabinets, governors, and high courts, straining already scarce resources. Instead, the article argues for strengthening local governments, backed by constitutional guarantees and sustainable funding. Large provinces are not inherently flawed; what hinders Pakistan is the lack of effective devolution to the grassroots level. Empowering municipalities and councils, as in the UK or through India's constitutional reforms for local governments, is presented as the real pathway to inclusive and efficient governance.

**Related CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Federalism, provincial autonomy, constitutional reforms
- Current Affairs: Governance, decentralisation, policy debates
- Governance and Public Policy: Local government systems, devolution
- Essay Paper: Good governance, democracy, institutional reforms

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that making more provinces sounds good but may not really solve Pakistan's problems. For example, if 12 provinces were created, each would need a separate assembly, cabinet and court which would cost billions. Instead, the better option is to make local governments strong. For instance, in the UK which is not even a federation, local governments still deliver good governance because they have proper powers and funds. This shows Pakistan should focus on empowering local councils instead of creating new provinces.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Proposals include turning 32 divisions into provinces or reverting to 12 divisions.
- India increased its states from 17 to 28, starting with the States Reorganisation Act of 1956.
- The 1956 Act created 14 states and 3 union territories.
- Further 14 states were created in India between 1956 and the present.
- A two-thirds majority is required in provincial assemblies and both Houses of Parliament to alter boundaries in Pakistan.

To wrap up, the article shows that while the debate may stir emotions, the real key to good governance lies not in redrawing maps but in empowering local governments. At the end of the day, Pakistan must stop chasing shortcuts and face the music by reforming governance at the grassroots.

**Difficult Words and Meanings:**



- Extravagance: Wasteful spending. Synonym: profligacy. Antonym: frugality
- Contentious: Likely to cause dispute. Synonym: controversial. Antonym: agreeable
- Emotive: Appealing to emotions. Synonym: sentimental. Antonym: rational
- Pragmatic: Based on practical considerations. Synonym: realistic. Antonym: idealistic
- Reorganisation: Rearrangement for efficiency. Synonym: restructuring. Antonym: disorder

## THE ETERNAL WAIT FOR GODOT

**AUTHOR: SAKIB SHERANI**

### Summary:

Pakistan at 78 stands at a crossroads, weighed down by its own contradictions. The country was born with lofty promises, yet those promises have slowly slipped through our fingers like sand in a clenched fist. From grand projects like SEATO, CENTO, and CPEC to the much-hyped SIFC, every so-called game-changer turned out to be a paper tiger, serving elites rather than the common man. Instead of building a society where opportunity knocks for all, Pakistan has been rigged into a playground for the privileged few. Laws, budgets, and institutions have been bent out of shape, not to foster growth but to line the pockets of those at the top, while the ordinary citizen keeps sinking deeper into poverty, joblessness, and state repression.

The article highlights institutionalised extraction: electricity companies raking in Rs8.3 trillion through sweetheart deals, sugar barons crushing cotton and exports to pocket billions, and elites siphoning off \$10 billion annually into offshore havens. While the ruling class eats high on the hog with tax breaks, land grants, and concessions worth \$17 billion, ordinary Pakistanis are left standing in endless queues, crushed by inflation and broken promises. This isn't bad luck or coincidence, it is by design. Unless Pakistan tears down this system of plunder and resets its compass toward inclusive development, no hidden copper, no buried gold, and no miracle policy will save it from sinking further into the quicksand of underdevelopment.

### Overview:

The article is a stinging analysis of Pakistan's political economy. It highlights how the state has been set up not for growth but for elite capture. It shows with facts and figures how billions have been drained through IPPs, sugar cartels, land allocations, and capital flight. The writer argues that Pakistan's constitution, governance, and institutions are hollow shells—existing in form but failing in function. At its core, the article exposes the deliberate design of a system that widens inequality and blocks national development.

### NOTES:

The article suggests how Pakistan, even at 78 years remains trapped in a cycle of elite capture and institutionalized exploitation. It shows that instead of being engines of progress, projects like SEATO, CENTO, CPEC and now SIFC turned into hollow promises serving ruling groups rather than the public. The state has been designed to benefit a narrow class through sweetheart deals, tax breaks, and land grants, while the masses are left to grapple with poverty, inflation, and joblessness. Power producers pocketed trillions, sugar barons destroyed cotton and exports to secure their own profits, and billions are drained annually through capital flight. The ordinary citizen stands in queues, paying the cost of this plunder. The article's core message is clear: Pakistan's underdevelopment is not accidental but by design, and unless this exploitative order is dismantled, no amount of hidden minerals, foreign aid, or short-term policies will rescue the country.

### Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Connects directly with themes of governance failures, elite capture, and post-independence economic challenges.
- Current Affairs: Provides real-time critique of Pakistan's economic management, corruption, and inequality.

- Governance and Public Policy: Illustrates extractive vs inclusive institutional models, useful for answering policy-oriented questions.
- Political Science: Links with theories of state failure, rentier systems, and elite-driven governance.
- Essay Writing: Supplies ready examples for essays on corruption, inequality, governance crisis, or Pakistan's development dilemma.

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that Pakistan's problems are not accidental but built into the system. For instance, power companies (IPPs) earned Rs8.3 trillion in ten years while electricity remained costly. Sugar mill owners, about 90 in number, made hundreds of billions in profits by distorting policy, which destroyed the cotton economy that once powered exports. Every year, elites enjoy \$17 billion in privileges like tax exemptions and free land, while \$10 billion leaves the country through capital flight, as seen in Panama and Pandora Papers. Meanwhile, common people face high prices, unemployment, and endless struggles. The state, instead of being a ladder for development has become a tool of exploitation.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Rs 8.3 trillion earned by Independent Power Producers (IPPs) in 10 years.
- 90 sugar mill owners reaped hundreds of billions while crushing cotton and exports.
- \$17 billion annually given as privileges (tax breaks, subsidies, land concessions) to elites.
- \$10 billion annually lost to capital flight, as exposed in Panama and Pandora Papers.
- 78 years since independence, yet the state remains extractive rather than inclusive.

To wrap up, this article is a mirror held up to Pakistan, showing a state that looks like a republic but functions like a spoils system. It drives home that no natural resource or foreign project can rescue a country where elites rule for themselves and institutions exist only in name. For students and aspirants, it is not just an article but a warning and a case study: unless Pakistan rebuilds itself on justice, inclusiveness, and accountability, it will keep going in circles, forever waiting for its Godot of development.

**ALASKA OPTICS WIN FOR PUTIN****AUTHOR: ABBAS NASIR****Summary:**

The Alaska meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin turned out to be more than just a handshake across the ocean. From red carpets at Anchorage to military flypasts, everything was staged to show Putin's grand re-entry into the Western spotlight after years of being treated as a pariah. Trump clapped his guest, rode with him in his limousine, and allowed cameras to beam an image of warmth and acceptance. For Putin, who had been in the doghouse since 2022 for invading Ukraine, this was no less than a jackpot, a major optics win that painted him as a leader back in business with the world's most powerful man.

Yet beneath the glitz and glamour, the talks revealed how thorny the road to peace still is. Putin held fast to his claim on Crimea and eastern Ukraine, while Trump promised consultations with Zelensky and NATO allies. Both leaders spoke in vague but hopeful tones, hinting at progress but leaving the devil in the details. For now, Putin walks away with diplomatic breathing space and a boost in legitimacy, while Trump hopes to wear the cloak of a peacemaker. The catch, however, is clear. Unless Trump balances this European peace push with a just stance on Gaza, his image abroad will remain half-baked at best.

**Overview:**

This article captures the shifting winds of diplomacy where power play and public perception walk hand in hand. It shows how Trump, hungry for a Nobel Peace Prize has thrown Putin a lifeline by breaking his Western isolation.

It also reflects on the symbolic weight of ceremonies and gestures in international politics, underlining that diplomacy is often a stage where optics matter as much as substance.

#### **NOTES:**

The article illustrates the intersection of international relations, optics, and power politics. It underscores how diplomacy is not only about negotiation but also about perception management. This article highlights the themes of realpolitik, symbolic gestures in diplomacy, great-power rivalry, land-for-peace dilemmas, and double standards in global politics. It links Ukraine's conflict with broader global hypocrisies, especially regarding Gaza. Aspirants should note how leaders employ theatre to win legitimacy and how Western policy swings between principles and expediency.

#### **Related CSS Syllabus and Subjects:**

- International Relations: US-Russia relations, NATO expansion, Ukraine conflict
- Current Affairs: Ukraine war, Gaza war, shifting alliances
- Political Science: Realpolitik, diplomacy, balance of power
- US Foreign Policy: Trump's peace-broker ambitions and contradictions

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article is about a big meeting between Trump and Putin in Alaska. Putin who had been shunned since invading Ukraine in 2022, got a hero's welcome with red carpets, applause, and even shared a ride with Trump. This made him look powerful again. They talked about peace in Ukraine, but the problem is tricky because Putin wants to keep Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine, while Ukraine and its allies refuse to give up land. Trump promised to consult with Ukraine and Europe before making any deal. For beginners, think of it as two players in a chess game: Putin has gained time and legitimacy, while Trump is trying to prove he can be the world's peacemaker, even though his support for Israel in Gaza undermines that image.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022; war ongoing for over 3 years.
- Putin indicted for war crimes by ICC (2023).
- Alaska summit held on Aug 17, 2025.
- Key unresolved issues: Crimea annexed in 2014, eastern Ukraine territories, NATO expansion.
- B-2 stealth bombers and F-35s used in symbolic flypast during meeting.
- Ukraine poverty due to war: GDP shrunk by ~30% (2022-2023); reconstruction cost estimated at \$486 billion (World Bank, 2023).

To wrap up, the article highlights how diplomacy in the modern world is as much about stagecraft as it is about statecraft. Trump and Putin used Alaska not just to talk peace but to play to the cameras and shape global narratives. For Putin, it was a triumph of optics, easing his isolation, while Trump walked away with the hope of being crowned a peacemaker. Yet the real test lies ahead, whether lofty gestures translate into actual peace in Ukraine and whether Trump can extend his supposed fairness to Gaza. Without substance, this summit risks becoming another show where the curtain falls, but the real play never begins.

## **FRAYED RELATIONS**

**AUTHOR: MALEEHA LODHI**

#### **Summary:**

The article traces the dramatic collapse of what was once hailed as a US-India "mega-partnership." Only months ago, Modi and Trump were exchanging praise and promises of strategic cooperation. Yet beneath the surface, tensions were already brewing over trade. Trump, obsessed with tariffs and economic leverage, openly branded India a "hard place to do business in" and accused it of being an abuser of trade. His threats quickly turned into

action when he imposed a 25 percent tariff on Indian imports, later escalating it to 50 percent, while also punishing New Delhi for its oil imports from Russia. These moves jolted India, leaving its leadership stunned and scrambling to contain the diplomatic damage.

The crisis was not only economic but also political and personal. Modi's denial of Trump's self-proclaimed role in mediating the India-Pakistan conflict bruised the US president's ego at a time when he was already angry over trade disputes. New Delhi's misplaced belief in its strategic indispensability blinded it to Trump's transactional worldview. In less than six months, a relationship built over decades of strategic convergence crumbled into mistrust, coercion and uncertainty. India now finds itself in a dilemma: conceding would mean humiliation at home, while resisting risks a long-term rupture with Washington.

#### **Overview:**

The article exposes the fragility of international partnerships when trade disputes, political egos and miscalculations collide. It illustrates how India, misjudging Trump's priorities, underestimated the impact of tariffs and ignored the role of personalities in shaping diplomacy. The US-India tension reflects a broader theme in world politics: when national interest is pursued through coercion rather than compromise, alliances unravel swiftly.

#### **NOTES:**

The article highlights the sudden breakdown of the once-celebrated US-India partnership, tracing how trade disputes, political ego, and strategic miscalculations quickly transformed warmth into hostility. Modi's early praise of Trump during his White House visit masked growing tensions, particularly over tariffs, with Trump branding India as "a very big abuser" of trade and imposing steep 25 percent tariffs that soon escalated to 50 percent. Adding to this, India's oil imports from Russia became another flashpoint, with Washington penalizing New Delhi for fueling Moscow's war economy. Modi's outright denial of Trump's repeated claims of mediating the India-Pakistan crisis further inflamed tensions, bruising the US president's ego and hardening his stance. India's failure to recognize Trump's transactional approach, along with misplaced confidence in its strategic indispensability, left it cornered in a diplomatic and economic bind. The crisis reveals how swiftly alliances can unravel when national pride, economic coercion, and shifting geopolitical priorities collide.

#### **Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- International Relations: Power politics, trade disputes, and transactional diplomacy
- Current Affairs: Contemporary US-India relations and their implications
- US Foreign Policy: Trump's hardball tactics and shifting global alignments
- Pakistan Affairs: Indirect implications for Pakistan's regional position and diplomacy
- Essay Writing: Themes of multipolarity, fragile alliances, and personality-driven geopolitics

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article shows how trade and ego can destabilize even the strongest of alliances. For example, when Trump imposed 25 to 50 percent tariffs on Indian imports, it was not just about economics but also a political show of strength. Another example is Modi denying Trump's role in defusing the India-Pakistan conflict which deeply offended the US president and worsened tensions. These examples highlight that diplomacy is shaped not just by policies but also by perceptions and personalities.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Trump first imposed 25 percent tariffs on Indian imports in August 2025, later raising them to 50 percent.
- India is the second-largest importer of Russian oil after China, with over one-third of its crude coming from Russia.
- Trump claimed more than two dozen times that he defused the India-Pakistan crisis of May 2025, while Modi publicly denied US involvement.

- Within six months, the US–India partnership moved from “mega-partnership” rhetoric to what analysts describe as a meltdown.

To sum up, The article is a powerful reminder that in international politics, today’s embrace can turn into tomorrow’s standoff. It captures the volatility of global alliances when pride, miscalculation and transactional interests dominate diplomacy. For students, it underlines the importance of understanding both the structural and personal dimensions of foreign policy in a world where stability often proves fleeting.

**Difficult Words with Synonyms and Antonyms:**

- Hubris: Excessive pride or arrogance. Synonym: vanity. Antonym: humility.
- Invective: Harsh, abusive language. Synonym: insult. Antonym: compliment.
- Obdurate: Stubborn, inflexible. Synonym: unyielding. Antonym: compliant.
- Quagmire: A messy or complicated situation. Synonym: dilemma. Antonym: solution.
- Mercurial: Unpredictable, volatile. Synonym: erratic. Antonym: steady.

## **MUSLIM COLLECTIVISM AUTHOR: GHULAM SHABBIR**

**Summary:**

The article highlights how Islam emerged not just as a creed but as a movement of moral initiative, designed to reset the broken socioeconomic order of Makkah where oligarchs thrived on injustice. The Prophet’s mission, rooted in monotheism and social justice, brought with it an ethic of positivism and collectivism. Positivism meant tackling societal ills with the diagnostic power of the Quran, while collectivism meant the community’s shared struggle, for Islam offered no solitary salvation. At Madinah, Muslims were molded into a median community that shunned elitism, secret cliques, and hierarchical exclusivity, fostering egalitarianism and consultation where every voice mattered. Through unwavering hope and divine assurance, this spirit lit a flame that outshone despair and birthed a political, social, and moral revolution.

Yet history records a shift. After three centuries of dynamic interpretation through Sunnah and ijma, the rigidity of Hadith formalism suffocated the spirit of collective renewal. Thinkers like Ghazali emphasized personal salvation, cutting religion off from public life, while Ibn Arabi’s mysticism almost neutralized social action. Later voices like Ibn Taimiyya, Shah Waliullah, and Sirhindi attempted revival, and the encounter with the West further pushed reformers to reevaluate tradition in light of Quranic norms. In the subcontinent, this collectivist impulse paved the way for Pakistan, envisioned as an egalitarian society free from class and gender bias. But alliances between secular elites and orthodoxy diluted that dream. The article ends with a reminder that nations fall not by floods or earthquakes but by moral decay, urging a course correction before the collective ship sinks.

**Overview:**

This article blends theology, history, and politics to show how Islam’s moral compass was always community-oriented and action-driven, meant to balance spiritual devotion with social justice. It traces the arc from the Prophet’s time to later centuries when collectivism waned, reformist revivals surfaced, and finally, the struggle for Pakistan emerged. The underlying argument is that Islamic collectivism must be revived today to confront political and social crises head-on.

**NOTES:**

The article explains that Islam began as a movement of moral and social reforms. It challenges the unjust socioeconomic order of Makkah and building a collective spirit of justice, equality, and consultation in Madinah. It emphasizes the Prophet’s mission of positivism through the Quran and collectivism through shared community struggle. However, after three centuries, rigid Hadith formalism and mystical detachment shifted religion towards individual salvation, weakening its public role. Reformist thinkers like Ibn Taimiyya, Shah Waliullah, and Sirhindi tried to revive the lost collectivism, while the encounter with Western imperialism pushed further reevaluation. In



South Asia, this collectivist spirit played a central role in the creation of Pakistan as an egalitarian state, though compromises between secular elites and orthodoxy diluted that vision. The article concludes that nations fall not by natural disasters but by moral decline, urging a revival of collective reform and moral clarity to prevent societal decay.

#### **Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Islamic Studies: Maqasid, collectivism, reform movements
- Political Science: Collective governance, egalitarian orders, decline and revival cycles
- Current Affairs: Nation-building, moral and political decay, Pakistan's challenges
- Essay Paper: Religion and politics, moral reform as nation-building, Islamic philosophy of society

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that Islam began with a mission to build a fair society where justice and equality ruled. It teaches that Islam is not about individual escape but about working together to solve problems. For example, Muslims in Madinah lived like equals where no one was above another, and decisions were made through consultation. Later, rigidity and mysticism pulled religion away from society, but thinkers like Shah Waliullah revived the idea of collective reform. Finally, Muslims of India used this spirit to create Pakistan, though today's failures show that the dream has not been fully realized.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Maqasid of Islam: Protect life, intellect, dignity, property, faith, lineage
- Early Islamic community: Based on egalitarianism and consultation
- First three centuries: Sunnah and ijma were flexible and revisable
- Pakistan: Founded on collectivist impulse for justice and equality
- Warning: Quran states nations fall due to moral and political decay, not natural disaster

To sum up, this article reminds us that nations rise on the strength of their moral backbone and fall when selfishness, elitism and indifference eat into their soul. Pakistan's story like that of earlier Muslim communities hangs on whether we choose collective reform or sink into complacency. The takeaway is plain that the tide of history spares no one, and only through unity, moral clarity, and social justice can the dream that lit the Prophet's mission be carried forward into our own time.

## **CHINA AND SHIFTING GEOPOLITICS      AUTHOR: ZAHID HUSSAIN**

#### **Summary:**

The article highlights how China is increasingly becoming the lodestar of shifting global politics, with Foreign Minister Wang Yi's whirlwind tour to India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan showcasing Beijing's growing clout. His stop in Islamabad reaffirmed Pakistan's status as China's "iron brother," as both sides reviewed defence, economic, and connectivity ties under the all-important CPEC framework. With Pakistan's four-day skirmish with India underscoring the dividends of Sino-Pak defence cooperation, Beijing's financial and political backing remains a lifeline for Islamabad. But the article also shows the security threats to Chinese workers in Balochistan and KP, along with the need for Pakistan to hammer out a long-term, well-defined trade policy with its largest investor.

The article captures the bigger chessboard where US-India relations have hit rock bottom under Trump's tariff blitz, pushing New Delhi into a tactical thaw with Beijing. Prime Minister Modi's decision to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in China, alongside leaders like Xi Jinping, Putin, and Shehbaz Sharif, underlines the new equations shaping the region. China, while grappling with its own trade war with Washington, is not playing a zero-sum game but rather weaving a web of multipolar alliances. The article concludes that Pakistan, caught

between transactional ties with the US and a time-tested but security-stressed partnership with China, must tread carefully, or else risk being caught between the devil and the deep blue sea in this era of global realignments.

#### **Overview:**

The article dissects China's growing centrality in South Asian and global geopolitics. It explains how Wang Yi's visits reaffirmed Beijing's deep ties with Pakistan, hinted at an easing of icy India-China relations, and signaled regional cooperation despite turbulence. It highlights the dual nature of Sino-Pak relations, built on strong defence and expanding economic ties but strained by security threats to CPEC projects. Simultaneously, it shows how India once America's counterweight to China is recalibrating after Trump's tariff war, setting the stage for broader multipolar cooperation at platforms like SCO.

#### **NOTES:**

The article discusses how China has become a central player in South Asian and global geopolitics, with Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visits to Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan underscoring Beijing's growing influence. His stop in Islamabad reaffirmed strong Sino-Pak ties, covering defence cooperation and the economic dimension through the second phase of CPEC, which now includes agriculture, mining, and industrial development. The article stresses that while China remains Pakistan's largest investor and strategic ally, security threats to Chinese workers in Balochistan and KP remain a pressing concern. At the same time, the article highlights the transactional nature of Pakistan's improving relations with the US, urging caution due to the unpredictability of Trump's policies. On the regional front, India's deteriorating ties with Washington, particularly after the imposition of 50 percent tariffs on its exports, have pushed New Delhi towards rapprochement with China. Modi's decision to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in China, alongside leaders like Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin, and Shehbaz Sharif, reflects shifting regional alignments and the growing importance of multipolar cooperation in an era of global disorder.

#### **Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Changing South Asian geopolitics, Pak-China ties, India-US tensions, CPEC developments
- International Relations: Multipolarity, balance of power, regional alliances, trade wars
- Pakistan Affairs: CPEC's second phase,
- Pak-China strategic partnership, security concerns in Balochistan and KP
- Essay Paper: China's rise, US-China trade war, multipolar world order, Pakistan's foreign policy balancing act

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article says China is becoming more powerful in South Asia and the world. The Chinese foreign minister visited India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan to strengthen ties. For Pakistan, China is the closest friend, supporting defence, trade, and CPEC projects. For example, China is investing billions in Pakistan's agriculture and mining. But militants in Balochistan have attacked Chinese workers which worries Beijing. On the other hand Pakistan has also improved ties with the US, but Trump's policies are risky because they change suddenly. India is trying to improve relations with China by joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting after facing high tariffs from the US.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- China is Pakistan's largest investor under CPEC, worth billions of dollars.
- Pakistan's four-day conflict with India highlighted Sino-Pak's defence cooperation.
- Trump slapped 50 percent tariffs on Indian exports to the US in 2025, one of the highest globally.
- India imports Russian oil, accounting for 25 percent of its tariff penalty.
- The SCO summit in China is to be attended by over 20 countries, including Xi, Putin, Modi, and Shehbaz Sharif.

To sum up, the article suggests that China is now the pivot around which South Asian geopolitics turn. Pakistan's partnership with Beijing remains its strongest card, but it must also navigate Washington's unpredictable overtures and internal security flaws. India's estrangement from the US and rapprochement with China mark a seismic shift in regional alignments, while platforms like SCO showcase the growing clout of the Global South. The article makes it clear that Pakistan cannot afford to put all its eggs in one basket. It must strike a fine balance, safeguard its internal stability, and leverage China's rise wisely, or else risk becoming a pawn in the great power game.

### **Difficult Words with Meanings, Synonyms and Antonyms**

- Acrimony: Bitterness in speech or relations. Synonym: hostility. Antonym: harmony
- Impetuousness: Acting without thought. Synonym: recklessness. Antonym: caution
- Transactional: Based on practical exchange, not long-term trust. Synonym: pragmatic. Antonym: principled
- Pivotal: Of central importance. Synonym: crucial. Antonym: trivial
- Repercussion: An unintended consequence. Synonym: fallout. Antonym: cause

## **FLOODING IN PUNJAB**

### **Summary:**

The article highlights the drowning of Punjab under the fury of nature and human neglect. Torrential rains coupled with India's release of excess water into the Ravi, Chenab and Sutlej rivers have turned large swathes of Punjab into a watery graveyard. Over 200,000 people have been uprooted, homes and crops lie in ruins, and billions worth of damage has been inflicted while authorities struggle to cope. The army has stepped in, yet officials continue to issue grim warnings that even more destructive floods may hit cities like Lahore, Rawalpindi and Sialkot. The article captures not just the deluge of water but also the flood of misery, exposing the hollowness of preparedness despite repeated alarms. The tragedy has been compounded by the glaring absence of political leadership, as Punjab's Chief Minister chose foreign trips over standing with the suffering masses.

The editorial suggests that floods cannot be shrugged off as mere acts of God or the unavoidable face of climate change. While climate change fuels extreme weather, it is unplanned urbanisation, rampant deforestation, and weak flood infrastructure that have turned seasonal rains into yearly calamities. Unless Punjab builds climate-resilient infrastructure, invests in river management, and adopts serious adaptation strategies, these floods will keep striking like clockwork. The piece ends on a somber note, reminding policymakers that disasters are not just natural phenomena but the offspring of negligence and misplaced priorities.

### **Overview:**

The article highlights how nature's wrath combined with poor governance has turned Punjab's flooding into a humanitarian disaster. It exposes both systemic flaws in flood management and the complacency of leadership at a time when people need resilience and planning.

### **NOTES:**

Punjab is facing devastating floods caused by torrential rains and excess water released by India into the Ravi, Chenab and Sutlej rivers, which has displaced over 200,000 people and forced them into relief camps for food, medical aid and shelter. The army has been deployed in at least eight districts to assist rescue efforts as floodwaters continue to swell, threatening major cities including Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujrat and Sialkot, while hundreds of villages, crops, livestock and infrastructure have already been destroyed, with initial losses running into billions of rupees. Alongside riverine flooding, urban flooding has badly hit cities due to intense downpours, further exposing the lack of preparedness despite repeated forecasts of heavy rainfall and water releases. The crisis has revealed the provincial government's inefficiency and weak planning, made worse by the absence of leadership as the chief minister chose to travel abroad during this critical period. Beyond the immediate destruction, the article underscores

that recurring floods are exacerbated not only by climate change but also by unplanned urbanisation, deforestation, inadequate flood-resistant infrastructure and poor river management, all of which demand urgent investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, effective adaptation strategies and long-term planning to prevent such large-scale devastation in the future.

**Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Climate change, water crisis, Pakistan-India water disputes
- Pakistan Affairs: Disaster management, governance, Indus Waters Treaty
- Environmental Science (Optional): Flood resilience, deforestation, unplanned urbanisation
- Essay Paper: Climate resilience, governance failures, disaster mitigation

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article says Punjab is facing floods because of heavy rains and India releasing river water. For example, villages are underwater, over 200,000 people have been rescued, and crops worth billions are destroyed. The problem is not just climate change but also lack of planning, like cutting trees, poor drainage and weak flood barriers. It also criticises leaders who did not stay to handle the crisis, showing that leadership matters as much as infrastructure.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Over 200,000 people evacuated to relief camps since mid-August 2025
- Army deployed in at least 8 districts to assist rescue operations
- Initial damage estimates run into billions of rupees
- Punjab cities including Lahore, Sialkot, Rawalpindi affected by urban flooding
- Floods triggered by torrential rains and excess water released by India under Indus Waters Treaty rivers

To wrap up, The article exposes how Punjab's floods are a man-made disaster magnified by nature. It calls for urgent investment in resilience and preparedness, otherwise the province will continue to lurch from one flood to the next. For CSS students, it is both a case study of climate governance and a reminder that disasters test not just infrastructure but also leadership and political will.

**Difficult Words with Meaning, Synonyms and Antonyms**

1. Torrential: Heavy and violent (Syn: downpouring, Ant: light)
2. Catastrophe: Sudden disaster (Syn: calamity, Ant: blessing)
3. Resilience: Ability to recover (Syn: toughness, Ant: weakness)
4. Indifference: Lack of concern (Syn: apathy, Ant: sympathy)
5. Mitigate: To reduce severity (Syn: alleviate, Ant: aggravate)

## The Express Tribune –

### PAKISTAN — BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

**AUTHOR: INAM UL HAQUE**

#### **Summary:**

In the wake of Operation Sindoor and Pakistan's nimble counter through Operation Bunyan Marsus, Islamabad has managed to claw its way back onto the global stage, reshuffling the deck in its favour. The US slapped India with stinging tariffs while giving Pakistan a comparatively lighter blow, opening the door to lucrative trade, oil exploration, and mineral deals. For a country often painted into a corner by Indian propaganda, these moves have breathed fresh life into its image and created new openings with the West, though not without whispers of risking the ironclad bond with Beijing. Yet China's measured diplomacy and long-standing camaraderie with Pakistan mean that a dalliance with Washington need not spoil the brotherhood forged over decades.

This tightrope act between Beijing and Washington is nothing short of a diplomatic high-wire performance. Pakistan has managed to keep both giants in its orbit, extracting oil deals from America while remaining a flagship partner in China's Belt and Road. With its mineral-rich mountains, untapped offshore hydrocarbons, and newfound trade advantages, Pakistan stands at the cusp of rewriting its economic fortunes. But in this great game of shifting alliances and transactional politics, one misstep could send it tumbling. For now, the world watches as Islamabad waltzes between superpowers undaunted, unbowed, and as Mr Bhattacharya put it - undefeated.

#### **Overview:**

This article dissects Pakistan's evolving role between the US and China in a post-Operation Sindoor landscape, showing how skillful diplomacy can turn geopolitical headwinds into tailwinds. It explores US tariffs on India, strategic oil and mineral deals, and Beijing's enduring friendship, all against the backdrop of Sino-US rivalry. For CSS exam aspirants, it's a rich case study in balancing great-power politics without falling into bloc traps.

#### **NOTES:**

After Operation Sindoor and its swift counter through Operation Bunyan Marsus, Pakistan has regained strategic relevance, earning US favour without alienating China. Washington's 25% tariff on India versus 19% on Pakistan created new trade leverage, with Islamabad eyeing offshore hydrocarbon reserves and vast mineral wealth that could transform it from an energy importer to an exporter. China's approach remains steady and non-intrusive, ensuring that Pak-China ties stay resilient despite Islamabad's warming relations with Washington. By sidestepping bloc politics, Pakistan has kept China, the US, and even Russia in its diplomatic orbit, using economic diplomacy alongside military capability to strengthen its position. This balancing act reflects Pakistan's skill in handling great-power politics while securing strategic deals in energy, minerals, and trade that could redefine its economic future.

#### **CSS syllabus relevance:**

- International Relations: Great Power Politics, Strategic Balancing
- Current Affairs: US-China Rivalry, South Asian Geopolitics
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign Policy, Economic Diplomacy, Strategic Resources
- Political Science: Realism vs Cooperative Engagement

#### **Notes for beginners:**

Pakistan is managing friendships with both the US and China, much like a person keeping peace between two rival friends. After a military clash with India, the US hit India with higher tariffs and offered Pakistan trade deals and oil exploration opportunities. Example: ExxonMobil may start drilling off Pakistan's coast which could bring big



money. At the same time, China is still Pakistan's long-term ally, like a childhood friend who stands by you no matter what. The key is Pakistan's ability to deal with both without making either feel sidelined.

**Facts and figures:**

- US tariffs: India 25%, Pakistan 19%
- Pakistan's exports to US: \$6 billion; imports from US: \$2.4 billion; surplus \$3.7 billion
- Pakistan holds the world's fourth-largest offshore hydrocarbon reserves
- Potential mineral wealth: estimated \$8 trillion
- CPEC remains the flagship China-Pakistan project

In a nutshell, this article is more than a tale of shifting alliances. It's a masterclass in how a middle power can punch above its weight by reading the room and playing its cards right. Pakistan's ability to stay in the good books of both Beijing and Washington is a rare feat in today's fractured world. Whether this balancing act leads to a golden age of economic revival or a stumble into geopolitical quicksand will depend on the cool heads steering its foreign policy ship.

**ADVANTAGE CHINA, PAKISTAN****AUTHOR KAMRAN YOUSAF****Summary:**

The article explores a diplomatic drama that flipped South Asia's political chessboard on its head. It begins with Trump's sweeping return to the White House and his unexpected chill toward India's Prime Minister Modi, once hailed as his "best friend." What started as a missed rally appearance snowballed into frosty White House talks, where Trump publicly called India the "biggest exploiter" in trade. This fracture, born of political miscalculations and election-time hedging, was soon followed by a military flare-up after the April 22 Pahalgam attack. India's strikes into Pakistani territory met a thunderous riposte as Pakistan downed six Indian jets, shocking global observers. With tensions spiralling toward war, the US stepped in, brokered a ceasefire, and Pakistan publicly credited Trump, earning it a rare moment of strategic spotlight in Washington.

The narrative then pivots to the diplomatic aftershocks. Modi, snubbing a chance for a White House sit-down alongside Pakistan's Army Chief, deepened the rift, pushing India into a desperate diplomatic pivot toward China. Meanwhile, Pakistan's deft crisis management and battlefield mettle carved out fresh space for influence, aligning with a shifting geostrategic tide that also benefits Beijing. The article leaves no doubt that in the game of international relations, timing, perception, and bold moves can turn the tables faster than allies or adversaries expect.

**Overview:**

This is a sharp political commentary on how quickly alliances can unravel in the unpredictable theatre of global politics. It blends realpolitik with high-stakes military tension, showing how Pakistan's rapid and decisive response during a crisis reshaped its standing with the United States, while India's miscalculations cost it diplomatic capital at a critical juncture.

**NOTES:**

The article details a significant shift in South Asian geopolitics triggered by President Trump's return to the White House and his cooling relations with Indian Prime Minister Modi, once considered a close ally. The rift began when Modi skipped a Trump rally during the US election season, instead leaning toward Kamala Harris, which backfired after Trump's victory. Subsequent White House talks were tense, with Trump pressuring Modi on arms and oil purchases and labelling India the "biggest exploiter" in trade. The situation escalated after the April 22 Pahalgam attack, when India launched strikes inside Pakistan, prompting Pakistan to down six Indian fighter jets, including Rafales, in a swift and surprising military response. As tensions edged toward war, the US intervened and brokered a ceasefire, with Pakistan openly crediting Trump for the de-escalation, raising its diplomatic profile. Modi's refusal

to attend a meeting involving Pakistan's Army Chief further strained ties, pushing India toward China, while the changing geostrategic climate offered fresh advantages to both Pakistan and China.

**Relevance to CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Pakistan-US relations, India-US tensions, South Asian security environment
- International Relations: Diplomatic shifts, crisis management, US mediation in regional conflicts
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's military and diplomatic strategy
- Political Science: Power politics, alliance behaviour, and realpolitik in practice
- Essay: Changing global alliances, geostrategic repositioning in South Asia

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article tells how relations between the US and India soured after Modi skipped a Trump rally during the election season, betting on Kamala Harris instead. When Trump won, he treated Modi coldly, calling India an unfair trader. Soon after, India attacked Pakistan following the Pahalgam incident, but Pakistan shot down six Indian jets, showing unexpected military strength. The US then stepped in to stop the fighting, and Pakistan publicly thanked Trump, which improved its position in Washington. Modi later refused to attend a meeting with Trump and Pakistan's Army Chief, pushing India closer to China. The situation gave both Pakistan and China a diplomatic boost.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Pakistan shot down six Indian jets during the April 22 Pahalgam crisis
- India used French-made Rafale jets in the operation
- Trump labelled India as "biggest exploiter" in trade with the US
- US mediated a ceasefire after tensions escalated toward war
- Modi skipped a Trump rally in the US during election season, betting on Kamala Harris

To sum up, this article captures how a single diplomatic misstep can snowball into a strategic loss while an agile opponent seizes the moment. It's a reminder that in the fast-moving currents of international politics, yesterday's friend can be tomorrow's sidelined player, and the spoils often go to those who can keep their nerve and play their cards at just the right moment.

## **LEARNING BEYOND CLASSROOMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**AUTHOR: DR ASGHAR ZAIDI**

**Summary:**

The article argues that learning in universities cannot and should not be confined to lecture halls and examinations because student societies act as laboratories of leadership, creativity and civic maturity. Far from being a waste of time, these platforms are an extension of education where young people cut their teeth in organisation, debate, teamwork and problem-solving. The writer drawing from his experience at GCU and UMT stresses that societies thrive when students are trusted with autonomy, when their voices are valued in governance, when pluralism rather than factionalism is encouraged and when co-curricular activity is aligned with academic goals. He insists that societies are the seedbeds of responsibility and confidence, preparing students not only for careers but also for nation-building.

At the heart of the piece of writing lies a bold call to action for Pakistan's universities to shed their fear of dissent and embrace student empowerment as an engine of reform. The writer makes it plain that the measure of higher education should not rest solely in CGPAs but also in the ability of graduates to lead with empathy, manage crises, and contribute meaningfully to society. By institutionalising co-curricular platforms with proper budgets,

mentorship and representation, universities can nurture well-rounded graduates who stand tall in the real world. If we want a future led by change-makers rather than paper-qualified degree holders, we must treat student societies as essential classrooms of democracy, innovation and collective responsibility.

**Overview:**

The article underscores that vibrant student societies transform universities into nurseries of leadership and innovation. By encouraging accountability, pluralism and inclusivity they bridge the gap between academic theory and real-life practice, showing that holistic education goes far beyond textbooks.

**NOTES:**

The article highlights that student societies in universities are not distractions but vital extensions of learning, equipping students with leadership, creativity, teamwork and problem-solving skills beyond the classroom. Drawing on experiences from GCU and UMT, the writer outlines five guiding principles for effective societies: decentralisation and student autonomy, recognition of students as stakeholders, promotion of pluralism over factionalism, alignment of co-curricular activities with academics, and inclusivity with broad representation. These societies act as training grounds for accountability, confidence and democratic values, producing graduates who are not just degree-holders but nation-builders. They also foster a sense of community, counter radicalism and build trust between students and administrations. The writer stresses that universities must institutionalise student societies with proper budgets, policy frameworks and faculty mentorship while ensuring student independence. He argues that true success in higher education should be measured not only in CGPAs but also in the ability of graduates to lead with empathy, manage crises and contribute meaningfully to society, making student societies indispensable for Pakistan's educational and national progress.

**Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Education reforms and youth development in Pakistan
- Pakistan Affairs: Role of institutions in shaping national leadership
- Governance and Public Policy: Decentralisation, inclusivity and participatory models
- Political Science: Civic education, pluralism and democratic training grounds
- Essay Paper: Topics on education, democracy, leadership, or youth empowerment

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that societies in universities are not just for fun but are a way of learning. For example, when students organise a debate or drama, they learn teamwork, leadership and confidence. At GCU, students were even allowed to shadow the Vice Chancellor to learn how decisions are made. At UMT, peer tutoring run by students helped juniors in academics. These activities prepare students to be leaders, solve problems and contribute to society, which normal classroom learning cannot do alone.

**Facts and Figures:**

- GCU and UMT models emphasised five principles: decentralisation, stakeholder recognition, pluralism, academic alignment and inclusivity.
- Peer tutoring at UMT is fully student-led and supports juniors academically.
- 147 UN member states recognise Palestine (contextual fact from earlier but not tied to this article; thus omitted here).
- No direct numerical data is given in this article, but emphasis is on institutional practices and their broader outcomes.

To sum up, the article is a powerful reminder that universities must look beyond syllabi and grades to nurture character, creativity and leadership. It shows that when young people are trusted with responsibility, they rise to the occasion, proving themselves as future leaders and change-makers. The future of Pakistan's higher education rests

not on rote learning but on vibrant societies that prepare students to stand firm in the real world with vision, empathy and integrity.

## **'NEW REALIGNMENTS WON'T DENT SINO-PAK PARTNERSHIP'**

**AUTHOR: KAMRAN YOUSAF**

### **Summary:**

The article drives home the point that Pakistan and China despite shifting sands in the region remain locked in what they call an ironclad friendship. Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Islamabad, hailed as his "most important stop," came at a time when global alignments were undergoing a shake-up with Pakistan's improving ties with Washington and China's reset with India. Yet both sides beat the drum of loyalty and declared that their bond was not up for grabs or hostage to third-party politics. Wang Yi reassured that China would continue standing shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan, helping it protect sovereignty, combat terrorism, and push ahead with development goals, while Dar stressed that Pakistan's "cardinal pillar" of foreign policy deep alignment with Beijing was here to stay.

The meeting, attended by Pakistan's civilian and military leadership, reaffirmed commitments on CPEC Phase-II, trade, ICT, agriculture, and connectivity. Wang Yi reminded the region that the 21st century ought to be Asia's century, with South Asia as its growth engine, and Pakistan as a key cog in that wheel. Both sides pledged to oppose hegemonic moves, promote people-to-people exchanges and keep the flag of cooperation flying high. Realignments may come and go, but for Islamabad and Beijing, their friendship remains the cornerstone of peace, stability, and prosperity in a turbulent region.

### **Overview:**

This article highlights that Sino-Pakistan relations have weathered storms of history and remain steady despite global realignments. It highlights mutual assurances, shared interests in development, CPEC's centrality, and Beijing's continued role as Pakistan's most trusted partner.

### **NOTES:**

The article highlights that Pakistan and China have once again reaffirmed their "ironclad" and "all-weather" friendship despite shifting global alignments. During his visit to Islamabad, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed that Pakistan was his "most important stop" and reassured support for Pakistan in safeguarding sovereignty, combating terrorism, and accelerating development. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar echoed the same, declaring that the "cardinal pillar" of Pakistan's foreign policy remains deep alignment with Beijing, regardless of Islamabad's growing engagement with the United States or China's reset with India. Both sides reiterated commitments on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Phase-II, enhanced trade, agriculture, ICT, cybersecurity, and people-to-people exchanges. The meeting, also attended by Pakistan's civil and military leadership underscored that their cooperation was not targeted at any third party but aimed at regional stability, prosperity, and connectivity. While the geopolitical landscape may shift, Sino-Pakistan relations remain steady, strategic and indispensable for peace and development in South Asia.

### **Related CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- International Relations: Strategic partnerships, multipolar diplomacy
- Current Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy, CPEC Phase-II
- Pakistan Affairs: Sino-Pak relations, regional security
- Essay Paper: Asia's rise, diplomacy in a multipolar world, Pakistan-China friendship

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that Pakistan and China are like two steady partners who stand by each other no matter what. For example, while Pakistan has improved ties with America, it still says China is its most trusted friend. CPEC is

a big example of their friendship, where China builds roads, power plants, and industries in Pakistan. Another example is that China promises to support Pakistan's independence and development, while Pakistan backs China on its key issues.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Wang Yi visited three countries New Delhi, Kabul, and Islamabad with Pakistan being the “most important stop.”
- CPEC Phase-II was reaffirmed as a central pillar of Pakistan-China economic cooperation.
- China promised deeper ties in ICT, agriculture, cybersecurity, and trade.
- Pakistan reiterated full support for China's core issues while appreciating Beijing's backing of sovereignty and stability.
- High-level meetings are planned later this year between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Xi Jinping.

To wrap up, the article shows that Pakistan and China are not just walking the same path but also shaping the region's future together. Their ironclad partnership, weathered by storms and strengthened by trust, shows that while global politics may ebb and flow, some friendships stand tall as pillars of resilience and opportunity.

#### **Difficult Words with Meanings:**

- Paramount: Of greatest importance. Synonym: supreme. Antonym: minor
- Convergence: Coming together. Synonym: unity. Antonym: divergence
- Unwavering: Firm, steady. Synonym: resolute. Antonym: uncertain
- Cornerstone: Fundamental part. Synonym: foundation. Antonym: accessory
- Revitalisation: Renewal or strengthening. Synonym: rejuvenation. Antonym: decline

## **WHY PAKISTAN DID NOT BECOME AN ISLAMIC STATE AUTHOR: SHAHID JAVED BURKI**

#### **Summary:**

The article explores why Pakistan, despite being carved out of colonial India as a homeland for Muslims, did not evolve into an Islamic state. Unlike its neighbors Afghanistan and Iran, which embraced extremist religious models, Pakistan's founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisioned a Muslim-majority state that would guarantee rights and freedoms to all, irrespective of faith. Jinnah's famous address to the Constituent Assembly in August 1947 made it plain that he sought inclusivity, not theocracy, insisting that religion was a matter of personal belief and not the business of the state. His vision was of a country where Hindus could go to their temples, Christians to their churches, and Muslims to their mosques without fear of state interference. However, Jinnah's early death and Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination created a power vacuum that was soon filled by the military. Subsequent rulers, particularly Ayub Khan, kept religion on the sidelines of governance, while even Zia-ul-Haq's attempt at Islamisation lost momentum after his death, proving that Pakistan's political evolution was never firmly tethered to a theocratic model.

What comes out of this story is a cautionary tale of ambition and circumstance. Pakistan was born as a compromise between political pragmatism and communal identity, yet it resisted the pull toward being an ideological theocracy. Where India under Modi now drapes itself in Hindutva and Afghanistan doubles down on religious extremism, Pakistan's trajectory reflects both Jinnah's secular-minded legacy and the state's recurring military dominance. The crux of the matter is that the founders did not want Pakistan to be a citadel of Islam, but rather a homeland where Muslims were safe and minorities not persecuted. The article reminds us that history often hangs by a thread of personalities and choices, and in Pakistan's case, those choices set it apart from its neighbors.



**Overview:**

This article highlights that Pakistan's formation was political, not religious. Jinnah's insistence on equality, coupled with his vision of a pluralistic state, was the cornerstone of its early foundation. The eventual rise of military rulers further distanced the country from the idea of a purely Islamic system. The lesson is simple: state-building cannot thrive on dogma alone; it requires pragmatism, institutions, and inclusivity.

**NOTES:**

The article highlights that Pakistan, unlike its neighbors Afghanistan, Iran, and now India under Modi, did not adopt a religious state model despite being created as a homeland for Muslims. Jinnah's vision was of a Muslim-majority state that guaranteed equality, freedom of religion, and inclusivity, made clear in his August 11, 1947 address to the Constituent Assembly. His early death and Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination created a leadership vacuum soon filled by the military, beginning with Ayub Khan's martial law in 1958 and his 1962 constitution, which gave no special role to religion. While General Zia attempted Islamisation, his policies weakened after his death in 1988. Thus, Pakistan's political evolution has been shaped more by pragmatism, military dominance, and institutional development than by religious dogma, making it distinct from neighboring states that have adopted overt religious ideologies.

**Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Pakistan's identity crisis and governance models
- Pakistan Affairs: Jinnah's vision, constitutional development, and military interventions
- Political Science: State-building, secularism versus theocracy, leadership choices
- History of Pakistan and India: Partition, independence, and regional ideological trends
- Essay: Secularism, religious nationalism, and challenges in Muslim-majority states

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article simply says Pakistan was made for Muslims but not to be ruled by Islam as a state religion. For example, Jinnah said in his speech that people of all religions were free to practice their faith, which shows he wanted a tolerant homeland. Later, even when Zia tried to bring Islamisation, it did not last. It proves the foundation of Pakistan was political rather than religious. This means Pakistan was designed as a country where Muslims felt secure, but minorities could also live without fear.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Pakistan was created in 1947 after the British left India under the leadership of Jinnah.
- Jinnah's landmark Constituent Assembly speech on August 11, 1947, laid out the secular and inclusive vision for Pakistan.
- Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister, was assassinated in 1951.
- General Ayub Khan imposed martial law in 1958 and gave a secular-leaning constitution in 1962.
- General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamisation policies lost traction after his death in 1988.

In the end, the article reveals that the state was never intended to be a fortress of Islamic law but a homeland where Muslims could thrive without fear and minorities could coexist peacefully. Jinnah's words still echo like a guiding star, reminding us that building a nation is not about locking it into dogma but about opening it up to justice, freedom, and inclusivity. History shows that when leaders lose sight of this balance, the state becomes hostage to confusion, but when they stick to it, nations carve out a distinct and dignified path in the world.

**Difficult Words with Synonyms and Antonyms:**

- Theocracy: Rule by religious authority. Synonym: clerical rule. Antonym: secularism.
- Secularism: Separation of religion from politics. Synonym: non-religious governance. Antonym: theocracy.
- Pragmatism: Practical approach to problems. Synonym: realism. Antonym: idealism.

# **SOCIAL MEDIA AND FRACTURING OF PAKISTAN'S POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

## **AUTHOR: DURDANA NAJAM**

### **Summary:**

The article highlights Pakistan's deepening political polarisation since Imran Khan's ouster in 2022, showing how social media has become both a mirror and a megaphone of division. With the number of users soaring from 31 million in 2017 to nearly 67 million in 2025, digital platforms have turned into echo chambers where algorithms feed on outrage, favouring emotionally charged content over facts. The Islamabad Policy Research Institute's study highlights how platforms like X, Facebook, WhatsApp and TikTok have shaped perceptions differently, with X fuelling division most strongly, TikTok softening it somewhat, while others hover in between. What emerges is a society increasingly trapped in "us versus them" binaries, where political actors weaponise social media with PR campaigns, influencers and propaganda, leaving ordinary citizens caught in the crossfire of misinformation, hate speech and half-truths.

Institutions that once commanded respect now face discrediting attacks online, while algorithms reward outrage over accuracy, and weak media literacy worsens the storm. Yet the article doesn't leave readers hopeless. It underlines that reforms like digital literacy, algorithm regulation and inclusive discourse could turn the tide, provided Pakistan's leaders rise above tribal politics and embrace collective responsibility. The message is clear that social media itself is not the villain, it only reflects the society that wields it. If Pakistan can check polarisation through civic education, institutional transparency and a multi-stakeholder approach, the same digital tools that now divide may one day unite.

### **Overview:**

The article underscores that social media has become the new battleground of politics in Pakistan, amplifying division rather than bridging differences. Algorithms thrive on anger and tribal loyalty, while weak media literacy and manipulative political actors deepen the fractures. Yet, by treating digital spaces as arenas for civic growth instead of ideological warfare, Pakistan still has a chance to steer its discourse back to reason and inclusivity.

### **NOTES:**

The article highlights how Pakistan's political polarisation has intensified since Imran Khan's removal in 2022, with social media emerging as the chief battleground of ideas and division. User numbers surged from 31 million in 2017 to nearly 67 million by 2025, transforming digital platforms into echo chambers where algorithms amplify outrage, privileging emotions over facts. The Islamabad Policy Research Institute's study shows X (formerly Twitter) as the strongest driver of polarisation, TikTok as relatively less divisive, and platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram as having weaker or neutral effects. Political parties exploit these spaces with PR campaigns, propaganda and influencers, leaving citizens exposed to misinformation, hate speech and half-truths. As institutional trust erodes under online attacks and media literacy remains weak, the article stresses that digital literacy, algorithm regulation and inclusive discourse are essential steps to counter fragmentation. Ultimately, it conveys that social media is not inherently the villain but rather a mirror of society's divisions, which can either deepen divides or, if wisely managed, pave the way for unity.

### **Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Political polarisation and media's role in Pakistan
- Pakistan Affairs: Institutional trust, democratic erosion and social fragmentation
- Political Science: Media theories, polarisation, civic education and digital democracy
- International Relations: Comparative study of political discourse in the digital age
- Essay: Democracy, digital media, misinformation, challenges of polarisation

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article says that social media in Pakistan has made politics more divided. For example, apps like X show more angry political posts, making people fight online, while TikTok is less divisive. Political parties use social media to spread their own stories, sometimes with false information, which makes people lose trust in leaders and institutions. The study suggests teaching digital literacy in schools so people can spot fake news and not fall into echo chambers.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Social media users in Pakistan grew from 31 million in 2017 to 66.9 million in 2025.
- 62.5% of survey respondents agreed that social media has made politics more polarised.
- X showed a positive correlation with political division, TikTok a negative correlation, while Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram showed weak or no correlation.
- The IPRI study used Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient to measure links between platforms and polarisation.

To wrap up, the article is a call for Pakistan's digital democracy. It tells us that while social media has magnified division and mistrust, it also offers a roadmap for repair. The path forward is not through censorship or silencing voices but through education, responsible regulation and institutional integrity. If leaders and citizens can join hands to tame the fire of online outrage, then the same platforms that now divide can become bridges of dialogue and cohesion.

**COMPREHENDING IRAN****AUTHOR: INAM UL HAQUE****Summary:**

The article shows Iran's turbulent journey through wars, sanctions, and power struggles, showing how its nuclear ambition, proxy strategy, and defiant stance against the United States and Israel have shaped its destiny. It highlights how the combined US-Israeli strike weakened but did not crush Iran's nuclear programme, while Tehran's reliance on missiles, espionage, and psychological warfare keeps it in the game. Drawing upon Prof Vali Nasr's analysis, the piece explains that Iran's security thinking springs less from revolutionary fervour and more from national survival instincts born of the eight-year war with Iraq, which left deep scars but also ignited self-reliance, patriotism, and a taste for proxy power. The doctrine of "forward defence" under IRGC and Qasem Soleimani became Iran's sword and shield, but cracks are now showing as economic hardship and restless youth chip away at clerical authority.

At the same time Iran's regional influence is waning as it loses ground in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen while Israel, backed by Washington and quietly supported by Arab states, grows stronger. The looming question of succession after Ayatollah Khamenei with his son Mojtaba tipped as a likely heir risks turning the republic into a dynastic rule, possibly entrenching "forward defence" even deeper. Despite all odds, the writer points to a faint silver lining: in the shifting sands of the Middle East, Tehran has rediscovered the value of its friendship with Pakistan. In short, the article paints Iran's story as one of resilience laced with overreach, a state that punches above its weight yet cannot escape the burden of its past.

**Overview:**

This is a deeply analytical article blending history, strategy, and regional politics. It traces Iran's arc from the revolutionary storm of 1979 to the missile duels of today, unpacking how wars, sanctions, and survival instincts crafted its strategic culture. The article weaves together lessons of resistance, costs of overreach, and the fragile balance between ideology and national interest.

**NOTES:**

The article highlights how the US-Israeli strike in June 2025 weakened but did not end Iran's nuclear programme, as Tehran remains determined to pursue nuclear arms. It explains that Iran's strategic culture stems largely from the

eight-year Iran-Iraq war, which bred self-reliance, religious zeal and the reliance on proxy warfare. This laid the foundation for the “forward defence” doctrine formally adopted in 2003 under which General Qasem Soleimani expanded Iran’s influence through groups like Hezbollah and by drawing Russia into Syria’s war. Despite heavy indoctrination and propaganda, Iran’s younger population is increasingly disillusioned due to economic hardship, lack of freedoms, and weak prospects. Regionally, Iran’s influence is shrinking as it loses ground in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen while Israel, backed by the US and supported tacitly by Arab states, is gaining dominance. Succession after Ayatollah Khamenei is a pressing question, with his son Mojtaba tipped as the likely heir, raising fears of dynastic rule and an even firmer embrace of “forward defence.” The article concludes by noting a silver lining for Pakistan as Tehran amid regional setbacks appears to value its friendship with Islamabad more than before.

### **Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- International Relations: Regional rivalries, nuclear politics, proxy warfare
- Current Affairs: Iran–US–Israel tensions, Middle East conflicts, shifting alliances
- Political Science: Theocracy, authoritarianism, strategic culture, succession politics
- Pakistan Affairs: Pak-Iran relations, regional security dynamics
- Essay Paper: Multipolarity, resilience of states under pressure, ideology in foreign policy

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that Iran has faced repeated blows, such as the US-Israeli strike on its nuclear sites in 2025, yet it refuses to abandon its nuclear dream. It relies on proxies like Hezbollah and Houthis and follows a “forward defence” strategy, which means fighting threats abroad before they reach home. For example, General Qasem Soleimani used this doctrine to bring Russia and Hezbollah into Syria’s war. Iran’s problems, however, are mounting. Young people are tired of restrictions, the economy is weak, and its influence in Syria and Iraq is shrinking. Meanwhile, Israel with US backing is getting stronger, and Arab states are tilting against Iran. For Pakistan, the lesson is that regional friendships and strategic balance are key to survival in a turbulent neighbourhood.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- US-Israeli strike in June 2025 damaged but did not eliminate Iran’s nuclear programme
- Iran’s war with Iraq lasted eight years (1980-88) and reshaped its strategic culture
- Iran Hostage Crisis lasted 444 days (1979-81)
- Forward defence doctrine formally adopted in 2003
- Ayatollah Khamenei’s likely successor is his son Mojtaba, aged 56
- General Qasem Soleimani killed in 2020, previously key architect of Iran’s proxy wars

To wrap up, The article shows Iran as both defiant and fragile, clinging to ideology yet forced to compromise with harsh realities. The story carries lessons for Pakistan too: in world politics, survival depends less on rhetoric and more on foresight, alliances, and adaptability. The article leaves us with a striking thought that Iran may be a lion bruised and cornered, but it still knows how to roar, and its roar will continue to echo across the Middle East.

**REFRAMING ALASKA SUMMIT**

**AUTHOR: DR SHAZIA ANWER**

**CHEEMA**

### **Summary:**

The article highlights the symbolic yet substantive Alaska Summit, where Presidents Trump and Putin met under the banner of “Pursuing Peace”. While Western media sensationalised it as a ceasefire meeting over Ukraine, the real thrust lay in the search for a durable peace process, rooted in political will and strategic understanding. The choice of Alaska, historically a bridge between Russia and America, carried deep symbolism which is reminding

the world of their intertwined past and signalling to Europe that two global systems were negotiating terms beyond the shadow of Western dominance. Putin's stance was crystal clear: he demanded an end to NATO's eastward march, sanctions that bite but no longer break, and a Eurasian security architecture that guarantees lasting stability rather than a patchwork ceasefire destined to collapse like a house of cards.

At the same time, Trump in his blunt style admitted ceasefires are often fleeting and hinted at the Istanbul proposal as the only realistic framework—no NATO or EU membership for Ukraine, reduced military size, and cultural protections for Russians. Yet the stumbling block remains Zelenskyy's own decree banning negotiations with Moscow, raising the question of whether Europe will cling to its all-out support or recalibrate its strategy. With EU leaders tight-lipped, blood continues to spill in Ukraine, echoing the article's haunting imagery of souls waiting for peace while states play power games. The article concludes that the Alaska Summit may not have produced instant results, but it has redrawn the map of diplomacy, showing that the world order is shifting and that peace, if it comes, must be more than just smoke and mirrors.

### **Overview:**

The article captures the strategic and symbolic weight of the Alaska Summit, placing it in the broader frame of global realignments. It highlights the contrasting narratives between Western media's hype and the actual agenda of pursuing a structured peace process. It underscores Russia's demands, Trump's pragmatism, and Europe's indecision, all while reminding that the Ukraine war is not just a battlefield struggle but a litmus test for the evolving multipolar order.

### **NOTES:**

The article focuses on the Alaska Summit held on August 15, 2025 between Presidents Trump and Putin, framed by Western media as a ceasefire meeting but in reality centred on pursuing a broader peace process. The venue itself carried symbolic weight, recalling shared US-Russia history and hinting at negotiations that question Western hegemony. Putin demanded an end to NATO's eastward expansion, relief from sanctions, and the creation of a Eurasian security architecture, while rejecting the Kellogg plan and pushing the Istanbul settlement as the basis for peace. Trump echoed this by stating ceasefires rarely hold, emphasising the need for a comprehensive settlement that excludes Ukraine's NATO and EU membership, reduces its military, and protects Russian culture and language. However, Ukraine's President Zelenskyy's decree banning negotiations with Russia remains a major obstacle. Meanwhile, the EU appears hesitant, torn between its stated support for Ukraine and the possibility of shifting toward negotiated peace, leaving the war's bloodshed to continue as a grim reminder of stalled diplomacy.

### **Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Current Affairs: US-Russia relations, Ukraine conflict, European diplomacy
- International Relations: Multipolarity, balance of power, NATO expansion, diplomacy of summits
- Political Science: Symbolism in politics, theories of conflict resolution, realism vs liberalism
- Essay Paper: Themes on global peace, decline of Western hegemony, symbolic diplomacy

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article says the Alaska Summit between Trump and Putin was about more than just stopping the war in Ukraine. Western media called it a ceasefire meeting, but both leaders wanted a longer peace process. For example, Russia asked for no NATO membership for Ukraine and fewer sanctions while Trump said only a bigger peace plan like the Istanbul proposal could work. But Ukraine's president has banned talks with Russia, making things harder. The article also says Alaska was chosen because it shows America and Russia share history, like when they once discussed building a tunnel under the Bering Strait.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- The Alaska Summit took place on August 15, 2025.
- Ukraine war casualties: over 500,000 dead and wounded (as reported by international monitors in 2025).



- Trump's Truth Social post after the summit stressed that "ceasefires do not hold up".
- Putin rejected the Kellogg plan and pushed the Istanbul settlement as the base document.
- The EU spends nearly €5 billion per month on Ukraine support according to European Commission data.

To sum up, the article makes it clear that the Alaska Summit was less about quick fixes and more about rewriting the script of global politics. The symbolism of the venue, the weight of history, and the clash of interests all point to a world where Western monopoly is waning and multipolar diplomacy is taking root. For Ukraine, the tragedy continues, but for students of politics, the summit is a living case study in how great powers use history, geography and narrative to bend the arc of international order.

#### **Difficult Words with Meaning, Synonyms and Antonyms:**

- Peripheral: Secondary or marginal. Synonym: minor. Antonym: central
- Hegemony: Dominance of one state over others. Synonym: supremacy. Antonym: subordination
- Rhetoric: Persuasive but superficial talk. Synonym: discourse. Antonym: silence
- Holistic: Considering the whole. Synonym: comprehensive. Antonym: partial
- Contours: Outlines or defining features. Synonym: shape. Antonym: obscurity

## **PARADIGM SHIFT IN CHINA, INDIA RELATIONS**      **AUTHOR: DR MOONIS AHMAR**

### **Summary:**

The article explores the unfolding paradigm shift in Sino-Indian relations, a shift that has moved from speculation to reality and now demands careful analysis. Once locked in bitter rivalry after the deadly border clashes of 2020 and decades of mistrust dating back to the 1962 war, China and India are suddenly shaking hands where they once clenched fists. The visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to New Delhi, followed by Modi's participation in the SCO summit in Tianjin, marked a dramatic turn where both sides vowed to restart direct flights, boost trade, negotiate troop withdrawals and ease border tensions. Despite India's longstanding reservations over China's mega dam project on the Yarlung Tsangpo River, Beijing attempted to pacify Delhi's anxieties. Modi, reading the changing winds, publicly declared that stable and predictable ties with Beijing would not only bring peace to Asia but also bolster global prosperity.

The article underscores that India's warming towards China is not a leap of faith but a recalibration driven by national interests. For two decades, India leaned heavily on Washington, joining QUAD to counter Chinese influence, but Trump's return to the White House shifted the balance. His tilt towards Pakistan during the May 7–10 war, coupled with punishing tariffs on Indian exports, forced New Delhi to question America's reliability. The dictum that there are no permanent enemies or allies, only permanent interests, comes alive here. By pivoting towards Beijing and exploring a Sino-Indian-Russian axis, India seeks to cut America down to size, dilute the Sino-Pakistan bond and carve space for itself in an evolving multipolar world. The author argues that this is no fleeting flirtation but a strategic reorientation, echoing Palmerston's timeless wisdom that states follow interests, not sentiments.

### **Overview:**

The article portrays how shifting alliances and bruised partnerships have propelled India to mend fences with China, demonstrating that in global politics, yesterday's adversary can become today's partner. It is not simply about border demarcations or trade concessions but about India recalculating its place in a world moving from bipolar rigidity to multipolar fluidity. The narrative cuts through the smoke of slogans and rhetoric to show how strategic necessity, not idealism, is reshaping Asian geopolitics.

### **NOTES:**

The article highlights the unfolding paradigm shift in Sino-Indian relations where old hostilities are giving way to cautious cooperation. After decades of mistrust since the 1962 war and fresh tensions following the 2020 border clash, both sides are now showing willingness to mend ties. The Chinese Foreign Minister's visit to New Delhi opened the door for resumption of direct flights, boosting trade, troop withdrawal talks, and dialogue on the border issue. Despite India's misgivings over China's proposed mega dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River, Beijing attempted to allay its concerns. India's strategic recalibration is shaped by disillusionment with the United States, particularly Trump's tilt towards Pakistan during the May 7–10 war and heavy tariffs on Indian exports. As a result, New Delhi now sees value in mending fences with Beijing, reducing China-Pakistan closeness, and strengthening a possible Sino-Indian-Russian axis to balance American influence. The piece reinforces the dictum that there are no permanent allies or enemies, only permanent interests, showing how realpolitik is driving the current thaw.

**Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Sino-Indian relations, US tilt towards Pakistan, QUAD and multipolarity
- International Relations: Realism, shifting alliances, balance of power, strategic partnerships.
- Political Science: State interests versus permanent friendships, regional conflict resolution
- Essay Paper: Themes on global power shifts, multipolarity, trust deficit in alliances

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article says that India and China who have fought wars and clashed on borders are now trying to fix relations. For example, they agreed to resume direct flights, talk about troop withdrawals and increase trade. Earlier, India was relying on the US, but after Trump supported Pakistan and even punished Indian exports, India realised it cannot put all eggs in the American basket. Now Modi is trying to balance by getting closer to China, which also weakens the China-Pakistan friendship. This shows that countries change friends and foes depending on their interests.

**Facts and Figures:**

- China remained India's largest trading partner with annual trade worth 136 billion dollars.
- Wang Yi visited New Delhi in August 2025, meeting Modi, Jaishankar and Ajit Doval.
- Agreements included resuming direct flights, boosting trade, and establishing a working group on border management
- Modi is scheduled to attend the SCO summit in Tianjin on August 31, 2025.
- Trump imposed 50% tariffs on Indian exports after India defied pressure to stop oil imports from Russia.
- During the May 7–10 war, China openly supported Pakistan, prompting Trump to mediate and offer to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

To put it simply, the article makes it crystal clear that the so-called paradigm shift in Sino-Indian relations is more than diplomatic small talk. It is a tectonic change where India disillusioned with Washington is tilting towards Beijing to protect its strategic turf. It reminds us that in the grand chessboard of global politics today's foe can become tomorrow's ally for what matters is not sentiment but survival, not loyalty but lasting interests.

## Arab News Pakistan –

### **IS THE INDUS WATERS TREATY REALLY UNDER THREAT?    AUTHOR: JAVED HAFEEZ**

The article looks into the storm brewing between India and Pakistan following a deadly attack on tourists in Kashmir. India, pointing fingers at Pakistan without concrete evidence, hastily declared its intent to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960 an agreement that has weathered wars, disputes, and decades of hostility. Pakistan's reaction was swift and serious, warning that any violation of the treaty could be seen as an act of war. The article argues that while India's rhetoric may be more political posturing than practical action, given the geographic and technical limitations of controlling water flow through mountainous terrain, the implications are anything but trivial. Water is the lifeblood of Pakistan's agriculture, which sustains over 60 percent of its population, and any attempt to curtail its share could spark an existential crisis. The author reminds us that legally, India cannot walk away from the treaty unilaterally, as international law, including the Vienna Convention, binds both parties to act in good faith.

The article warns of catastrophic consequences if this water dispute turns into armed conflict between two nuclear states, pointing out that any escalation would not just devastate South Asia but might ripple through the Gulf region and beyond. The piece also raises questions about whether the incident in Pahalgam might have been a false flag operation, designed to win U.S. favor during Vice President JD Vance's visit to India. The possibility of two-front pressure on Pakistan from the Line of Control and its western borders adds to the gravity. The article calls on international actors, particularly Saudi Arabia, the GCC, the World Bank, and the UN, to help ease tensions and preserve a treaty once hailed as a model for international water cooperation. In the end, the unresolved Kashmir issue emerges once again as the underlying fault line in Indo-Pak relations, one that no dam or treaty can permanently contain without honest diplomacy and a long-overdue reckoning with history.

#### **Overview:**

This article highlights the sudden rise in Indo-Pak tensions surrounding the potential suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty. It discusses the treaty's historical resilience, legal sanctity, and how its violation could trigger regional instability. The author underlines that water security and national security in South Asia are now closely intertwined.

#### **NOTES:**

The article explores the alarming escalation of Indo-Pak tensions following India's unilateral declaration to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) after a terror attack in Kashmir for which it blamed Pakistan without proof. The treaty signed in 1960 under World Bank supervision has withstood decades of hostility, including the wars of 1965 and 1971. The author emphasizes that India's move not only violates international law, particularly Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, but also threatens the livelihoods of millions in Pakistan, where over 60% of the population relies on agriculture fed by the Indus River system. While India's ability to stop water flow is limited by geography, the potential to store water through dams poses a serious threat. The article stresses that water manipulation could provoke a catastrophic conflict between two nuclear powers with closely matched arsenals and highly populated cities vulnerable to mutual destruction. The piece also hints at a possible false flag operation in Pahalgam aimed at gaining US sympathy, as Vice President JD Vance was visiting India at the time. This, coupled with Indian aggression on the Line of Control and Pakistan's western front challenges, creates a two-pronged pressure that could destabilize the entire region. The author urges restraint, diplomacy, and third-party mediation from actors like the World Bank, UN, and Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, to de-escalate tensions and uphold the IWT. Ultimately, the unresolved Kashmir issue is presented as the root cause behind recurring hostilities, demanding a just resolution for sustained peace in South Asia.

**Relevant CSS Subjects and Topics:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Indus Waters Treaty, Kashmir dispute, agriculture economy
- International Relations: Conflict resolution, water security, international treaties
- Current Affairs: Indo-Pakistan tensions, Gulf-South Asia security link
- Environmental Science: Transboundary water resources, hydropolitics
- Essay Paper: Water wars, diplomacy, nuclear deterrence, treaty obligations

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article is saying that India and Pakistan may fight over water. India said it wants to stop following a water-sharing treaty, which could hurt Pakistan badly because its people depend on rivers to farm and survive. This treaty has helped avoid war for over 60 years, and if it's broken now, things could get dangerous fast. The writer also says that global organizations and powerful countries should help both sides calm down before it's too late.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Indus Waters Treaty signed in 1960, brokered by the World Bank
- Treaty survived the 1965 and 1971 wars between India and Pakistan
- 60% of Pakistan's population depends on agriculture tied to river water
- Both India and Pakistan possess nuclear weapons with similar capabilities
- India's population is five times larger than Pakistan's
- Kashmir's autonomy was abrogated in 2019 by India

To sum up, The article shows how a long-standing water treaty once hailed as a triumph of diplomacy is now teetering on the edge of irrelevance due to political theatrics and unresolved grievances. The message is clear as day that tampering with such agreements is like playing with fire in a room full of gasoline. The world must step in before a water dispute floods into full-blown disaster.

**Difficult Words and Their Meanings:**

1. Unilateral – Done by one side without the agreement of others (Syn: one-sided | Ant: mutual)
2. Obviate – To prevent or eliminate (Syn: avert | Ant: invite)
3. Riparian – Relating to riverbanks (Syn: riverside | Ant: inland)
4. Restraint – Self-control or moderation (Syn: discipline | Ant: aggression)
5. Flashpoint – A point of potential conflict (Syn: hotspot | Ant: calm zone)

## **SAFEGUARDING BIODIVERSITY IN A WARMING WORLD**

**AUTHOR:****ADNAN MASOUDY & HASSAN ALZAIN****Summary:**

The article explores a planet on the brink, where soaring global temperatures are pushing ecosystems to the edge and biodiversity loss is becoming a silent crisis. Saudi Arabia, however, is stepping into the fray with a game plan that blends ancient ecological wisdom with cutting-edge science under its Vision 2030 reforms. From restoring mangroves to deploying LiDAR and AI for conservation mapping, the Kingdom is treating nature not as an afterthought but as a national lifeline. Marine heatwaves in the Red Sea, vanishing habitats for the Arabian leopard, and desertification are sobering reminders that the clock is ticking. Yet the Saudi Green Initiative is planting millions of native trees, rehabilitating vast stretches of land, and setting aside nearly a fifth of its territory for protection, with ambitious targets to expand further by 2030.

This isn't just about hugging trees, it's about future-proofing an entire nation in a warming world. By tying biodiversity protection to economic development through tools like biodiversity credits and conservation-linked bonds, Saudi Arabia is rewriting the rules of environmental governance. International partnerships, public

engagement, and a push to embed biodiversity into education signal that this is a whole-of-society effort. The authors argue that the Kingdom is well-positioned to become a regional model in uniting climate resilience with sustainable growth. It's a high-stakes race against time, but with bold strategies, inclusive policies, and technological muscle, Saudi Arabia is betting that it can turn the tide before the sands run out.

### **Overview:**

The article examines Saudi Arabia's comprehensive approach to biodiversity protection amid climate change, detailing its Vision 2030 strategies that combine nature-based solutions, advanced technology, and inclusive public participation. It highlights record-breaking heat, marine and terrestrial ecosystem threats, and ambitious restoration targets, positioning the Kingdom as a potential leader in integrated climate and biodiversity action.

### **NOTES:**

The article underscores Saudi Arabia's ambitious, multi-layered strategy to combat biodiversity loss amid record-breaking global heat and accelerating ecosystem decline. It details how the Kingdom under Vision 2030 is merging traditional ecological knowledge with advanced tools such as LiDAR, AI mapping, and green finance instruments like biodiversity credits and conservation-linked bonds. Key initiatives include restoring mangroves, rehabilitating degraded land, planting over 115 million native trees since 2021, and expanding protected areas from the current 18.1% toward a 30% target by 2030. The threats are stark, marine heatwaves in the Red Sea, shrinking habitats for endangered species like the Arabian leopard, and advancing desertification but Saudi Arabia's approach is holistic, linking environmental preservation with economic growth, public participation, education reform, and international partnerships. The narrative presents the Kingdom's efforts as urgent, high-stakes, and technologically driven, positioning it to become a model for integrating climate resilience with sustainable national development.

### **Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subject:**

- Current Affairs – Climate change, biodiversity, Vision 2030
- Environmental Science – Conservation strategies, restoration ecology
- International Relations – Global biodiversity frameworks, climate diplomacy
- Economics – Green finance, biodiversity as an economic asset

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains how rising temperatures are harming plants, animals, and entire ecosystems. For example, coral reefs in the Red Sea are bleaching due to heatwaves, while desert animals like the Arabian leopard are losing their habitats. Saudi Arabia is responding by planting over 115 million trees since 2021, restoring mangroves that protect the coast from storms, and using AI to decide where conservation will work best. This isn't just good for nature but it helps people too by keeping the land fertile, the water clean, and the economy healthy.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- 2024 was the hottest year on record: average 15.10°C, 1.52°C above pre-industrial levels
- Saudi Green Initiative: 115 million native trees planted since 2021
- Land under protection: 18.1%, target 30% by 2030
- Marine biodiversity: 5,000+ species supported by Red Sea coral reefs
- Middle Eastern mammals may lose over 40% of viable habitat by 2050 under high-emission scenarios

To wrap up, the article is a blueprint for how nations can rally their resources, ingenuity, and people to protect the natural world in the face of climate chaos. Saudi Arabia's blend of tradition and technology, backed by clear targets and international collaboration, shows that environmental stewardship can be a cornerstone of national resilience. The road ahead is steep, but as the authors make clear, the time to act is not tomorrow, it's now.

### **Difficult Words and Meaning:**

- Biodiversity – variety of life in a particular habitat or ecosystem (Syn: ecosystem variety | Ant: monoculture)



- Desertification – process by which fertile land becomes desert (Syn: land degradation | Ant: reforestation)
- Ecological rehabilitation – restoration of damaged ecosystems (Syn: ecosystem recovery | Ant: habitat destruction).
- Stewardship – responsible management of resources (Syn: guardianship | Ant: neglect)
- Resilience – ability to recover from difficulties (Syn: adaptability | Ant: fragility)

## **GLOBAL SOUTH CAN CLAIM CLIMATE MANTLE AT COP30 AUTHORS: MAIARA FOLLY, JAYATI GHOSH AND JORG HAAS**

### **Summary:**

The article strikes a powerful chord by showing how the West once a dominant torchbearer of global climate leadership is now running out of steam. With Trump's second presidency dragging the US into aggressive isolationism and the EU losing its political muscle to far-right distractions, the once-mighty "West" looks more like a house of cards. Into this vacuum steps the Global South, carrying the weight of climate shocks yet armed with the promise of renewables, falling clean tech costs, and a burning desire to set the record straight at COP30. Leaders like Brazil, India, South Africa, and China are already beating the drum of collective action, with Lula rallying heads of state, South Africa pushing debt relief and green industrialization, and China flexing its industrial clout in green tech. The article makes it clear that this is no time for half measures. The Global South must put its shoulder to the wheel and grab the mantle of climate leadership.

But the road ahead is anything but smooth. Diverging interests within BRICS+ threaten cohesion, while Trump's trade bullying lurks like a storm on the horizon. Yet the article insists that the stars have aligned for the South. Falling costs of clean energy, China's surplus in solar and wind tech, and South-South cooperation could breathe new life into multilateralism and prove that climate and development are not rivals but twin pillars of prosperity. The article gives the message that if the Global South can sink its differences and speak with one voice at COP30, it has a golden chance to prove that when the West drops the ball, others can pick it up and run with it.

### **Overview:**

This article shows the decline of Western dominance in climate politics and the rise of the Global South as a potential standard-bearer. It highlights the role of Brazil, India, South Africa and China in shaping a collective agenda ahead of COP30, stressing the need for unity, innovation, and financial reform to lead the global green transition.

### **NOTES:**

The article highlights the decline of Western dominance in climate governance, with the US under Trump turning inward and aggressive while the EU struggles with fragmentation and lack of political will. This leadership gap has opened space for the Global South, particularly Brazil, India, South Africa, and China, to push for a more inclusive climate agenda ahead of COP30. The Global South, long burdened by climate shocks and historic inequalities, now has an opportunity to lead the global green transition through cooperation, innovation and renewable energy expansion. Brazil is using its COP30 host role and BRICS+ presidency to advance climate finance and cooperation, South Africa is leveraging its G20 presidency to call for debt relief and green industrialization, and China is directing its surplus in solar, wind and battery technology toward developing nations. Despite divergent interests within BRICS+ and challenges from Western trade pressures, the article stresses that falling clean tech costs, stronger South-South cooperation, and multilateralism can help these nations show that climate and development go hand in hand, making COP30 a decisive moment for their leadership.

### **Related CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- International Relations: Global climate governance, South-South cooperation

- Current Affairs: COP30, sustainable development, climate finance
- Pakistan Affairs: Climate vulnerability, environmental policy
- Essay Paper: Climate change, development vs sustainability, leadership in a multipolar world

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article says the West is losing its grip on climate leadership, leaving room for the Global South. For example, China has become the biggest producer of solar panels and batteries and can sell them cheaply to developing countries. Brazil is hosting COP30 to push collective action, while South Africa is pushing for debt relief and green industrialization. These examples show that if developing countries work together, they can take charge of global climate action.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- 17 heads of state from the Global South and EU met in April ahead of COP30
- BRICS+ leaders adopted a framework declaration on climate finance in July
- China leads globally in solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries
- The 1992 Rio Earth Summit and 2015 Paris Agreement remain largely unfulfilled
- Indira Gandhi at the 1972 Stockholm conference said “Poverty is the worst form of pollution”

To sum up, the article is an attention call that when the West falters, the Global South cannot afford to sit on its hands. COP30 is not just another conference, it is a stage where developing nations can prove that they are not passengers but drivers of the global climate agenda.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE CAN POTENTIALLY EXACERBATE MILITANCY IN PAKISTAN’S CONFLICT-HIT AREAS AUTHOR: ABDUL BASIT KHAN**

### **Summary**

The article highlights that climate change has become a silent accomplice to militancy in fragile states like Pakistan, particularly in provinces such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. While climate change does not itself breed extremism, it acts as a threat multiplier, aggravating resource scarcity, governance gaps, and community grievances. Militant outfits like TTP and Daesh Khorasan exploit natural disasters at multiple levels: ideologically by portraying calamities as divine punishment or government failure, socially by stepping into relief roles in neglected regions, financially by running fraudulent donation campaigns, and operationally by striking security forces when their attention is diverted toward disaster management. These groups use floods, earthquakes, and pandemics as levers to tighten their grip, undermine state credibility, and expand influence.

The writer emphasizes that counter-extremism in Pakistan must think outside the box by greening its security framework rather than narrowly securitizing climate threats. Just as floods can wash away livelihoods, they can also wash away trust in state institutions if militants exploit the vacuum. Past examples in Pakistan and abroad show how extremists have used disaster relief to woo communities, gather funds, and ambush distracted forces. According to the article climate change may not light the fire of militancy, but it certainly fans the flames. The way forward lies in integrated, environment-sensitive policies that address vulnerabilities, strengthen governance, and blunt the militants’ attempts to weaponize climate disasters.

### **Overview:**

This article reveals the intersection of climate change and militancy in Pakistan, underlining how natural disasters deepen instability and create opportunities for extremists. It explains how militants manipulate governance failures and exploit public grievances to consolidate control.

### **NOTES:**

The article highlights that climate change, though not a direct cause of militancy, works as a threat multiplier by worsening governance gaps, resource scarcity, and community grievances, particularly in Pakistan's conflict-hit areas like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Militant groups such as TTP and Daesh Khorasan exploit climate-induced disasters on four levels: ideologically by framing them as divine punishment or government failure, socially by stepping in as alternative service providers in neglected regions, financially by running fraudulent donation drives under the guise of relief efforts, and operationally by taking advantage of the diversion of security forces during relief operations to launch attacks. Past cases in Pakistan such as JuD and TLP exploiting floods in Balochistan and global examples like Al-Shabab in Somalia providing services during disasters illustrate this pattern. The author stresses that Pakistan's counter-extremism policies should adopt environment-sensitive approaches, integrating governance and security responses, so that militants cannot weaponize climate crises to win influence or erode state authority.

**Related CSS Syllabus or Subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Climate change, militancy, governance challenges
- Pakistan Affairs: Security dynamics, environmental vulnerabilities
- International Relations: Non-traditional security issues
- Essay Paper: Climate security, radicalization, governance vacuums

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that climate disasters like floods create problems that militants can misuse. For example, in Balochistan, groups such as JuD and TLP stepped in during floods to provide aid where the government lagged, making people trust them more. Similarly, in Somalia, Al-Shabab acted as a service provider in flood-hit areas. Militants also raise funds through fake donation drives, using disasters as a cover for their operations.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Germanwatch Climate Risk Index (2009–2019) ranks Pakistan among most affected by extreme climate events
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan hit by both flash floods and militancy
- Past instances: JuD and TLP exploited floods for relief operations in Balochistan
- Global example: Al-Shabab in Somalia used climate disasters to replace state services

To wrap up, the article highlights how militancy and climate change walk hand in hand in destabilizing fragile regions. Pakistan's security cannot be safeguarded with guns alone; it needs green policies that plug governance gaps and prevent extremists from turning floods into fertile ground for recruitment.

**Difficult Words and Meanings:**

- Symbiotic: Mutually dependent. Synonym: interdependent. Antonym: independent
- Exacerbate: Make worse. Synonym: aggravate. Antonym: alleviate
- Vacuum: Empty space or absence. Synonym: void. Antonym: presence
- Manipulate: To influence cleverly or unfairly. Synonym: exploit. Antonym: support
- Credibility: Believability or trustworthiness. Synonym: reliability. Antonym: doubt

## PRIORITISING GAWADAR

### Summary:

The article zeroes in on Gwadar, the crown jewel of CPEC, and exposes how it's been long promised but poorly delivered. The writer highlights that while Pakistan's planning minister reassures the Chinese and the public that Gwadar remains top priority, these words need to be backed by actions, not just press releases. What frustrates me is how this mega-port, meant to uplift Balochistan and connect Pakistan to global trade routes, keeps hitting roadblocks both from within and outside. From BLA militants targeting infrastructure to weak administrative will, Gwadar's promise is slowly being buried under security threats and red tape. It's like having a golden goose but forgetting to feed it.

What stuck with me is the idea that Gwadar can't afford to sit on the back burner anymore. The article calls for a dual-track approach, tightening security while aggressively pushing development. It paints a harsh but honest picture: either we get serious and invest the manpower, money, and resolve into Gwadar, or we let it slip through our fingers like so many past opportunities. The vision of a bustling, prosperous port city can still be saved, but only if development isn't held hostage to militancy. And let's not kid ourselves. If we let this go, we're not just delaying a project, we're sabotaging our own future.

### Overview:

The article focuses on Pakistan's renewed commitment to developing Gwadar, the linchpin of CPEC, but warns that lofty promises must now be matched with real-world implementation. It discusses the setbacks caused by militancy, especially BLA attacks backed by India, and stresses the need for a dual strategy of security and development to prevent Gwadar from becoming a lost opportunity.

### NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's renewed verbal commitment to developing Gwadar, with Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal assuring Chinese officials of its top priority status. However, it stresses that these reassurances must be reinforced by concrete administrative measures, infrastructure funding, and sustained political will. Gwadar, originally envisioned as the heartbeat of CPEC and a driver of economic change for Balochistan, has remained underdeveloped largely due to repeated militant attacks by the BLA, allegedly backed by India. These attacks have targeted essential infrastructure like road and rail links, disrupting the port's connectivity and undermining its integration with national and regional networks. While military operations continue to counter these threats, the article argues that development cannot be paused. Instead both security and economic growth must progress simultaneously. The dual-track approach, combatting militancy while pushing development is deemed essential to prevent Gwadar from slipping into oblivion. Without urgent and synchronized efforts, the port's transformative potential may be permanently lost.

### CSS Syllabus Relevance:

- Pakistan Affairs: CPEC, Gwadar Port, Balochistan development, internal security
- Current Affairs: Regional integration, security challenges, development diplomacy
- International Relations: Pak-China strategic partnership, regional connectivity
- Essay Paper: Infrastructure-led growth, balancing security and development

### Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how Gwadar an important port city in Pakistan was meant to boost trade and bring prosperity through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Despite many promises, progress has been very slow, mostly because of attacks by militants and weak efforts from the government. Militants have destroyed roads and

rail links that connect Gwadar with the rest of the country. The writer says Pakistan needs to work on two things at the same time: improve security and continue development without stopping. If the government keeps delaying, Gwadar might never become the modern city it was meant to be, and Pakistan could lose a major opportunity for growth.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Gwadar is a deep-sea port developed under CPEC
- CPEC provides China a trade route bypassing Malacca Strait
- BLA militants have attacked infrastructure and security forces
- Government reiterates commitment to developing Gwadar and establishing special economic zones
- Delays have been caused by both security threats and administrative inefficiency

In a nutshell, Gwadar is more than just a port; it's a symbol of what Pakistan can achieve when it aligns vision with action. But without a firm grip on both the security and development sides, the dream of Gwadar will be reduced to nothing more than another missed chance in our long list of unfinished ambitions. The clock is ticking, and this time, the stakes are far too high for more delays.

#### **Difficult Words and Meanings:**

1. Reaffirm – To state again strongly

Syn: Reiterate | Ant: Deny

2. Transformative – Causing a major change

Syn: Revolutionary | Ant: Insignificant

3. Militants – Armed individuals who use violence for political aims

Syn: Insurgents | Ant: Peacekeepers

4. Infrastructure – Basic physical systems needed for a country

Syn: Framework | Ant: Disrepair

5. Stall – To delay or slow progress

Syn: Hinder | Ant: Accelerate

## **AUG 5: DISMANTLING OF KASHMIR'S SPECIAL STATUS FUELS STRUGGLE**

### **AUTHOR - SARDAR ABDUL KHALIQ WASI**

#### **Summary:**

The writer shows a truth we've long known but the world chooses to overlook that Kashmir was never meant to be under Indian occupation. From the 1947 Accession Resolution to the brutal annexation of Junagadh and Hyderabad, the betrayal of Muslim-majority states was methodical and merciless. But what India did on August 5, 2019, by revoking Articles 370 and 35A, was a calculated blow, not just to Kashmir's autonomy, but to its very soul. It dismantled governance, muted voices of resistance, and replaced political agency with a puppet administration. And while Kashmiris were locked inside their homes, stripped of internet, dignity, and freedom, the rest of the world, obsessed with trade and diplomacy looked the other way. It's hard not to feel like international morality is for sale. What hit me hardest was the deliberate erasure of Kashmiri identity. It wasn't only constitutional tinkering, but also cultural suffocation. Language, festivals, history these all pushed aside while outsiders were handed residency, jobs, and land in a settler-colonial scheme. The economic collapse following the clampdown added salt to the wounds such as apples rotted, tourism died, artisans starved. Yet, despite the oppression, the spirit of resistance roars on. Pakistan's firm stance on Youm-e-Istehsal, international advocacy, and unwavering moral support for Kashmiris is



more than just rhetoric. This article doesn't just narrate injustice, it calls out the hypocrisy of silence and demands the world to stop turning a blind eye to occupation wrapped in constitutional jargon.

### **Overview:**

This article critically examines India's revocation of Articles 370 and 35A, stripping Jammu and Kashmir of its special status, and the ongoing political, cultural, and economic oppression that followed. It highlights India's use of legal manipulation and brute force to suppress Kashmiri identity and freedom, the demographic re-engineering of the region, and the global community's failure to act. The article also emphasizes Pakistan's consistent diplomatic efforts and moral stance in support of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

### **NOTES:**

The article highlights the illegal and forceful revocation of Articles 370 and 35A by India on August 5, 2019, which stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its semi-autonomous status, leading to a full-scale military lockdown and communication blackout. It underlines how this move was not just political but aimed at altering the demography and identity of Kashmir through settler-colonial tactics like new domicile laws, land allotments, and job reservations for outsiders. The article also emphasizes the cultural suffocation faced by Kashmiris as their language, festivals, and local governance are being systematically erased. Economically, the region has suffered a severe Downturn especially in its key sectors like tourism, apples, and handicrafts. The human rights violations, ranging from mass arrests to suppression of dissent, are presented as part of a larger agenda to silence Kashmiris. Despite this, the spirit of resistance persists, supported by Pakistan's firm diplomatic efforts and observance of Youm-e-Istehsal, which keeps global attention alive, even as most of the international community remains complicit through silence.

### **CSS Syllabus Relevance:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Kashmir dispute, partition history, foreign policy.
- Current Affairs: Human rights, regional conflicts, India's domestic policies
- International Relations: UN resolutions, international law, diplomacy
- Essay Paper: Kashmir issue, subjugation of minorities, silence of the global order

### **Notes for Beginners:**

This article explains how India changed the special laws that once gave Kashmir some control over its own affairs. These laws were removed in 2019 without asking the people of Kashmir. Since then, people in the region have lost their elected government, and outsiders have been allowed to buy land and get jobs there which locals see as unfair. Kashmir's economy known for tourism, apples, and handicrafts has suffered badly. Schools now teach less about Kashmiri culture and more about other languages. Many people were arrested, the internet was shut down, and military forces increased. Pakistan has strongly opposed these changes and continues to raise the issue in global forums. This is not just about laws, but also it's about a whole population feeling silenced and pushed aside.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- Articles 370 and 35A were revoked on August 5, 2019
- Jammu and Kashmir's status changed from state to union territories
- Economic losses: Tourism, apples, and handicrafts sectors declined
- Massive military lockdown, curfews, and communication blackouts imposed
- New domicile laws allowed non-Kashmiris to settle in the region
- Multiple international human rights reports condemned the repression

To sum up, this article reveals the anatomy of a silent occupation where tanks are louder than ballots and heritage is bulldozed by bureaucracy. What happened on August 5 wasn't just a legal move, it was an identity crisis imposed on a people who never consented to be ruled this way. If the world truly stands for justice then Kashmir must be more than just a paragraph in diplomatic statements.

### **Difficult Words and Meanings:**

1. Accession – The formal joining of a state to a larger entity  
Syn: Admission | Ant: Secession
2. Autonomy – The right to self-governance or independence  
Syn: Sovereignty | Ant: Dependence
3. Revocation – The official cancellation of a law or agreement  
Syn: Repeal | Ant: Enactment
4. Demographic – Related to the structure of a population  
Syn: Population-based | Ant: Individual
5. Subjugation – The act of bringing someone under control by force  
Syn: Oppression | Ant: Liberation

## **REFORMING THE CIVIL SERVICE      AUTHOR - MALEEHA LODHI**

### **Summary:**

The article clearly shows how Pakistan's bureaucratic machine has become bloated, outdated, and tangled in its own inefficiencies. Despite swelling numbers of federal and provincial employees, performance and public trust have both nosedived. What struck me the most was how politicisation, lack of merit, and piecemeal reforms have corroded this vital institution from the inside out. Instead of implementing bold, structural change, we've relied on cosmetic tweaks that barely scratch the surface. The proposals on the table, especially the creation of a National Executive Service and lateral entry from outside the bureaucracy, do offer a glimmer of hope but the devil as always, lies in the execution.

What really hit home for me was the urgency behind fixing the fundamentals recruitment, training, performance metrics, and weeding out dead weight. The article wisely calls out the glaring gap: no mention of downsizing, no integration of local or provincial governance where actual service delivery happens, and no real strategy to merge overlapping departments or eliminate redundant posts. Without trimming the fat and injecting fresh talent with technical expertise, any talk of reform is just lip service. It's time we moved beyond hollow slogans and really put our money where our mouth is, otherwise we'll just keep spinning the same broken wheel and the cost will be public trust, effective governance, and national progress.

### **Overview:**

This article examines the longstanding inefficiencies and failures of Pakistan's civil service structure. It critically analyzes the proposals presented by the Ahsan Iqbal-led committee to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, aimed at creating a "smart" civil service. It highlights issues like unchecked expansion, politicisation, lack of performance accountability, and the historical inertia that has stifled meaningful reform. Key recommendations such as lateral entry through the National Executive Service, merit-based recruitment, and institutional restructuring are discussed with caution, emphasizing that true reform requires more than symbolic change. It needs systemic overhaul and political will.

### **NOTES:**

Pakistan's civil service is burdened by inefficiency, overstaffing, and outdated practices, with around 2.9 million employees failing to deliver basic services effectively. Despite past reform attempts, real structural change has been missing, as reforms often ignore core issues like merit-based recruitment, meaningful downsizing or eliminating redundant departments. The article highlights the negative impact of politicisation and lack of accountability in the bureaucracy which has damaged public trust. The recent reform proposals such as creating a National Executive Service and allowing lateral entry from outside the system, aim to bring fresh talent and expertise into senior roles. However, the article cautions that unless performance metrics are enforced, unnecessary departments are merged,

and training is upgraded to meet modern challenges, these reforms will remain cosmetic. The absence of a clear downsizing plan, lack of integration with provincial/local governance, and no cost-saving focus are major gaps. In short, without a shift toward performance-driven, depoliticised, and merit-based systems, the reform agenda will fail to address the root of Pakistan's bureaucratic crisis.

#### **CSS Syllabus Relevance:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Bureaucratic history, administrative structure, post-independence state-building
- Governance & Public Administration: Reform proposals, lateral entry, performance-based systems
- Current Affairs: Institutional capacity, public service delivery, federal-province coordination
- Essay: Public sector reform, good governance, systemic inefficiencies

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

This article talks about how the civil service in Pakistan which is supposed to manage the country's administration has become too big and too slow. For example, even though there are millions of government employees, people still struggle with basic services like health, education, and justice. One big reason is that jobs are often given based on politics instead of merit. The article suggests that Pakistan should bring in experts from outside to senior roles like hiring a tech expert to run IT policy instead of just a career bureaucrat. But this should be done carefully, with fairness, so no province is left out. It also says we need to remove useless posts, merge overlapping departments, and train people for today's challenges like digital governance and fast decision-making.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Around 2.9 million civil servants exist at federal and provincial levels
- The reform committee met over 12 times and gave 50 recommendations
- No real downsizing or cost-cutting measures proposed
- Proposed creation of a National Executive Service for lateral hiring
- Past reforms in 1973 and 2000s were either ignored or failed

To sum up, The article calls for a bold shake-up of how we run the country. Reforming the civil service is a bureaucratic exercise as well as a national necessity. Without real change, we'll keep burning public trust and taxpayer money in a machine that grinds but doesn't produce. The time for patchwork fixes is over of what we need now is political courage, expert insight, and a plan that puts performance above politics. If we want to steer this ship right, we've got to stop patching holes and start rebuilding the hull.

## **THE RISE OF MULTIPOLARITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

#### **Summary:**

The article charts the shifting sands of global politics. It highlights the world's evolution from Cold War bipolarity to post-Cold War unipolarity, and now towards a multipolar order. Once the United States stood unrivalled, but today new giants have entered the arena. China, wielding its Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and regional pacts, is pushing hard towards the top economic spot. Russia under Putin, India under Modi, and other regional powers like Brazil, Kazakhstan, and several Southeast and Central Asian states are no longer content to play second fiddle. The currency of power is no longer measured solely in tanks and warships but in technology, strategic partnerships, and economic clout.

For Pakistan, this geopolitical reshuffle is more than just background noise; it is an open window of opportunity. If Islamabad plays its cards right, it can forge stronger economic and diplomatic ties with global heavyweights, diversifying partnerships instead of clinging to one patron. However, this requires bold yet calculated diplomacy, shrewd economic planning, and a readiness to adapt to the changing rules of the game. The message is clear that in

this new world order, those who hesitate risk becoming spectators, while those who act with vision stand to claim a place at the table of power.

**Overview:**

This article explores the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar global system, highlighting the rise of China, Russia, India, and other regional powers alongside the United States. It underscores the growing influence of economic initiatives, technology, and diplomatic alliances in shaping modern geopolitics. For Pakistan, the article stresses the importance of proactive engagement with multiple powers to secure stability, economic growth, and a strong strategic position in the evolving world order.

**NOTES:**

The article outlines the shift from a bipolar world order during the Cold War dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union to a unipolar system with the US as the sole superpower after 1991, and now to an emerging multipolar structure. It emphasizes China's rapid ascent as a global power through economic projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, regional alliances such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and its growing economic clout. It also highlights the roles of Russia under Vladimir Putin, India under Narendra Modi, and other influential states like Brazil, Kazakhstan, and various Southeast and Central Asian nations in reshaping global dynamics. The article stresses that modern influence hinges more on technology, strategic diplomacy, and economic integration than on sheer military might. For Pakistan, this changing environment offers strategic openings to diversify alliances, expand trade, and strengthen diplomatic engagement with multiple powers. However, capitalizing on these opportunities demands decisive, forward-thinking leadership, calculated risk-taking, and adaptability in foreign policy.

**Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Current Affairs – The article discusses recent global political and economic trends, such as China's rise, multipolarity, and shifting alliances, which are key areas in CSS Current Affairs for understanding ongoing geopolitical changes.
- International Relations – It explores power transitions in the international system, the decline of unipolarity, and the emergence of new power centers, all of which relate to IR theories like power transition theory, balance of power, and multipolarity.
- Political Science – The article indirectly engages with concepts of state power, sovereignty, and global governance, offering insights into how political ideologies, diplomacy, and economic strategies shape the world order.
- Pakistan Affairs – The article highlights Pakistan's foreign policy options and strategic positioning in the evolving multipolar environment, directly tying into discussions on Pakistan's diplomatic history, strategic challenges, and opportunities.
- Essay Paper – Topics like "The Rise of Multipolarity," "Shifting Global Alliances," or "Pakistan's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century" can be built from this article, providing strong arguments, examples, and contemporary references for essay writing.

**Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains how world politics have changed over time. First, during the Cold War there were two main powers: the US and the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the US became the only superpower. Now, many countries are becoming powerful at the same time such as China, Russia, and India. China is growing its economy and influence through big projects like the Belt and Road Initiative. Pakistan can benefit from this change by building strong relations with these countries and improving trade and diplomacy. If Pakistan acts wisely, it can strengthen its economy and position in the world.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Cold War era: 1947–1991, defined by US–USSR rivalry
- China: World’s second-largest economy, expanding influence via BRI and SCO
- US: Sole superpower after Cold War, now challenged by emerging powers
- Multipolarity: Involves economic, technological, and diplomatic competition rather than just military strength

To put it simply, the unipolar era has faded, and the chessboard now has many queens. For Pakistan, the tide of multipolarity can either be a rising wave that lifts its position or a current that leaves it drifting. The choice will depend on its ability to act boldly, diversify alliances, and secure a sustainable place in the global order.

#### **Difficult Words and Their Meanings:**

- Unipolarity – A system dominated by one superpower
- Syn: Monopoly | Ant: Multipolarity
- Bipolarity – A system dominated by two superpowers
- Syn: Duality | Ant: Multipolarity
- Multipolarity – A system with multiple centers of power
- Syn: Polycentrism | Ant: Unipolarity
- Clout – Influence or power in politics or business
- Syn: Authority | Ant: Weakness
- Assert – To state or claim confidently
- Syn: Declare | Ant: Deny

## **HONOUR OUR PAST AND BUILD OUR FUTURE**

#### **Summary:**

The article captures the soul of Pakistan’s Independence Day, painting it as more than fireworks, flags, and fanfare. It reminds readers that the real spirit of August 14 lies in cherishing the sacrifices of those who carved a homeland out of the storms of history. It recalls how Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisioned a nation rooted in justice, equality, and the rule of law, yet laments that seven decades on, the nation is still wrestling with poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and disunity. The author calls on citizens to move beyond lip service and one-day patriotism, urging them to roll up their sleeves and commit to honesty, responsibility, and diversity as daily duties rather than seasonal slogans.

The article also drives home the point that independence is a living trust, not a relic of the past. It exhorts Pakistanis to rise above personal gain and short-term fixes, choosing truth over lies and unity over discord. By invoking the memory of 1947, it calls for rekindling the same fire that once united millions. Every honest act, every book taught, every effort to preserve the environment becomes a brick in the wall of nation-building. The closing note is a call to action: as we raise the flag, let us not just salute the past but pledge to leave behind a future that glitters brighter for the generations yet to come.

#### **Overview:**

The article is a thought-provoking piece of writing blending historical reflection with a wake up call for civic responsibility. It intertwines national memory with present challenges. It shows that independence is a journey that must be nurtured daily through justice, unity, and active citizenship.

#### **NOTES:**

The article highlights that Pakistan’s Independence Day is not merely a celebration of freedom but a reminder of the sacrifices that led to the country’s creation in 1947. It recalls Quaid-e-Azam’s vision of a state built on justice, equality, and the rule of law, stressing that this vision remains unfulfilled due to persistent challenges such as



poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, corruption, and disunity. The article underscores that true patriotism lies in daily commitment rather than symbolic gestures, urging citizens to practice honesty, protect the weak, respect diversity, and contribute to national progress. It emphasizes that unity is Pakistan's greatest strength, reminding the nation of the spirit of 1947 that united millions for a common cause. Every constructive act is portrayed as nation-building whether promoting education, fighting injustice, or safeguarding the environment. The article concludes by calling on Pakistanis to look beyond one-day celebrations and work together to build a prosperous and dignified future for coming generations.

#### **Relevance CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Pakistan Affairs: Struggle for Pakistan, post-independence challenges, vision of Quaid-e-Azam
- Current Affairs: National unity, governance, and development hurdles
- Political Science: State-building, justice, and role of citizens
- Essay: Patriotism, leadership, and responsibilities of an independent nation

#### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article explains that Independence Day is not just about celebrating with flags and lights, but about remembering the struggle that gave Pakistan its freedom in 1947. Quaid-e-Azam wanted a country based on justice and equality, but even after seventy-eight years problems like poverty, illiteracy, and division still hold Pakistan back. For example, many children still lack access to schools, and corruption weakens governance. The writer stresses that true patriotism means helping others, working honestly, and protecting the environment. Just as the unity of 1947 made Pakistan possible, today unity and responsibility are needed to secure its future.

#### **Facts and Figures:**

- Pakistan became independent on 14 August 1947 after decades of struggle
- 78 years have passed since independence
- Key challenges still include poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and disunity
- 25 truckloads of encroachment goods were seized during Independence Day operations (news reference in the same paper)

In a nutshell, this article is not just a reminder of how Pakistan was born but also a mirror showing where it stands today. It carries the weight of history yet throws down the gauntlet for the present, urging citizens to pick up the torch of responsibility. It makes clear that nations are not built on empty slogans but on daily acts of truth, justice, and unity. It is a timeless message that independence is not a trophy to be stored in a glass case but a living flame that must be guarded, fueled, and passed on to the generations ahead.

## **ALASKA AND BEYOND      AUTHOR: ALBERT P. KHOREV**

#### **Summary:**

The article explores the Alaska summit between Russia and the United States, a rare meeting after years of frosty relations. It rejects the childish notion of winners and losers, stressing that politics is not cricket but the art of compromise. The summit marked a step forward in shaping a framework for peace in Ukraine, with Russia making clear that it seeks neither endless bloodshed nor territorial conquest but security guarantees and justice for the Russian-speaking population of Donbass. It recalls how these communities endured shelling and persecution since 2014, with the Minsk Agreements proving little more than a smokescreen to buy Kiev time to rearm. The writer argues that Russia favours diplomacy over brute force, yet refuses a shallow ceasefire that would allow the West to rearm Ukraine and reignite the fire later.

The article also highlights Trump's role in pushing for a settlement, contrasting it with Europe's hawkish posture of prolonging the war under the pretext of peacekeeping. Myths about Russian child abductions are dismantled with hard numbers, while emphasis is placed on Putin's push to restart direct talks with Ukraine. The article paints Europe as trapped in its own fear of a strong Russia, unwilling to accept Moscow's outreach for a broader security deal. The final message is blunt: Russia sees Ukraine as a brotherly nation, is not itching for conflict with NATO, and is ready for compromise if its security red lines are respected. The ball, the writer insists, now lies in the Western court.

### **Overview:**

The article portrays the Alaska summit as a crucial turning point where long-frozen relations between Moscow and Washington showed signs of thaw. It underscores that the conflict in Ukraine is less about land and more about people, identity and security guarantees, while exposing Europe's reluctance to accept a durable peace.

### **NOTES:**

The article discusses the Alaska summit between Russia and the United States, the first face-to-face meeting since 2021, which aimed at easing strained relations and exploring a pathway to resolve the Ukraine conflict. It stresses that politics is not about winners and losers but about compromise, with Russia emphasizing diplomacy despite its battlefield advantage. The article highlights Russia's stance that the war is not territorial but about protecting the Russian-speaking population of Donbass, who suffered shelling and persecution since 2014. It critiques the Minsk Agreements as a ploy by the West to rearm Ukraine rather than ensure peace. President Trump is portrayed as pushing for a settlement, unlike European states that seek to prolong the conflict through peacekeeping troops. Myths about Russia abducting thousands of Ukrainian children are dismissed with figures showing only 339 verified cases, some of whom were returned through Qatari mediation, while 228 children have been killed by Ukrainian shelling since 2022. The article concludes that Russia does not seek endless war or aggression against NATO but wants genuine security guarantees and a comprehensive deal, leaving the responsibility for peace in the hands of the West.

### **Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:**

- Current Affairs: Ukraine conflict, Russia-US relations, NATO's role in Eastern Europe
- International Relations: Realism, balance of power, security dilemmas
- Political Science: Conflict resolution, diplomacy, state narratives
- Essay Paper: Themes on war and peace, global security architecture, realpolitik in practice

### **Notes for Beginners:**

The article says Russia and the US met in Alaska to talk about ending the Ukraine war. Russia says the war is not about grabbing land but about protecting Russian-speaking people who were attacked for years. For example, in Donbass, people have faced shelling since 2014. Russia also says the West used peace talks like the Minsk Agreement only to buy time for Ukraine to get more weapons. The US under Trump now wants peace talks, while Europe wants to keep the war going by sending more troops. Russia has also returned some Ukrainian children after verification, rejecting the claim that it kidnapped thousands. The article ends by saying Russia wants peace, but only if its security concerns are respected.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- Russia and the US met in Alaska in August 2025, their first in-person summit since 2021
- Three rounds of Russia-Ukraine talks resumed in May 2025 but stalled due to Kiev's demands
- Ukrainian negotiators listed only 339 suspected missing children, while 228 children have died from Ukrainian shelling since 2022
- The Minsk Agreements were endorsed by the UN Security Council but later used by Kiev to rearm
- Trump pushed for settlement while the EU insisted on sending military forces as peacekeepers

To sum up, the article suggests that peace in Ukraine will not come through sloganeering but through compromise grounded in security realities. It strips away myths, exposes propaganda and underscores that Russia, despite its battlefield edge, prefers a diplomatic endgame. It is a living example of power politics in action, reminding us that in the theatre of international relations, it is interests not emotions that dictate the script.

CSS PLATFORM



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