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Dawn –

JUDGES SPEAK OUT.

AUTHOR: ZAHID HUSSAIN

Summary:

Pakistan today finds itself caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, as the façade of constitutional democracy gives way to a hybrid system where unelected power brokers pull the strings. Justice Athar Minallah's bold remarks reveal the bitter truth: the absence of genuine constitutional governance has allowed elite capture and authoritarian impulses to take root. What is paraded as civilian supremacy is nothing more than a thin veil, easily pierced by manipulated elections, amendments like the 26th, and the steady erosion of judicial independence. The judiciary once a beacon of hope now appears compromised, with some judges openly warning that it risks becoming a mere rubber stamp. The tragedy is compounded by the growing economic disparity with nearly half of the population pushed below the poverty line, while rulers sing the praises of a hollow "revival."

The article shows Pakistan's political landscape where history repeats itself like a broken record. Politicians who once vowed to resist military tutelage have themselves embraced the comfort of a power-sharing arrangement, sacrificing the people's mandate for short-term gains. The controlled media may try to sweep the discontent under the carpet, but the storm of public frustration continues to brew. Letters by senior judges like Mansoor Ali Shah and Ayesha Malik highlight deep rifts within the judiciary, further exposing the cracks in an already fragile edifice. The looming shadow of authoritarianism coupled with a tamed judiciary and a parliament stripped of legitimacy makes the country's democratic future look precarious. Unless Pakistan breaks this vicious cycle of engineered rule and restores the sanctity of free elections and judicial independence, the dream of true democracy will remain a mirage.

Overview

This article underscores how Pakistan's hybrid political structure undermines democracy, erodes judicial independence, and deepens public disillusionment. It stresses the dangers of elite capture, manipulated elections, and constitutional manipulation while pointing to economic disparity as the bitter fruit of authoritarian tendencies.

NOTES:

The article highlights Justice Athar Minallah's assertion that the acceptance of hybrid rule is tantamount to dictatorship and the absence of constitutional governance, leading to elite capture and systemic failure. It exposes how Pakistan's political system has become a façade of civilian supremacy where real authority lies with unelected institutions, and manipulated elections coupled with the 26th Constitutional Amendment have eroded judicial independence. The judiciary once seen as a guardian of democracy now risks becoming an extension of the executive, as pointed out by Justices Minallah, Mansoor Ali Shah, and Ayesha Malik through their critical letters and dissent. Political leaders instead of resisting, have willingly compromised, prioritizing power over the public mandate, further undermining parliamentary legitimacy. The article also brings to light the grave socio-economic crisis, with nearly 45 percent of the population living below the poverty line, lack of access to education and basic facilities, and rising discontent due to denial of democratic rights. It emphasizes that controlled media cannot hide this growing unrest, and unless free elections, independent judiciary, and true constitutional governance are restored, the dream of democracy will remain elusive in Pakistan.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Constitutional governance, civil-military relations, judicial independence
- Political Science: Separation of powers, authoritarianism vs democracy
- Current Affairs: Hybrid regimes, democratic backsliding, elite capture

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is not running under true democracy. Instead, unelected institutions share or control power, while politicians act as partners in this setup. Judges like Athar Minallah and Mansoor Ali Shah have spoken against this system, saying that the Constitution and people's mandate are being ignored. Amendments like the 26th have weakened the judiciary, making it seem under pressure. Because of this citizens face growing poverty and a lack of services while leaders call the system a success. The article highlights that without free elections, an independent judiciary, and genuine civilian rule, Pakistan cannot achieve real democracy.

Facts and Figures:

- Nearly 45 percent of Pakistan's population lives below the poverty line
- Flood of constitutional amendments passed by questionable parliaments
- Petitions against the 26th Constitutional Amendment remained unheard for nearly a year
- Opposition lawmakers recently convicted and unseated to secure a two-thirds majority for the ruling coalition

To sum up, the article reminds us that democracy is not sustained by lip service but by free elections, independent courts and respect for the people's will. A hybrid regime may patch cracks in the short run, but without true constitutionalism, Pakistan risks sinking deeper into authoritarianism and public despair.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Façade: A deceptive outward appearance (Synonym: disguise, Antonym: reality)
- Usurpation: Taking power illegally or by force (Synonym: seizure, Antonym: surrender)
- Elite capture: When policies serve a small privileged group instead of the public (Synonym: domination, Antonym: equity)
- Authoritarianism: Strong central power with limited freedoms (Synonym: dictatorship, Antonym: democracy)
- Legitimacy: Lawful or justified authority (Synonym: validity, Antonym: illegitimacy)
- Discontent: Dissatisfaction or unhappiness (Synonym: unrest, Antonym: contentment)

THREE YEARS, THREE UPRISINGS

AUTHOR: KHURRAM HUSAIN

Summary:

The article highlights how popular uprisings have toppled three governments in South Asia in just three years, each sparked by a different trigger but driven by the same undercurrent of mass disillusionment. In Sri Lanka, it was an economic free fall after default that drove people to storm the presidential palace. In Bangladesh, anger boiled over when a controversial quota system handed jobs to loyalists, sparking student-led protests that swept Sheikh Hasina out of power. In Nepal, the shutdown of social media proved the last straw for an already frustrated youth, who set parliament ablaze and forced the prime minister to resign. These uprisings had no party vanguard or planned mobilisation, but they were organic explosions of rage where inflation, unemployment, and institutional mistrust combined to light the fuse.

The writer warns that Pakistan, with its biting inflation, eroded incomes, and growing distrust in institutions, stands on similar ground. A fake rumour in Punjab recently mobilised schoolchildren in minutes, showing how fragile the situation is and how quickly unrest can spread. Unlike its neighbours, Pakistan's capital is somewhat insulated by geography, but provincial hubs remain vulnerable. If the government keeps relying on repression instead of creating

jobs and restoring trust, the writing is on the wall. When bread-and-butter issues choke the common man and the political elite turns a blind eye, it takes only a spark to set the prairie on fire.

Overview:

This article examines the fall of regimes in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal through organic uprisings born out of deep economic hardship and political exclusion. It highlights common triggers such as inflation, unemployment, and mistrust in institutions, and warns that Pakistan faces the same dangers if it fails to address governance and economic distress.

NOTES:

The article traces the fall of three South Asian governments in quick succession, each brought down not by organized political opposition but by spontaneous mass uprisings rooted in economic distress and public frustration. In Sri Lanka an unprecedented economic collapse and soaring fuel prices pushed citizens to storm the presidential palace in 2022. In Bangladesh anger over a controversial job quota system merged with youth unemployment and corruption, sparking massive protests that ousted Sheikh Hasina in 2024. In Nepal a ban on social media platforms triggered violent demonstrations in 2025, leading to the prime minister's resignation as enraged youth burned parliament. Common threads across these cases include inflation, unemployment, declining institutional credibility, and the rising impatience of young populations. The article suggests that these were organic movements, erupting without party leadership, and warns that Pakistan shows similar fault lines, where inflation, eroded incomes, and mistrust in governance could easily ignite unrest if corrective measures are ignored.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Political instability, socio-economic discontent, governance issues
- Current Affairs: Regional uprisings, economic crises, public mobilisations
- Political Science: Legitimacy of political systems, role of youth in political movements, dynamics of organic uprisings

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal, people rose against their rulers not because political parties led them but because their daily lives had become unbearable. In Sri Lanka fuel prices tripled in one year, in Bangladesh unemployed youth revolted against unfair job quotas and in Nepal a ban on social media triggered anger. These events show that when people are frustrated and poor, they can suddenly unite and protest without planning. The article also warns that Pakistan faces the same risk, as inflation and mistrust in institutions are high, and even small triggers can cause unrest.

Facts and Figures:

- Fuel prices in Sri Lanka tripled in one year (Rs150 in mid-2010s to Rs450 in July 2022)
- Nearly two decades were needed earlier for fuel prices to triple, showing the sudden shock
- High rates of youth and graduate unemployment in Bangladesh worsened after the pandemic
- Three regimes fell in three years: Sri Lanka (2022), Bangladesh (2024), Nepal (2025)

To sum up, The article suggests when rulers ignore bread-and-butter realities and rely on suppression, history often repeats itself. Pakistan stands at a crossroads: either it creates jobs, restores faith in institutions, and gives the youth a stake in the system, or it risks being swept away by a tide of organic discontent like its neighbours.

STOKING THE US-CHINA RIVALRY

AUTHOR: NASIR JAMAL

Summary:

The article captures the widening gulf between the United States and China,. It highlights two giants walking in opposite directions while the world watches. On one side, Washington under Donald Trump doubles down on protectionism, raising tariffs sky-high to shield domestic markets but simultaneously shaking the very foundation of global trade. On the other hand, Beijing led by Premier Li Qiang preaches unity, innovation, and opening up, while wrestling with its own economic headwinds at home. The contrast is as stark as night and day—America building walls while China lays bridges both driven by the pursuit of national power. For Pakistan which relies heavily on Chinese trade, investment, and loans, the stakes are high. Any spark in this rivalry can set off tremors in its already fragile economy.

The writer points out that China despite headwinds like property sector debt, youth unemployment, and shrinking foreign investment has managed to keep GDP growth near 5 percent, banking on fiscal stimulus and domestic demand. By targeting job creation, loosening monetary policy, and opening new sectors for foreign investment, Beijing is striving to keep its economy afloat, even as American tariffs average 34 percent on Chinese goods. This tug of war, one side betting on fences and the other on free markets, holds immense implications for the global economic order. For Pakistan and similar economies the tussle is not a distant spectacle but a storm that can either carry them forward with Chinese momentum or crush them under American pressure.

Overview:

The article highlights how divergent economic visions of the US and China are reshaping the global economic landscape. While Washington's tariff-heavy, protectionist stance risks igniting a prolonged trade war, China seeks to recalibrate by shifting toward domestic demand, job creation, and technological innovation. The article highlights how this rivalry impacts global supply chains, climate commitments, and investment flows, with countries like Pakistan caught in the crosswinds.

NOTES:

The article shows the widening gap between US and Chinese economic strategies and their implications for the global economy. It explains that Washington under Donald Trump has reimposed steep tariffs on Chinese goods, raising the average tariff level to 34 percent which threatens to trigger prolonged trade wars. In contrast, China despite challenges like property sector debt, unemployment, and shrinking foreign investment has managed to maintain GDP growth of around 5 percent by shifting its focus from export-driven expansion to domestic consumption. Premier Li Qiang's report underlines China's plan to generate 12 million urban jobs, keep unemployment near 5.5 percent, and adopt expansionary fiscal and monetary policies with a deficit-to-GDP ratio of 4 percent. The article also points out that China is opening up new sectors such as telecommunications, medical services, and education to foreign investment while providing tax breaks and subsidies to boost industries like AI, quantum technology, and 6G. Meanwhile, the US continues to pursue unilateral protectionist policies, including a 100 percent tariff on Chinese electric vehicles and a 50 percent tariff on semiconductors. This divergence not only sharpens global economic fault lines but also creates uncertainty for dependent economies like Pakistan, which are heavily tied to Chinese trade and investments.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- International Relations – US-China rivalry, trade wars, and global economic order
- Current Affairs – Global protectionism, fiscal policies, and investment flows
- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan's dependence on Chinese investment and vulnerability to global trade shifts
- Economics – Fiscal and monetary policy, tariffs, and domestic demand dynamics

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how the US and China are taking very different economic paths. America is raising tariffs which means it makes foreign goods more expensive to protect local industries, just like putting a wall around its market. On the other hand, China is trying to boost growth by increasing jobs and encouraging people at home to spend more, like asking families to buy local products instead of relying on exports. For example, when the US raises tariffs on Chinese electric cars to over 100 percent, China responds by shifting focus toward its domestic buyers. This tug of war affects countries like Pakistan, which depends on China for investments, trade, and financial support.

Facts and Figures:

- US tariffs on Chinese goods now average 34 percent, affecting over \$370 billion worth of trade.
- China's GDP growth has hovered around 5 percent in recent years despite global downturns.
- Beijing plans to create 12 million urban jobs in 2025 while keeping unemployment at 5.5 percent.
- China has set its deficit-to-GDP ratio at 4 percent, reflecting its willingness to expand fiscal stimulus.
- Tariffs on Chinese semiconductors were doubled to 50 percent, and on electric vehicles quadrupled to over 100 percent.

To sum up, the article reminds us that global economic rivalry is not just about numbers but about competing visions for the world order. As the US tightens the screws with tariffs and China counters with openness and innovation, smaller economies like Pakistan find themselves between a rock and a hard place. The real test lies in how wisely they navigate these stormy waters, aligning policies to secure growth without being swept away by the tides of great power competition.

PAK-US-CHINA TRIANGLE

AUTHOR: MUHAMMAD AMIR RANA

Summary:

The article sheds light on the triangular equation between Pakistan, the US, and China where Islamabad finds itself juggling competing interests while seeking much-needed economic lifelines. Washington's \$500 million investment in Pakistan's minerals sector, alongside flood-related assistance, rekindled memories of past cooperation, yet raised questions over its durability. China with its \$30 billion CPEC footprint and another \$8.5bn pledge still towers as Pakistan's chief economic partner. However, Pakistan's eagerness to celebrate a smaller American investment signals both its yearning for Western capital and its attempt to strike a delicate balance in a shifting geopolitical landscape. This cautious tightrope walk reflects Pakistan's desire to avoid being cornered and instead turn foreign engagement into a breathing space amid regional tensions, especially with India.

Yet, as the article argues, the devil lies in the details. For foreign investment to translate into transformation, Pakistan must overhaul its bureaucratic red tape, fix security vulnerabilities, and strengthen internal resilience. Chinese anxieties over safety and American concerns about instability remain sticking points while Afghanistan's turbulence further fuels uncertainty. If the US and China deepen parallel stakes in Pakistan, this could either become a bridge for cooperation or a flashpoint of contention. Ultimately, Pakistan's fate hinges less on foreign generosity and more on its own ability to put its house in order, for in the long run, no external crutch can carry a nation that stumbles within.

Overview: This article examines how Pakistan navigates its strategic triangle with the US and China, particularly in the wake of fresh American investments and longstanding Chinese commitments. It underscores the opportunities and pitfalls of balancing great powers while stressing that internal reform is the cornerstone of sustainable diplomacy.

NOTES:

The article highlights how Pakistan is navigating its fragile position between the US and China, with Washington recently announcing a \$500 million investment in the minerals sector while Beijing already stands as the larger economic partner with \$30 billion invested under CPEC and an additional \$8.5bn pledged. Pakistan's civil-military leadership celebrated the American deal as a sign of renewed global confidence, though the real challenge lies in overcoming entrenched bureaucratic hurdles, weak institutions, and persistent security threats that deter long-term investors. The article also draws attention to regional dynamics where Afghanistan's instability, militant threats and Pakistan's careful handling of its May standoff with India illustrate the precarious balance Islamabad must maintain. While external aid and investment provide breathing space, the article makes clear that lasting stability and diplomatic leverage depend on Pakistan's own ability to build internal resilience, improve governance, and clearly define its national objectives.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Current Affairs – connects directly with Pakistan's foreign policy shifts, US-China rivalry, and recent aid/investment.
- International Relations – relates to multipolarity, economic diplomacy, and strategic triangles in global politics.
- Pakistan Affairs – focuses on Pakistan's internal weaknesses (bureaucracy, security) and their impact on foreign relations.
- Essay Paper – themes like Pakistan's foreign policy challenges, balance of power, economic diplomacy, and security vulnerabilities.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is trying to manage relations with both the US and China, who are global powers with competing interests. For example, while China has already invested billions through CPEC, the US recently invested \$500 million and Pakistan welcomed it with great enthusiasm. Beginners can understand this as Pakistan standing between two friends who don't always get along. If it manages both wisely, it gains benefits. But if it fails, it risks conflict. The article also teaches that no matter how much help comes from outside, Pakistan must fix its own problems like weak institutions and insecurity.

Facts and Figures:

- US announced a \$500 million investment in Pakistan's critical minerals sector (2025).
- Washington also extended emergency assistance during floods.
- China has already invested nearly \$30 billion through CPEC and related projects.
- During PM's visit to China, \$8.5bn worth of new pledges were secured.
- US sanctioned the Majeed Brigade of the BLA, reflecting concern over security threats.

To sum up, The article shows Pakistan's high-wire act between the US and China where economic relief and diplomatic survival depend on deft balancing and timely maneuvering. Yet, the message rings clear that unless Pakistan shores up its internal strength and clears its house of inefficiency and insecurity, even the deepest pockets of global powers will not rescue it from perpetual vulnerability.

NEW TERRITORIAL CLAIM

AUTHOR: ZAHID HUSSAIN

Summary:

The article captures a tense geopolitical picture revolving around Donald Trump's renewed demand to regain control of Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan, a move that threatens to reopen old wounds and stir the hornet's nest in South

Asia. Known for his unpredictable temperament, Trump's recent warnings to the Taliban have reignited fears of another foreign intervention in a region still reeling from decades of war. His insistence that the base's proximity to China's nuclear sites makes it strategically vital reveals more about Washington's power games than genuine concern for Afghan stability. The Taliban's swift and strong rebuttal, reminding the United States of its commitments under the Doha Agreement, highlights Kabul's resolve to defend its sovereignty. Yet Trump's rhetoric, oscillating between diplomacy and intimidation, leaves the world guessing whether his threats are mere bluster or a prelude to something graver.

The writer underscores that another American military adventure in Afghanistan would be a recipe for regional chaos, pulling in major powers like China and Russia while placing Pakistan in an especially precarious position. Having already paid a heavy price in the last two Afghan wars, Pakistan cannot afford to be caught in the crossfire again. Despite Trump's attempts to woo Islamabad with promises of investment and cooperation, his unpredictable nature casts long shadows of uncertainty. The article concludes with a reminder that lessons from history must not be cast to the wind. America's earlier humiliation in Afghanistan should have acted as a call, not a trigger for renewed ambitions. If Trump chooses to march down the same road again, the consequences could be disastrous not just for the region but for global peace itself.

Overview:

The article explores the political and strategic tension sparked by Donald Trump's renewed interest in reclaiming Afghanistan's Bagram Airbase. It analyzes the potential implications for regional stability, the Taliban's firm stance on sovereignty, and the dangerous ripple effects that could follow any American intervention. The article also touches on how this move could draw China and Russia into the equation and jeopardize Pakistan's national security once more.

NOTES:

The article highlights Donald Trump's renewed push to reclaim the Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan, a move that has rattled the region and reopened wounds of past conflicts. It emphasizes how Trump's unpredictable attitude and provocative remarks toward the Taliban could once again destabilize South Asia. The Taliban's firm response, reminding the US of its Doha Agreement commitments, reflects Afghanistan's determination to safeguard its sovereignty. The writer underscores that Trump's motives are not purely strategic but deeply rooted in geopolitical competition, particularly his concerns about China's growing influence near Bagram. Any attempt by the US to reoccupy the base could ignite tensions involving China and Russia, leading to a new power struggle. The article also draws attention to Pakistan's vulnerability, given its long border with Afghanistan and the heavy toll it has already paid in two previous Afghan wars. Despite Trump's recent gestures of friendship and investment promises to Pakistan, the author warns that his impulsive politics could once again entangle the country in chaos. The article concludes that the US must learn from its humiliating exit in 2021 and avoid walking the same destructive path that once turned Afghanistan into a graveyard of empires.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – US foreign policy, regional power rivalry, Afghanistan's strategic importance
- Current Affairs – Pakistan-US relations, South Asian security, Taliban's governance stance
- Pakistan Affairs – Security implications of Afghan instability for Pakistan, border challenges
- Political Science – Sovereignty, non-intervention, and diplomacy in modern geopolitics

Notes for Beginners:

Trump's recent statement about retaking Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan has raised global concerns. The Taliban government rejected this idea, saying Afghanistan's freedom cannot be compromised. For instance, under the Doha Agreement the US had promised not to interfere in Afghanistan's internal matters. If Trump's administration takes any aggressive step, it might trigger tensions with China and Russia because the airbase is close to their strategic

areas. Pakistan, sharing a long border with Afghanistan, could again face the fallout like it did during previous wars, through refugee inflows and militant spillovers.

Facts and Figures:

- Bagram Airbase is located 40 km north of Kabul.
- It was built by the USSR in the 1950s and later expanded by the US.
- The base once hosted 10,000 American troops.
- The US withdrew from Bagram in 2021 after a 20-year war.
- The Doha Agreement was signed in February 2020 under Trump's presidency.

To wrap up, the article reminds that power politics often comes at the cost of peace. Trump's obsession with reclaiming Bagram Airbase could ignite a fresh storm in an already fragile region. For Pakistan and Afghanistan the scars of past conflicts are still raw and another misstep could push both nations to the brink. True leadership, as the writer hints, lies not in reviving old ambitions but in learning from history's painful lessons to secure a stable and peaceful future.

WOMEN & POWER

AUTHOR: ABDULLAH KHALID

Summary:

The article narrates the remarkable journey of women in Pakistan's politics. It shows how their role has shifted from the margins to the mainstream. From Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan's foundation of the All-Pakistan Women's Association in 1949 to Fatima Jinnah's historic challenge against Ayub Khan in 1965, women carved spaces in an arena largely dominated by men. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Constitution of 1973 gave women constitutional rights, but Ziaul Haq's Islamisation sparked movements like the Women's Action Forum, proving that repression can ignite resistance. Benazir Bhutto's rise in 1988 shattered ceilings, placing a woman at the helm of government in the Muslim world and inspiring millions. These episodes stitched together a narrative where women, through struggle and resilience, steadily turned the tide of political exclusion.

Fast forward to today, the story reflects both achievement and unfinished business. Women like Maryam Nawaz, Aseefa Bhutto, and Dr Yasmin Rashid stand tall in politics, while parties now integrate women leaders structurally. Legislative milestones, such as domestic violence laws and property rights, mark progress, and the Elections Act 2017 further ensures women's inclusion. Yet, deep-rooted challenges remain in rural areas where women struggle even to cast their votes, and within party offices where true decision-making power is still contested. The article shows that women in power are no longer an exception but an evolving norm, redefining the country's political DNA.

Overview:

This article charts women's political journey in Pakistan, tracing milestones from independence to the present. It highlights key moments like Fatima Jinnah's leadership, Benazir Bhutto's premiership, Musharraf's local government reforms, and recent leadership roles of Maryam Nawaz and Aseefa Bhutto. It also outlines both achievements in legislation and persisting challenges in representation, showing how women's political journey mirrors the transformation of Pakistan's democracy itself.

NOTES:

The article traces the political journey of women in Pakistan from 1947 to the present, showing how their role gradually expanded despite social and political hurdles. It begins with Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan's founding of the All-Pakistan Women's Association in 1949 and Fatima Jinnah's bold challenge to Ayub Khan in 1965, symbolising women's entry into national politics. The 1973 Constitution under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto secured equal

rights for women, while Ziaul Haq's Islamisation policies prompted the creation of the Women's Action Forum in 1981, transforming suppression into organised resistance. Benazir Bhutto's premiership in 1988 marked a turning point as she became the first female prime minister of the Muslim world. Later, Musharraf's Local Government Ordinance institutionalised women's representation in local councils, and Dr Fehmida Mirza's election as the first female Speaker further broke barriers. Today, women like Maryam Nawaz, Aseefa Bhutto, and Dr Yasmin Rashid demonstrate how political space for women has widened, supported by legal frameworks such as the Elections Act 2017 and policy advances in property and domestic violence laws. Yet, the article stresses that deep-rooted barriers remain in rural areas where women still struggle for basic political participation, and within parties where decision-making roles are limited. The overall narrative shows that women's political struggle runs parallel with Pakistan's democratic evolution, gradually reshaping its political culture.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – political evolution, constitutional rights, women in politics
- Gender Studies – women's empowerment, activism, resistance movements
- Political Science – representation, leadership, democracy
- Current Affairs – women in governance, policy reforms, political inclusion
- Sociology – cultural barriers, role of tradition versus modernity in women's participation

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how women in Pakistan moved from being sidelined to holding powerful positions. For example, Fatima Jinnah challenged a military ruler in 1965, Benazir Bhutto became the first female prime minister of the Muslim world, and today women like Maryam Nawaz and Aseefa Bhutto are leading major parties. Musharraf's laws gave women seats in local councils, while new laws like the Elections Act 2017 made sure women candidates are part of elections. Still, in many villages women face hurdles even in voting. The lesson is that women's struggle is part of Pakistan's political story, and their inclusion strengthens democracy.

Facts and Figures:

- APWA was founded in 1949 by Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan
- Fatima Jinnah contested against Ayub Khan in 1965
- 1973 Constitution guaranteed equal political rights to women
- Women's Action Forum was founded in 1981 during Zia's regime
- Benazir Bhutto became the first female prime minister of the Muslim world in 1988
- Musharraf's Local Government Ordinance ensured women's representation at local level
- Elections Act 2017 mandated minimum women candidates and voter turnout requirements

To sum up, the article underlines that women's political journey in Pakistan is not just a side story but a central thread in the nation's democratic fabric. From resistance against authoritarian regimes to leadership at the highest level women have proven their resilience and vision. Yet, without translating these political gains into permanent cultural change, progress remains fragile. Women in power are no longer extraordinary but increasingly normal, and their presence is reshaping the destiny of Pakistan's politics.

ELITE PACT

AUTHOR: ARIFA NOOR

Summary:

The article highlights Pakistan's newly signed defence agreement with Saudi Arabia, which has generated widespread excitement but little clarity. The writer exposes how the pact's euphoria stems less from strategic necessity and more from Pakistan's recurring dependence on external lifelines to patch its economic wounds. The

deal, widely celebrated as a breakthrough, is being viewed through the same old lens of financial hope, Saudi money in exchange for Pakistan's military muscle. This deep-seated mindset exposes the elite consensus that relies on foreign funds to sustain political order while avoiding meaningful economic reforms. Like a recurring dream that never changes its course, the ruling class seems content with temporary relief rather than taking the bitter but essential medicine of self-reliance.

The writer goes on to argue that the ruling elite's addiction to external inflows from CPEC to climate aid and Gulf investments reveals their lack of political will to embrace reform. Even when discussions about expanding the tax base or curbing government expenditure surface, they remain mere lip service. Arifa Noor warns that such patterns not only keep Pakistan's democratic system fragile but also deepen the chasm between the elite and the common people. The defence pact may sustain the status quo, but it risks repeating the blunders of the Musharraf era when the illusion of prosperity was bought at the cost of sovereignty. While the power circles celebrate, the people's welfare continues to be the missing piece in Pakistan's power puzzle.

Overview:

This article highlights Pakistan's elite-driven political economy and how the newly signed Pak-Saudi defence pact reflects the country's unending search for external lifelines. It questions whether this pact will truly serve national interests or merely fortify the ruling elite's grip on power. Arifa Noor emphasizes that without institutional reform, economic discipline, and people-centered governance, Pakistan will remain caught in a vicious cycle of dependency and political insecurity.

NOTES:

The article revolves around the newly signed Pakistan-Saudi Arabia defence pact and the public euphoria surrounding it, despite limited information about its operational details. Arifa Noor highlights that Pakistan's excitement stems from its habitual reliance on external financial assistance to escape economic turmoil. The pact is being perceived as a familiar arrangement. Pakistan provides military support while Saudi Arabia extends financial relief. The writer underlines that this reaction exposes an enduring elite consensus that thrives on external funds to sustain political stability while avoiding much-needed structural reforms. Over the years, Pakistan's ruling elite has continuously sought external inflows from CPEC to Gulf investments and post-flood aid, hoping these would rescue the economy without painful internal adjustments. Noor argues that this mindset stems from insecurity and a lack of political will, where leaders prefer short-term relief to reform-driven sustainability. The article draws parallels with Musharraf's era, when foreign alliances brought temporary economic prosperity but eroded national autonomy. The writer warns that the continuation of this dependency model driven by the elite's disregard for public welfare will keep Pakistan trapped in economic vulnerability and democratic fragility.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Civil-Military Relations, Economic Challenges, and Foreign Policy
- International Relations: Strategic Partnerships and Dependency Theory
- Current Affairs: Gulf Geopolitics and Economic Diplomacy

This article relates to these topics as it critically examines how Pakistan's internal political dynamics influence its external engagements and how foreign pacts perpetuate economic and political dependency.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's elite class often depends on other countries' financial help rather than fixing internal problems. Whenever there's a crisis, instead of reforming the tax system or reducing unnecessary expenses, they look for foreign loans or investments. The newly signed defence pact with Saudi Arabia is seen as another example of this mindset, hoping for quick financial relief instead of long-term stability. The writer warns that such policies may give temporary benefits but harm Pakistan's independence and people's welfare in the long run. For

example, after 9/11 Pakistan joined the US-led war and received aid, but it also suffered from instability and loss of control over its internal affairs.

Facts and Figures:

- Saudi Arabia remains one of Pakistan's largest financial supporters, providing loans and oil on deferred payments.
- Pakistan's foreign reserves have repeatedly depended on Saudi and IMF assistance.
- The defence pact promises mutual support in case of external aggression but lacks clear operational details.
- Historically, Pakistan received over \$20 billion in Saudi financial aid since the 1970s in various forms of assistance.

In essence, the article is a mirror to Pakistan's recurring political habits and its deep-rooted culture of dependency. It reminds policymakers that external alliances cannot substitute for internal reform. Unless the leadership breaks free from this comfort zone and prioritizes public welfare over elite bargains, Pakistan will continue to march in circles, celebrating short-term relief while neglecting long-term stability.

NEW LOW IN PAK-AFGHAN TIES

AUTHOR: MALEEHA LODHI

Summary:

The article explores Pak-Afghan relations. It shows how ties that were once cautiously rebuilt have now reached a new low. Pakistan's frustration is mounting as the Taliban continues to turn a deaf ear to its repeated concerns about the TTP. Despite Islamabad's carrot-and-stick policy, combining strikes on militant hideouts with renewed diplomatic engagement, the Taliban has offered nothing more than hollow assurances. Cross-border terror has escalated, casualties among Pakistani forces have piled up, and Kabul's reluctance to rein in the TTP has left Islamabad feeling cornered. Like a man trying to patch a leaking roof while the storm rages on, Pakistan has found itself caught between hard security responses and the need to avoid a complete breakdown in relations.

The article also reflects Islamabad's recognition that cutting ties with Kabul would be akin to shooting itself in the foot. Pakistan has kept diplomatic channels open, sending high-level officials to Kabul, engaging in trilateral talks with China, and even conceding ground on trade concessions in hopes of extracting cooperation. But each time, Taliban promises melted into thin air. The refusal to name the TTP in joint statements and the growing trust deficit underscore a stark reality: Pakistan is at a crossroads where further inaction risks emboldening militants, while unilateral strikes could set the region on fire. Pakistan's policy is trapped in a vicious cycle, and unless Kabul changes course, the road ahead looks fraught with peril.

Overview:

The article examines the sharp decline in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations amid rising cross-border terrorism and the Taliban's refusal to act against the TTP. It outlines Islamabad's use of military strikes, trade restrictions, refugee deportations, and high-level diplomacy to pressure Kabul. Despite repeated efforts, Taliban leaders failed to deliver on promises, worsening mistrust. The article highlights Pakistan's dilemma—balancing security responses with the need to avoid a complete rupture in ties.

NOTES:

The article underlines the worsening ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan with the Taliban's reluctance to rein in the TTP emerging as the biggest stumbling block. Despite Pakistan's efforts through military strikes, border restrictions, and diplomatic overtures, the Taliban has responded only with empty promises. Cross-border terrorism has intensified, costing Pakistani security forces heavy casualties, while joint statements between the two sides deliberately avoid naming the TTP, adding to mistrust. Pakistan though frustrated has avoided a complete rupture

by maintaining dialogue through high-level visits and trilateral cooperation with China, even offering trade concessions. However, every attempt has met with Kabul's indifference, leaving Islamabad trapped between coercive measures and the need to sustain fragile engagement. The article stresses that Pakistan is at a critical juncture, with further inaction likely to embolden militants and aggressive unilateralism threatening to destabilize the region even further.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Pak-Afghan relations, border security, militancy
- Current Affairs – regional diplomacy, counterterrorism, trade and refugee policy
- International Relations – trilateral cooperation (Pakistan-China-Afghanistan), impact of non-state actors
- Political Science – policy dilemmas, governance challenges in foreign policy

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is facing serious problems with Afghanistan because the Taliban are not stopping the TTP from attacking across the border. For example, when Pakistani soldiers are killed in these attacks, Pakistan sometimes responds with air strikes, but that only increases tension. At the same time Pakistan has tried to make peace by sending officials for talks and even giving trade concessions, but the Taliban make promises without taking real steps. It is like a game where one side keeps moving while the other side just watches. This situation shows how Pakistan is stuck between using force and keeping relations stable.

Facts and Figures:

- TTP attacks in Pakistan rose sharply after Taliban takeover in Afghanistan (2021)
- In December 2024, 16 Pakistani soldiers were killed in a TTP attack on Makin border post
- Around 1.2 million Afghan refugees have been repatriated from Pakistan
- Multiple air strikes carried out in Nangarhar, Khost, and Paktika provinces since 2024
- At least three high-level visits by Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar to Kabul in 2025

To sum up, the article makes it clear that Pakistan and Afghanistan stand at a critical juncture. Pakistan cannot turn a blind eye to cross-border terrorism, yet it also cannot afford a complete diplomatic breakdown with Kabul. The Taliban's reluctance to act against the TTP has pushed relations into a vicious cycle of promises and betrayals. For Pakistan, the challenge is to strike a balance between pressure and engagement without letting militants tighten the noose around its security. The article is a reminder that foreign policy when caught between hope and hostility often becomes a test of resilience, patience, and strategic foresight.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Hiatus – a pause or gap (Syn: break | Ant: continuation)
- Audacious – bold and daring (Syn: fearless | Ant: timid)
- Coercive – using force or threats (Syn: oppressive | Ant: voluntary)
- Repatriated – sent back to one's own country (Syn: returned | Ant: retained)
- Inconclusive – not leading to a clear result (Syn: uncertain | Ant: definite)

GOOD GOVERNANCE**AUTHOR: AIZAZ AHMAD CHAUDHRY****Summary:**

The article exposes how successive governments both civilian and military have failed to deliver on even the most basic responsibilities of the state. Political instability, unchecked corruption, weak institutions, and endless policy U-turns have created a perfect storm that has left the nation staggering under unsustainable debt and collapsing public services. Instead of focusing on legislation and long-term policy, MNAs see politics as a cash-and-carry enterprise, where recovering election expenses and controlling development funds outweigh public interest. The

prime minister far from acting as a true chief executive is held hostage by legislators and forced to bargain with other state institutions for survival. It is a vicious cycle where governance takes a backseat, and the very fabric of democracy is torn apart.

The article lays down a roadmap for reform. It argues that Pakistan's parliamentary system as it is practised must be revisited to restore functionality. Provinces need to be restructured for efficient governance, resources must trickle down to empowered local governments, and state institutions must regain independence through meritocracy. Practical, doable steps such as establishing local governments for service delivery, boosting industrialisation and investment, ensuring the government's writ and empowering the Election Commission are seen as the building blocks of good governance. The article clears the message that unless Pakistan reforms its fragile system and puts citizens at the centre of policymaking, governance will remain a hollow slogan rather than a lived reality.

Overview: The article critically examines the chronic failures of governance in Pakistan. It highlights political instability, resource mismanagement, corruption, weak institutions, and a compromised parliamentary system as root causes. It contrasts Pakistan with other parliamentary democracies like Japan and Italy, where institutional meritocracy ensures stability. Finally, it suggests reforms, from empowering local governments to encouraging industrialisation and strengthening the Election Commission.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's chronic governance failures rooted in political instability, corruption, weak institutions and a compromised parliamentary system where MNAs prioritise personal gains over legislation and service delivery. It shows how prime ministers are reduced to bargaining with legislators and state institutions for survival, while resources remain mismanaged and public services collapse. Despite the 18th Amendment, provinces hoard resources instead of empowering local governments, further weakening state capacity. The article draws comparisons with parliamentary democracies like Japan and Italy, where institutional meritocracy ensures continuity and stability. It calls for urgent reforms such as rationalising the parliamentary system, empowering local governments, strengthening the Election Commission, boosting industrialisation, encouraging investment and import substitution, and restoring institutional autonomy through merit-based practices. The central message is that without systemic reform and citizen-focused policymaking, governance in Pakistan will remain a hollow slogan.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – governance crisis, political instability, resource mismanagement
- Current Affairs – democratic practices, corruption, economic mismanagement
- Political Science – institutional reforms, parliamentary democracy, local governance
- Public Administration – bureaucratic efficiency, service delivery, accountability mechanisms
- International Relations – comparative governance models, civil-military relations

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that governance in Pakistan has failed because politicians and governments are not focusing on people's needs. For example, instead of making laws to improve health or education, MNAs try to recover election expenses or secure personal benefits. A prime minister cannot act independently because he has to keep MNAs happy to stay in power. In contrast, in countries like Japan or Italy, institutions such as courts and bureaucracy are strong and independent, which keeps governance stable even if politics is chaotic. The article also shows how simple steps like empowering local governments, creating jobs through industries, and ensuring fair elections could improve the system for ordinary citizens.

Facts and Figures:

- Millions of Pakistanis have fallen below the poverty line due to inequitable distribution of resources
- Pakistan faces unsustainable debt and poor public service delivery
- The 18th Amendment devolved resources to provinces, but they rarely reach the local level

- Comparisons made with Japan, Italy, and the Netherlands, where strong institutions support parliamentary democracy
- Recommendations include industrialisation, investment attraction, import substitution, and ECP reforms

In a nutshell, the article works as both a diagnosis and a prescription for Pakistan's governance dilemma. It reveals how corruption, weak institutions, and a distorted parliamentary system have left the state unable to serve its people. At the same time, it provides practical steps strengthening local governance, ensuring institutional meritocracy, and encouraging economic self-reliance to break free from the vicious cycle. Unless Pakistan reforms its system with sincerity and resolve, good governance will remain a mirage in the desert of mismanagement.

A SUMMIT OF INACTION

AUTHOR: ZAHID HUSSAIN

Summary:

The article captures a dismal picture of the much-hyped Arab-Islamic summit in Doha, which promised thunder but delivered drizzle. Leaders of nearly sixty Muslim countries gathered to craft a decisive response to Israel's brazen assault on Qatar, yet what emerged was nothing more than hollow words and diplomatic jargon. Israel's aggressive strikes have crossed red lines repeatedly, attacking Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran, and most recently Qatar while leaving behind a trail of blood and rubble. With over 65,000 Palestinians killed most of them women and children, and millions displaced into misery, the genocide continues unabated. The summit, instead of rising to the occasion, merely issued condemnations, leaving the Arab street disillusioned and Israel emboldened.

The writer further highlights the paradox of Muslim states, while their people burn with outrage, their rulers woo Washington with arms deals, lavish gifts and promises of investments. The dependence of Gulf sheikhdoms on US security guarantees has made them pawns in a dangerous game unable to break free from the shadow of American patronage. Israel backed to the hilt by Washington has sabotaged peace talks, targeted Hamas negotiators in Doha and openly declared plans to permanently occupy Gaza. Yet, the Muslim bloc remains a house divided more concerned with safeguarding its own interests than forging a united front. The article concludes that without genuine unity and concrete action, lofty statements will remain castles in the air, while Israel continues its rampage with impunity.

Overview:

This article exposes the failure of the Arab-Islamic summit in Doha to produce any meaningful response against Israel's aggression. It highlights the scale of Israeli atrocities in Gaza, the killings in Qatar, and repeated assaults across the Middle East, all sustained by US backing. It analyzes Arab governments for their inaction, their overreliance on America, and their lack of unity. The article ultimately argues that unless the Muslim bloc translates rhetoric into real action, Israel will remain unchecked in its expansionism.

NOTES:

The article powerfully critiques the Arab-Islamic summit in Doha which brought together leaders from nearly sixty Muslim countries but failed to deliver concrete action against Israel's relentless aggression. Despite Israel's repeated assaults on Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran, and even Qatar coupled with the staggering toll of over 65,000 Palestinian deaths and millions displaced, the summit's response remained limited to empty condemnations. The writer underscores how Muslim rulers tied to Washington through arms deals, investments, and political patronage have compromised their autonomy, rendering the Muslim bloc divided and ineffective. Israel fully backed by the United States has not only intensified its genocidal campaign in Gaza but has also sabotaged negotiations and openly declared expansionist designs while Arab states remain paralyzed by dependence and disunity. The article concludes

that without genuine unity, strategic independence and decisive action, the Muslim world will continue to issue lofty declarations that amount to castles in the air, leaving Israel emboldened and the Arab street disillusioned.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – US-Israel nexus, collective security, diplomacy failures
- Current Affairs – Gaza genocide, Middle Eastern conflicts, Muslim world's political inertia
- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan's position within OIC and regional diplomacy
- Political Science – power politics, role of summits, diplomacy versus realpolitik

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Arab and Muslim countries called a summit in Doha to respond to Israel's attacks, but nothing practical came out of it. For example, Israel killed thousands of Palestinians in Gaza, attacked Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran and even Qatar, yet the Muslim countries only issued statements instead of taking real steps. The writer says Gulf states rely too much on America, even giving it huge investments and gifts which makes them weak in front of Israel. For instance, Qatar bought expensive arms from the US but was still attacked by Israel. This shows that without unity and real action, statements are useless and Israel will keep attacking.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 65,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza, mostly women and children
- More than one million Palestinians were displaced due to Israeli war
- Israel attacked six countries this year, including Qatar, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iran
- Qatar gifted a \$400 million plane to US President Trump and signed multibillion-dollar arms deals
- Summit in Doha hosted leaders from nearly 60 Arab-Islamic countries but ended without action

To sum up, the article underlines that the Doha summit was more smoke than fire. While Muslim leaders thundered in speeches, their silence in action betrayed a house divided against itself. Israel, emboldened by unconditional US support, continues to unleash destruction, while Arab rulers remain entangled in self-interest and dependency. The lesson is stark: until Muslim states muster genuine unity and match their words with deeds, they will remain spectators in their own tragedy, allowing history to record their inaction as complicity

DOING SOMETHING GOOD

AUTHOR: ASHRAF JEHANGIR QAZI

Summary:

The article argues that the decline of American moral and political authority coupled with Israel's berserk aggression has wrecked Washington's credibility as a stabilizing force. Arab elites once relying on external powers to shield them from their own public anger now face a rude awakening. China braces for an inevitable clash with the United States, while India despite its ambitions remains unable to rise above regional status. Alongside these geopolitical upheavals, climate change hangs like the sword of Damocles, threatening to erase human civilization itself. The reset of the Doomsday Clock to 89 seconds before midnight, the closest yet to annihilation, is a chilling reminder of how close mankind is to collective suicide. Against this backdrop, the Palestinian tragedy emerges as a litmus test for the moral survival of the Arab and Muslim world, which risks a civilizational collapse if Palestine is abandoned to Israel's genocidal policies.

The writer stresses that the so-called two-state solution has been buried under Israeli expansionism and US complicity, leaving only one just path: the liberation of Palestine where all faiths coexist in peace and justice. He laments how propaganda whether grassroots or tree-top sustains the ignorance of the masses and comforts the conscience of elites while comprador intellectuals serve as apologists for injustice. Drawing on Chomsky and Carey, he reminds readers that silence is complicity, urging people to resist by being persistent, asking hard questions, and

making oppressors uncomfortable. Women often stronger and braver than men despite being confined to domestic obedience are called upon to play a vital role in this struggle. The article concludes with a call to action that lets us begin by feeling the discomfort of injustice at home and abroad, turn that into reflection and resistance and strive to do good for Pakistan and for the planet before it is too late.

Overview:

The article combines geopolitical analysis, the Palestinian crisis, climate catastrophe and moral decay into one grim portrait of the modern world. It warns that without unity, courage, and persistence, humanity faces both political enslavement and environmental collapse.

NOTES:

The article underscores the decline of US moral and political authority, aggravated by Israel's unrestrained aggression that has shattered Washington's credibility as a stabilizer in global politics. It points to China preparing for an inevitable confrontation with the US, India's inability to rise beyond regional Status and the Arab elites' growing realization that dependence on external powers can no longer shield them from domestic pressures. Climate change looms as an existential threat in the Anthropocene era with the Doomsday Clock reset to 89 seconds before midnight, symbolizing humanity's proximity to self-destruction. Within this turbulent context, the Palestinian genocide emerges as a defining moral crisis, where the two-state solution is deemed dead due to Israeli expansionism and US complicity, leaving only the liberation of Palestine as a just outcome. The article critiques propaganda that sustains ignorance and comforts elites, stresses that silence amounts to complicity, and calls for persistent resistance, collective action and the inclusion of women as vital actors in the struggle for justice. Ultimately, it concludes that both Pakistanis and the wider world must transform discomfort into action to confront political evil, protect Palestine, and safeguard the planet from looming catastrophe.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – decline of US dominance, rise of China, failure of India, Palestine question
- Current Affairs – Gaza genocide, Arab inaction, climate change crisis
- Political Science – propaganda, realpolitik, failure of global institutions
- Environmental Science – climate change, Anthropocene threats, human survival
- Pakistan Affairs – lessons for Pakistan's diplomacy, moral responsibility within the Muslim bloc

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that the world is facing many dangers together. America is no longer strong like before, Israel keeps attacking Palestinians with US support, and Arab countries are doing little to stop it. For example, despite thousands of Palestinians being killed, Arab leaders remain silent because they depend on America. At the same time, climate change is becoming dangerous, with scientists saying humanity could destroy itself within this century. The writer says people should not stay silent; instead, they should keep questioning leaders and protesting just like Chomsky suggests. He also says women who often show more courage than men must take part in this struggle. The main message is that we must take action for justice, for Palestine, for Pakistan, and for our planet.

Facts and Figures:

- Doomsday Clock set at 89 seconds before midnight, closest ever to annihilation
- Over 65,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza, mostly women and children
- Millions of Palestinians displaced into dire conditions
- Climate change in Anthropocene era projected to make human survival unlikely within this century if unchecked
- Nearly 60 Arab and Muslim leaders have failed to take effective action despite repeated summits

To wrap up, The article shows how the world is sinking into chaos through US decline, Israeli brutality, Arab disunity and climate negligence. Yet it also calls for action, urging ordinary people to disturb the comfort of elites,

to persist in the struggle for Palestine and to push back against injustice. If Muslims and the global community remain spectators, history will remember their silence as betrayal. But if they act with courage and unity, good things may lead to more good things, giving humanity a fighting chance against political evil and climate disaster.

SAUDI DEFENCE PACT

Summary:

The editorial highlights the recent Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, marking it as a watershed moment in bilateral relations. Though military cooperation between the two nations has roots going back to the 1960s, this pact raises the stakes by declaring that aggression against one will be treated as aggression against both. Coming on the heels of Israel's assault on Qatar, the timing speaks volumes, suggesting Gulf states are beginning to doubt American security guarantees and are now looking elsewhere for reliable partners. With Pakistan's battle-hardened military and long-standing ties with the Arab world, it appears to be a natural ally, one that could play a pivotal role in reshaping regional defence dynamics. For Pakistan, this is not just a diplomatic win but a statement of strength on the global chessboard.

However, the pact also raises questions that cannot be swept under the rug. Will Saudi Arabia extend the same support if India wages fresh aggression against Pakistan especially when Riyadh maintains cordial ties with New Delhi? The editorial urges clarity on such dilemmas. Beyond bilateral defence, it argues that Muslim states must rethink collective security. The underutilised Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition could evolve into a robust Muslim NATO if expanded to include Iran and other excluded states. Such a coalition would not only act as a deterrent against Israel's aggression but also project unity in a fractured Muslim world. Defence pacts and coalitions can either remain paper tigers or be forged into real instruments of security that reshape the balance of power.

Overview: The article focuses on the Pak-Saudi defence pact, terming it a diplomatic and strategic breakthrough that signals both countries' intent to stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of external aggression. It situates the agreement in the context of shifting Gulf politics, waning US influence, and Israel's aggressive stance in the region. At the same time, it warns that unresolved ambiguities and the absence of a united Muslim defence structure remain major hurdles.

NOTES:

The article highlights the landmark Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, tracing its historical backdrop to their defence cooperation since the 1960s while stressing its present-day significance in reshaping regional security. It underlines that this pact goes beyond traditional military collaboration by declaring that an attack on one will be treated as aggression against both, signaling a new level of strategic partnership. The timing of the agreement following Israel's assault on Qatar reflects the growing disillusionment of Gulf states with American security guarantees and their search for alternative partners. For Pakistan, the pact enhances its image as a dependable military ally with battlefield experience and deep Arab ties, making it a central player in Middle Eastern defence politics. However, the article also raises critical concerns about Saudi Arabia's dual relations with India, casting doubt on Riyadh's willingness to stand by Pakistan in case of hostilities with New Delhi. It urges Muslim states to go beyond bilateral pacts and develop a collective security mechanism, suggesting that the underutilised Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition could evolve into a Muslim NATO if broadened to include Iran and other excluded countries. The article contends this would act as both a deterrent against Israeli aggression and a symbol of unity in a divided Muslim world. Ultimately, it frames the agreement as both a bold diplomatic step and a litmus test for the possibility of Muslim countries transforming defence promises into real instruments of collective strength.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs (bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia, defence cooperation)
- International Relations (alliances, security pacts, shifting Gulf politics)
- Current Affairs (Middle East crises, Israel's aggression, Muslim bloc unity)

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a new defence pact, promising to defend each other if attacked. For example, if any country attacks Saudi Arabia, Pakistan would consider it an attack on itself and vice versa. This agreement is important because Gulf countries no longer fully trust America to protect them especially after Israel's recent aggression in the region. The article also suggests that instead of relying only on bilateral pacts, Muslim countries should come together to form a strong defence alliance much like NATO so they can collectively respond to threats.

Facts and figures:

- Defence ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia date back to the 1960s.
- Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition was founded in 2015 with 43 member states.
- The pact was signed days after Israel's attack on Qatar, raising its global significance.

To sum up, this editorial portrays the defence pact as a bold step forward for Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but also as a test of whether words will translate into meaningful action. While it strengthens bilateral trust, its real potential lies in paving the way for broader Muslim unity against common threats. If expanded and institutionalised, such pacts could alter the region's security landscape, but if left vague, they may remain lofty promises etched on paper.

Difficult words and meanings:

- Watershed: a turning point or milestone (synonyms: landmark, breakthrough; antonyms: triviality, routine)
- Aggression: hostile or violent behavior (synonyms: attack, assault; antonyms: peace, retreat)
- Volatile: unstable and likely to change suddenly (synonyms: unpredictable, shaky; antonyms: stable, steady)
- Deterrent: something that discourages action (synonyms: obstacle, hindrance; antonyms: incentive, encouragement)

COLLECTIVE SELF-DEFENCE

AUTHOR: AHMER BILAL SOOFI

Summary:

The article highlights how Israel's reckless airstrike on Qatar a UN member state has not only trampled on international law but also set a dangerous precedent for the Middle East. By bypassing established UN frameworks and resorting to unilateral force, Israel is rewriting the rules of the game, normalising aggression without legal cover. The article reminds us of parallels with past violations, from the US raid on Osama bin Laden in Pakistan to India's strikes on Pakistani soil, both of which were condemned as breaches of sovereignty. It underlines that under international law, dealing with non-state actors is a matter of law enforcement and cooperation, not naked warfare. Against this backdrop, Pakistan's firm military response to India serves as a reminder that silence only breeds further violations, and protests must be matched with resolute action.

The article calls on Middle Eastern states to stop putting all their eggs in the UN's basket, which has often been paralysed by veto politics, and instead to rise to the occasion by forging regional frameworks of collective self-defence. Pointing towards Articles 51 and 52 of the UN Charter, it suggests that such cooperation would not only be legitimate but also vital in deterring Israel's expansionist ambitions, which are openly tied to the dream of a "Greater Israel." With talk of Turkey being the next target, the stakes are higher than ever. Either Muslim states

unite under an institutionalised defence mechanism, or they risk being picked apart one by one by a power that has no qualms about redrawing frontiers at gunpoint.

Overview:

The article analyses Israel's attack on Qatar in the context of international law and collective security, stressing the need for Middle Eastern countries to adopt regional defence arrangements under the UN Charter. It critiques the failures of the Security Council, highlights Israel's dangerous expansionist trend, and urges Muslim states to move from reactionary responses to proactive institutional frameworks.

NOTES:

The article highlights Israel's airstrike on Qatar as a blatant breach of sovereignty and international law, setting a dangerous precedent in the Middle East. It draws parallels with the US raid on Osama bin Laden in Pakistan and India's strikes on Pakistani soil. Both condemned as unlawful violations to emphasise that targeting non-state actors should be pursued through international legal frameworks like UNSC Resolution 1373, extradition, and Interpol rather than military aggression. It warns that Israel's repeated cross-border operations, backed by its ambition of a "Greater Israel," threaten to normalise illegitimate warfare and destabilise the region, with Turkey possibly being the next target. The article stresses that relying solely on the UN is futile due to veto politics and advocates for Middle Eastern states to establish collective self-defence mechanisms under Articles 51 and 52 of the UN Charter, which provide legal legitimacy for regional security arrangements. It underscores Pakistan's robust military response to India as a reminder that firm protest and deterrence are essential to prevent violations from becoming international norms, urging Muslim states to forge unity and institutionalised defence frameworks before being undermined individually.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations (collective security, veto politics, shifting Middle East dynamics)
- International Law (UN Charter, sovereignty, legality of use of force)
- Pakistan Affairs (Pakistan's military responses, regional diplomacy)
- Current Affairs (Gaza conflict, Middle East crises, Israeli expansionism)

Notes for beginners:

The article explains that Israel attacked Qatar without any legal approval even though Qatar is a UN member state. International law says that if non-state actors are involved in crimes, states should use cooperation mechanisms like Interpol or UN frameworks, not bomb another country. For example, when the US killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, it was declared a violation of sovereignty. Similarly, India's strikes on Pakistan were rejected under international law. To avoid being repeatedly attacked Middle Eastern states are urged to come together and form a defence system much like NATO so that aggression against one is treated as aggression against all.

Facts and figures:

- On Sept 9, 2025, 15 Israeli jets struck Qatar.
- Qatar is a UN member and was hosting Hamas leaders for ceasefire talks at the time.
- UNSC Resolution 1373 provides frameworks for dealing with non-state actors through cooperation and extradition.
- Articles 51 and 52 of the UN Charter allow for self-defence and regional security arrangements.

To sum up, this article sounds the alarm about Israel's aggressive overreach and the UN's inability to rein it in. It pushes Middle Eastern states to shed complacency and embrace collective security under international law before Israel's "Greater Israel" vision becomes an unstoppable reality. The call is unmistakable; unity is strength, disunity is peril.

MOMENT OF TRUTH

AUTHOR - MALEEHA LODHI

Summary:

Israel's unprecedented strike on Qatar jolted the entire Middle East, exposing the fragility of the regional order and the hollowness of security guarantees tied to the United States. The emergency Arab-Islamic summit, despite fiery rhetoric, fell short of decisive action, reflecting once again the gulf between words and deeds in Arab diplomacy. While leaders denounced Israeli aggression in Gaza and beyond, they stopped short of wielding their vast economic clout or cutting diplomatic ties, leaving the burden of response to individual states. Against this backdrop, the Gulf Cooperation Council's push for a joint defence mechanism and the announcement of the landmark Pakistan-Saudi defence pact emerged as the only tangible signs of shifting alignments. Particularly, the pact underscored Riyadh's growing distrust of Washington's security umbrella and its turn toward Islamabad for credible deterrence against unchecked Israeli expansionism.

The larger picture points to a turning tide in Middle Eastern geopolitics. Israel's repeated strikes, America's partisan vetoes at the UN, and the failure of collective Arab resolve have deepened mistrust in existing security arrangements. Qatar, despite hosting the largest US base in the region and offering lavish investments to Washington, learned the hard way that flattery is no shield against aggression. The Pakistan-Saudi agreement committing both sides to treat an attack on one as aggression against both represents a watershed moment in regional diplomacy and could redraw the strategic chessboard. Whether this pact can be translated into an effective deterrent remains to be seen, but message is clear that the old order built on US dominance is giving way to new, homegrown alignments.

Overview:

The article highlights how Israel's attack on Qatar has intensified regional instability, exposed the futility of Arab summits, and accelerated the shift in Gulf alliances, particularly through the Pakistan-Saudi defence pact. It shows how Israel's actions coupled with American vetoes have eroded trust in Western security assurances, prompting Muslim states to explore self-reliant security mechanisms.

NOTES:

The article underscores the gravity of Israel's strike on Qatar, marking a dangerous escalation in Middle Eastern tensions and revealing the limitations of Arab unity and US security guarantees. The emergency Arab-Islamic summit, despite strong condemnations, failed to take collective punitive measures, leaving responses to individual states and exposing the persistent gap between rhetoric and real action. Proposals such as sanctions, suspension of ties, and economic pressure were floated but not adopted, further weakening the credibility of Arab diplomacy. Meanwhile, the Gulf Cooperation Council signaled intentions to strengthen a joint defence mechanism, yet the most significant outcome was the Pakistan-Saudi defence pact, which commits both nations to treat an attack on one as aggression against both. This agreement reflects Riyadh's eroding trust in Washington's ability to safeguard the region and highlights Pakistan's growing role in emerging security arrangements. The article also stresses how US vetoes at the UN, coupled with its silence on the Doha strike, have tarnished its credibility as a reliable security partner, pushing Gulf states toward alternative alignments and homegrown strategies for collective deterrence.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Current Affairs – Covers the immediate context of Israel's attack on Qatar, Arab-Islamic summit outcomes, and shifting Gulf security alignments.
- International Relations – Relates to multipolarity, decline of US security guarantees, UN's ineffectiveness, and emergence of new defence pacts.

- Pakistan Affairs – Highlights Pakistan’s growing strategic importance, especially through the Pakistan-Saudi defence pact and its role in Muslim world security.
- Political Science – Demonstrates the gap between theories of collective security and realpolitik where states act in self-interest rather than collective unity.
- Essay Paper – Provides material for broader themes such as multipolarity, changing global alliances, strategic diplomacy, and Middle Eastern power shifts.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Israel bombed Qatar, even though Qatar hosts a big US base, proving that American friendship is no guarantee of safety. Arab leaders condemned Israel but did not take real steps like sanctions or cutting ties. However, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a defence pact meaning if one is attacked, the other will defend it. This shows that Gulf states are no longer fully relying on the US and are building new partnerships. For example, just like NATO countries defend each other, this deal is a mini version of collective defence in the Muslim world.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 65,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza war
- Israel struck six countries in September 2025 alone
- Nearly 60 states attended the joint Arab League and OIC summit
- Arab states control more than 25% of global energy supplies
- The US vetoed 6 ceasefire resolutions since the war began

To sum up, the article that the Middle East is at a crossroads where old assurances of security have collapsed and new alliances are being forged. Israel’s unchecked aggression and America’s blind support have not only fanned instability but also pushed Muslim states to look inward for defence. The Pakistan-Saudi pact is a landmark step, potentially the beginning of a new security architecture in the Muslim world. The real question is, will words finally be matched with action, or will the cycle of rhetoric without resolve continue?

OVAL OFFICE MEETING

Summary

The editorial reflects on the renewed warmth in Pakistan-US relations under Donald Trump’s leadership after years of coldness during Biden’s administration. The meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Army Chief Gen Asim Munir, and President Trump marked a notable diplomatic engagement focused on security, counterterrorism, and investment. However, the editorial points out the irony of labeling Trump a “man of peace,” considering his aggressive stance toward Iran and his unflinching support for Israel amid the Gaza conflict. While the photo ops and mutual compliments created a wave of optimism, the writer warns against being carried away by appearances, emphasizing that this cordiality might be short-lived given America’s history of transactional relations with Pakistan.

The article further reminds readers that Pakistan’s ties with the US have always been a roller-coaster ride—intense during shared strategic interests and cold once those goals are met. From the Afghan Jihad to the War on Terror, the pattern of aid followed by abandonment remains unchanged. The editorial urges caution, asserting that Pakistan must pursue balanced diplomacy: maintaining relations with Washington while safeguarding its alliances with China and its principled stance on Palestine and Iran. It concludes that history teaches a simple truth. Pakistan must keep its feet on the ground and prepare for sudden shifts in American policy rather than basking in fleeting moments of diplomatic warmth.

Overview:

This article highlights Pakistan's renewed diplomatic engagement with the United States after a long lull, drawing attention to the cyclical nature of their relations. It underscores the need for Islamabad to act prudently, avoiding emotional overinvestment in temporary goodwill. The editorial questions whether this revival marks a lasting policy shift or merely a phase of convenience, warning Pakistan to balance its strategic partnerships without compromising national interests or ideological positions.

NOTES:

The article centers on the renewed diplomatic engagement between Pakistan and the United States following a long period of strained ties, highlighted by the high-profile meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Army Chief Gen Asim Munir and President Donald Trump. It reflects how this encounter filled with smiles, praise, and promises of cooperation has sparked optimism in Islamabad, yet the writer warns against overestimating its significance. The editorial underscores that US-Pakistan relations have historically been cyclical—warm during shared strategic interests and cold once those objectives are achieved. The article draws parallels to past eras of alliance such as during the Afghan Jihad and the War on Terror where Pakistan gained temporary aid but suffered long-term instability once US priorities shifted. The writer also highlights the irony of Trump being portrayed as a “man of peace,” given his aggressive stance toward Iran and unwavering support for Israel amid the Gaza conflict. The article emphasizes that Pakistan must remain cautious, balancing its relations with Washington while preserving its strategic partnerships with China and maintaining principled positions on issues like Palestine. Ultimately, the writer stresses that sustainable diplomacy depends not on fleeting goodwill but on pragmatic policy grounded in historical awareness and national interest.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-US Relations, Foreign Policy Shifts, and Civil-Military Coordination
- Current Affairs: US Foreign Policy, Regional Geopolitics, and Pakistan's Strategic Position
- International Relations: Realism, Balance of Power, and Bilateral Engagements

Notes for Beginners:

The article discusses how Pakistan and the United States are trying to improve their relations after years of distance. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Asim Munir met with President Donald Trump to talk about security, terrorism, and investment. Although this meeting seemed positive, the writer cautions that the US has a history of helping Pakistan only when it suits its own interests. In the past, America provided aid during wars like the Afghan conflict but withdrew once its goals were met. The article advises Pakistan to keep good relations with the US while also maintaining ties with China and supporting just causes like Palestine. The main message is that Pakistan should act wisely and not rely too heavily on promises that may not last long.

Facts and Figures:

- The last official bilateral meeting between a Pakistani prime minister and a US president took place in 2019 between Imran Khan and Donald Trump.
- Saudi Arabia and the US remain Pakistan's two largest strategic partners in terms of defence and investment.
- Historically, Pakistan has received over \$33 billion in US aid since 2002 during the War on Terror.
- Trump's recent re-engagement marks the first dedicated White House visit for a Pakistani leader in six years.

In essence, the article reminds that diplomacy is not built on handshakes and smiles but on strategy and foresight. While Pakistan's re-entry into Washington's good books may seem like a diplomatic triumph, history urges caution. Nations that fail to learn from past patterns risk being caught in the same whirlpool of dependency and disillusionment. Pakistan must therefore steer its foreign policy with prudence, balancing its friendships without losing sight of its sovereignty and long-term national interests.

QUEST FOR ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY

AUTHOR: SAEED AHMED

Summary:

The article relates Pakistan's current economic subservience to the colonial exploitation that began when the East India Company gained control over Indian revenues in 1765. The writer laments how Pakistan's sovereignty once symbolised by the founding of the State Bank in 1948 has been steadily eroded by its dependence on external aid and international financial institutions. The IMF, World Bank and ADB, once considered partners, now dictate Pakistan's policies, from monetary management to energy pricing. The article shows a nation caught in a vicious cycle where donor-driven projects multiply but fail to yield tangible progress. Despite receiving over \$50 billion in aid between 2000 and 2022, Pakistan continues to rank poorly in key human and economic indicators, with worsening poverty, unemployment, and institutional decay. In essence, the writer portrays Pakistan as a modern colony, this time ruled not by imperial powers but by international creditors and donor agencies.

The author asserts that international aid has turned into a tool of soft power, allowing foreign governments to pursue their own strategic and political agendas under the guise of development assistance. He criticises Pakistan's policymakers for outsourcing decision-making to foreign technocrats, which has compromised the country's autonomy and accountability. Drawing inspiration from India's post-2004 approach of rejecting most bilateral aid and relying on self-financing, the writer argues that Pakistan must also discipline its aid inflows and restrict donor involvement to projects that genuinely enhance productivity and growth. The article insists the goal is not to reject aid outright but to reclaim control over economic policy, ensuring that external assistance serves Pakistan's national interest rather than external priorities. In the end, he gives message that economic sovereignty is not a luxury, it is a lifeline for national security and long-term prosperity.

Overview:

The article discusses how Pakistan's overreliance on international aid has undermined its economic independence. Saeed Ahmed traces the erosion of financial sovereignty from the colonial period to modern times, arguing that institutions like the IMF, World Bank, and ADB have become de facto decision-makers in Pakistan's economy. He urges policymakers to restore control over financial policy by setting clear priorities for aid utilization and limiting foreign influence.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's deepening economic dependency on international financial institutions, connecting with the colonial exploitation that began in 1765 when the East India Company took charge of Indian revenues. The writer highlights how Pakistan's sovereignty once symbolized by the establishment of the State Bank in 1948 has gradually been compromised by reliance on foreign aid and loans. Institutions like the IMF, World Bank and ADB which were initially viewed as partners, now exert control over Pakistan's fiscal policies, dictating decisions related to taxation, subsidies and energy pricing. Despite receiving over \$50 billion in aid from 2000 to 2022, Pakistan's socio-economic indicators such as poverty, unemployment and child stunting remain alarming. It reflects inefficiency and mismanagement. The author criticizes policymakers for surrendering economic decision-making to foreign technocrats, thereby diminishing national accountability and independence. He describes foreign aid as a modern instrument of soft power used by donor countries to advance their own political agendas under the guise of development. The writer proposes that Pakistan should follow India's model of self-financing by limiting donor involvement to projects that genuinely promote productivity and sustainable growth. Ultimately, he emphasizes that reclaiming control over financial policies and prioritizing self-reliance are pivotal for Pakistan's long-term stability, security, and genuine economic sovereignty.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs – Economic Sovereignty and Dependence on International Financial Institutions
- International Relations – Role of IMF and World Bank in Global Politics
- Current Affairs – Global Aid Politics and Economic Diplomacy
- Governance and Public Policy – Policy Autonomy and Institutional Reform

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan has become too dependent on financial aid from international institutions like the IMF and World Bank which now influence its economic decisions. For example, the IMF often sets conditions like increasing fuel taxes or cutting subsidies before approving loans, which directly impacts the people. The writer compares this dependency to the colonial period when foreigners controlled India's wealth. He argues that true independence means controlling one's own financial policies. Like India, which refused foreign aid after 2004, Pakistan must learn to stand on its own feet by accepting only the aid that supports real development and productivity.

Facts and Figures:

- In 1765, Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II granted tax collection rights to the East India Company, leading to financial colonization.
- Pakistan received around \$50 billion in official development assistance between 2000 and 2022.
- Twenty-six million children in Pakistan remain out of school, and 40% of children under five are stunted.
- In 2024, Pakistan received only \$116 million from USAID and £41.5 million from the UK, yet donors continue to influence policy decisions.

To sum up, a nation without economic control is a nation without real freedom. Pakistan's struggle for sovereignty cannot be won through borrowed money or foreign prescriptions. The path to true independence lies in reclaiming financial decision-making, curbing donor interference, and fostering self-reliance. As the writer concludes, economic sovereignty is not merely about pride but it is about survival, dignity and the ability to shape one's own destiny.

The Nation –

MINERALS AND GEOPOLITICS

AUTHOR: DR. GULIAYESHA BHATTI

Summary:

Pakistan has finally begun to turn its talk of mineral wealth into tangible policy, with the \$500 million MoU between U.S. Strategic Metals and Pakistan's Frontier Works Organisation signalling a decisive move into the global critical minerals supply chain. For decades projects like Reko Diq and Saindak stood as monuments of missed chances, but this deal offers a different story by including not only mining but also recycling expertise, a sector growing as crucial as extraction itself in the age of electric vehicles and clean energy. The presence of senior U.S. diplomats at the signing underlined Washington's intention to reduce reliance on Chinese-dominated supply chains, while for Pakistan, FWO's involvement gave the agreement institutional muscle and operational credibility. At the same time, Islamabad was finalising a \$7 billion railway upgrade with China, showing its new strategy of balancing between competing powers rather than putting all its eggs in one basket.

Yet, the article warns that the road ahead is strewn with pitfalls. Pakistan's long record of flashy MoUs that gathers dust after the photo-ops casts a shadow on this ambitious venture. The future of this partnership will depend on transparency, environmental safeguards, fair revenue sharing, and above all, building domestic capacity rather than

remaining a mere exporter of raw material. Critical minerals like lithium and cobalt are the oil of the 21st century, central to technology, energy, and even defence. If Islamabad can marry governance with foresight, it could leapfrog into a higher orbit of global economic relevance. But if the old cycle of dependency and mismanagement repeats itself, this golden opportunity may slip through Pakistan's fingers once again, leaving it a spectator in the great mineral game.

Overview:

This article explores Pakistan's entry into the global critical minerals race through a landmark MoU with a U.S. mining company. It highlights the economic, environmental, and geopolitical stakes, particularly in balancing U.S. and Chinese interests, and stresses the need for good governance to avoid past failures.

NOTES:

The article underlines Pakistan's long-awaited breakthrough in harnessing its mineral potential through a \$500 million MoU between U.S. Strategic Metals and Pakistan's Frontier Works Organisation (FWO). Unlike past ventures such as Reko Diq and Saindak that turned into cautionary tales, this deal promises not only extraction but also recycling, an area increasingly vital in the clean energy era. The presence of top U.S. diplomats at the signing reflected Washington's push to diversify away from Chinese-controlled supply chains, while FWO's involvement lent institutional strength to the agreement. Simultaneously, Pakistan moved forward with a \$7 billion CPEC-related railway upgrade, highlighting its new balancing act between global powers. However, the article cautions that Pakistan's history of hollow MoUs could haunt this initiative unless supported by transparency, fair revenue-sharing, environmental safeguards, and domestic capacity-building. Since critical minerals like lithium and cobalt are dubbed the "oil of the 21st century," the stakes for Pakistan are sky-high, making this a potential turning point in its economic and geopolitical trajectory.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Mineral resources and their role in economic development; institutional capacity in resource management.
- International Relations: U.S.-China rivalry, strategic balancing, and geopolitics of critical minerals.
- Current Affairs: Global clean energy transitions, critical minerals as drivers of technology and defence.
- Political Science: Resource politics, governance challenges, and the state's role in economic diplomacy.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan has signed a \$500 million agreement with a U.S. company to explore and recycle important minerals like lithium and cobalt which are needed for batteries, clean energy, and new technology. For years, Pakistan talked about its mineral wealth but failed to use it properly. This new deal is different because it includes both mining and recycling, which can bring more value. The U.S. is interested because it wants to reduce dependence on China for minerals, while Pakistan wants investment and global recognition. But for this to work, Pakistan must ensure clear rules, protect the environment, and build local expertise instead of just exporting raw materials. If handled wisely, this could create jobs, strengthen the economy and give Pakistan more importance in the world market.

Facts and Figures:

- \$500 million MoU signed between U.S. Strategic Metals and Pakistan's Frontier Works Organisation
- \$7 billion financing deal signed with China for ML-1 railway upgrade under CPEC in the same week
- Reko Diq project holds an estimated 5.9 billion tonnes of ore reserves containing copper and gold
- Global demand for lithium is expected to increase more than threefold by 2030

To sum up, the article reminds that minerals are no longer just buried treasure but the backbone of modern economies. Pakistan can seize this moment to become a credible player in global supply chains or fall back into the

rut of missed opportunities. With foresight, transparency, and commitment, this MoU could mark the beginning of Pakistan's rise from a passive resource holder to a strategic actor in the mineral-driven world order.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - AN IMPERATIVE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Summary:

The article suggests that no nation can move forward while leaving half its population behind. Women's empowerment far from being a luxury is painted as the backbone of sustainable development. The article argues that when women are given equal access to education, leadership, and decision-making, they not only break the shackles of dependency but also bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to governance and society. Without their participation, policymaking becomes lopsided and develops half-baked, much like a bird trying to fly with one wing. The writer points out that excluding women means wasting half the nation's talent, while including them in positions of power multiplies efficiency, harmony, and justice across institutions.

It is emphasized that women's economic independence is a game-changer, freeing them from coercive dependence and giving them a voice in matters that affect their lives. From tackling domestic violence to leading businesses and public offices, women are portrayed as catalysts who wear many hats and balance multiple roles with resilience. The article warns that policies framed solely by men often fail to address the realities faced by women, while female executives not only understand these issues better but often outperform their male counterparts. The message rings loud and clear: keeping women on the sidelines is national self-sabotage, while their empowerment is the key to justice, growth, and survival in today's competitive world.

Overview:

The article underscores that empowering women is inseparable from achieving sustainable development and the UN's SDG-5 on gender equality. It shows how integrating women into leadership, policymaking, and the economy strengthens justice, harmony, and tolerance in society. By highlighting barriers such as cultural stereotypes, economic dependence, and lack of representation, the piece advocates for systemic reforms in education, training, and employment opportunities to unlock women's full potential.

NOTES:

The article highlights that women's empowerment is central to sustainable development and no country can progress by sidelining half its population. It stresses that women's participation in policymaking, leadership, and economic activities ensures more inclusive and effective decisions, while their absence makes governance lopsided and incomplete. This piece of od writing points out that women's economic independence is important to breaking cycles of dependency and addressing issues like domestic violence. It emphasizes that in many cases women leaders and executives perform better than their male counterparts, bringing balance, innovation and resilience to institutions. The article further argues that depriving women of education, training, and employment wastes half of the nation's talent and undermines its progress, while integrating women into leadership and professional roles strengthens justice, tolerance, and harmony in society.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Women's role in national development and governance
- Current Affairs – Gender equality, policymaking, and social justice
- Sociology – Gender roles, stereotypes, and cultural barriers
- Gender Studies – Empowerment models, case studies of women leaders, SDG-5
- International Relations – Global benchmarks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that women are vital for a country's growth. For example when girls are denied education, half the nation's potential is wasted but when they are given opportunities, they become doctors, teachers, and leaders who help society grow. Just like a household cannot function properly if one member does all the work while the other is sidelined, a country cannot progress if women are kept dependent and powerless. When women are economically independent, they can stand on their own feet, raise their voice against unfair treatment, and contribute to decision-making, making society more balanced and just.

Facts and Figures:

- Women make up nearly half of Pakistan's population according to the 2023 census
- UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 calls for gender equality and women's empowerment
- Economic dependence remains a major factor behind domestic violence cases
- Pakistan consistently ranks low on the Global Gender Gap Index compared to regional neighbors

To wrap up, the article makes it abundantly clear that empowering women is not just a moral duty but a national necessity. Without their education, independence and leadership Pakistan will remain stuck in reverse gear. By breaking stereotypes and integrating women fully into society, the nation can unlock resilience, innovation, and harmony. Simply put, no country can march into the future while chaining half of its people to the past.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

Inextricably – in a way that cannot be separated (Syn: inseparably | Ant: loosely)

Coercive – involving force or pressure (Syn: oppressive | Ant: voluntary)

Hierarchy – system of ranked authority (Syn: order | Ant: equality)

Congenial – pleasant and harmonious (Syn: agreeable | Ant: hostile)

Shackles – restraints that limit freedom (Syn: chains | Ant: liberty)

GENDER EQUALITY IS A MYTH IN PAKISTAN

Summary:

The article shows the reality of gender inequality in Pakistan. It exposes how women remain chained by social prejudices, economic disparities, and cultural constraints. From unequal wages to denial of education and careers women's plight is painted as a story of neglect and indifference. Honor killings, domestic violence and rigid feudal traditions have made life miserable for many while poor enforcement of laws has allowed the law of the jungle to prevail. Even in politics, women's representation is cosmetic as most occupy reserved seats without exercising real power, leaving the majority silenced at decision-making tables. The article thus argues that Pakistan's image and progress remain hostage to this glaring imbalance.

At the same time, it underscores that women are indispensable as nation-builders, without whom no society can climb the ladder of development. The failures of past governments to bridge the gender gap and the apathy of policymakers have pushed the issue to a breaking point. Unless laws are implemented effectively, feudal mindsets are broken, and women given genuine space in leadership and economic participation, Pakistan cannot hope to compete with developed nations.

Overview:

The article examines gender inequality in Pakistan by highlighting wage gaps, restrictions on education and employment, honor-based violence, and weak law enforcement. It also critiques superficial political participation, pointing out that most women in parliament belong to elite families. Illiteracy, feudal control and conservative mindsets further entrench inequality. The article concludes that empowering women is vital for Pakistan's development and global image.

NOTES:

The article highlights the multifaceted challenges of gender inequality in Pakistan. It emphasizes how women face systemic barriers in education, employment, and politics. It underlines the persistence of wage gaps, limited career opportunities, and restrictions placed on women by feudal and conservative traditions, particularly in rural areas. The article highlights the menace of honor killings, domestic violence, and the lack of effective law enforcement which allow injustices to continue unchecked. It criticizes the superficial political participation of women, pointing out that most occupy reserved seats without wielding real influence, while genuine representation through direct elections remains rare. The article also underscores that illiteracy, poverty, and outdated social mindsets deepen the crisis and make women second-class citizens. Yet, it strongly argues that without the empowerment of women as equal contributors in economic, social, and political spheres, Pakistan cannot achieve sustainable development or improve its global image.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – women’s role in development, governance gaps
- Gender Studies – patriarchy, violence, inequality, empowerment
- Current Affairs – human rights, governance failures, women’s issues in policy debates
- Political Science – representation, democracy, law implementation
- Sociology – feudalism, cultural traditions, conservative mindsets

Notes for Beginners:

The article says women in Pakistan are often treated unfairly. Many don’t get equal pay for work, some are not allowed to study or choose careers and in villages they are stopped from voting. Sometimes women even face violence in the name of honor. The government has made laws, but they are not enforced properly, so people keep breaking them. In politics, most women are given reserved seats, but very few reach power through elections. For example, most women parliamentarians come from rich or feudal families, not from the common public. This shows that women still need more opportunities to contribute equally.

Facts and Figures:

- Sixty reserved seats for women in Pakistan’s National Assembly
- Few women elected directly, mostly from influential families
- Gender gap in Pakistan ranked among the widest globally (World Economic Forum reports Pakistan near bottom)
- Honor killings claim hundreds of women’s lives each year
- Illiteracy remains high among women, especially in rural areas

To wrap up, the article makes it clear that gender inequality is eating away at Pakistan’s foundations like a termite. While laws exist, their poor enforcement and cultural resistance continue to block real progress. Unless Pakistan ensures women’s equal rights in education, work, and politics, the dream of national development will remain a castle built on sand. Giving women their rightful place is not only about fairness, it is about survival in a fiercely competitive world.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

Deplorable – deserving strong condemnation (Syn: disgraceful | Ant: admirable)

Appalling – shocking and horrific (Syn: dreadful | Ant: pleasing)

Chauvinism – excessive loyalty to male dominance (Syn: sexism | Ant: equality)

Stereotypical – oversimplified and fixed idea (Syn: conventional | Ant: unique)

Archaic – very old and outdated (Syn: obsolete | Ant: modern)

DIGITISING PROGRESS

Summary:

The government's announcement of digitising all payments by June 2026 is no small feat but it is a watershed moment that signals Pakistan's resolve to shake off outdated systems and march into the digital age. This reform holds the promise of streamlining governance, reducing corruption and opening doors to transparency while making the machinery of the state leaner and more efficient. It is not merely about adopting technology but about reimagining how the citizen interacts with the state, cutting through red tape, and shutting the doors on the middleman culture that has drained public trust. Such a move also speaks volumes on the international stage, projecting Pakistan as a nation ready to reform, modernise and align with global standards.

Yet the road ahead is steep for the success of such a transition hinges on more than sleek portals and paperless systems. Without addressing the yawning gap in digital literacy, this dream risks falling flat. A system that excludes the very people it was meant to empower will only replace one inefficiency with another. As always the devil lurks in execution, digital reforms must run hand in hand with efforts to equip citizens with the skills and confidence to navigate them. Pakistan's future prosperity depends not only on digitising payments but on digitising people, ensuring no one is left behind as the country steps boldly into tomorrow.

Overview:

This article highlights Pakistan's decision to digitise all payments by June 2026, presenting it as a vital step toward transparency, efficiency, and global credibility. It stresses the advantages for the economy, citizens and international partners while warning that digital reforms without widespread digital literacy will remain incomplete.

NOTES:

The article underlines the government's landmark decision to digitise all payments by June 2026, presenting it as a pivotal move to modernise Pakistan's governance framework. It stresses that digitisation will help curb corruption, close leakages, enhance transparency and streamline state services while dismantling the entrenched middleman culture. The reform also carries global significance by boosting Pakistan's credibility with international investors and partners. However, the article warns that technology alone cannot guarantee success unless it is coupled with digital literacy, ensuring that citizens have the skills to engage with these systems effectively. Without this reforms risk widening social gaps and alienating the very people they aim to empower. Ultimately, the article argues that true progress lies not only in digitising systems but also in digitising people so the reform becomes both inclusive and sustainable.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs (governance reforms, transparency, public service delivery)
- Current Affairs (digitisation, economic modernisation, international credibility)
- Public Administration (e-governance, reducing corruption, improving service delivery).

Notes for beginners:

This article explains that Pakistan plans to move all its payments to digital systems by June 2026. This means that instead of cash payments, most transactions will be tracked digitally, reducing corruption and making the government more efficient. For example, if someone pays a bill, it will go directly to the government account without involving a middleman. However to make this successful, people need to know how to use computers, phones and online platforms otherwise many citizens may feel left out.

Facts and figures:

- Government target: all payments digitised by June 2026.
- Benefits include transparency, cutting corruption, boosting credibility, and reducing reliance on cash.
- The success depends on increasing digital literacy among the population.

To sum up, the article shows both the promise and the pitfalls of Pakistan's digital journey. The reform is ambitious and long overdue, yet its success will depend on execution and inclusivity. If Pakistan manages to marry technology with accessibility, it will not just digitise transactions but also rewire the very relationship between the state and its people which would be a transformation that could set the stage for lasting progress.

Arab News Pakistan –

WHILE TALIBAN STRENGTHEN GRIP, THE WHOLE WORLD IS PARTY TO AFGHAN SUFFERING AUTHOR: NAILA MAHSUD

Summary:

The Taliban's decision to remove the word 'acting' from government officials' titles marks a turning of the screw in Afghanistan's grim saga. What was once thought to be a transitional phase has now cemented into an unyielding rule, with Mullah Habibullah Akhundzada pulling strings from the shadows like his predecessor, Mullah Omar. Despite early promises of inclusivity, the Taliban has clung to its old ways excluding women, minorities, and rival groups from governance. Meanwhile the west played cat and mouse with aid and recognition, but its maneuvers only deepened Afghan suffering, as the people were left high and dry between power games and frozen assets. The result is a deadlock where ordinary Afghans pay the heaviest price, while the Taliban tighten their grip with iron hands.

This entrenched regime shows no sign of softening. Akhundzada's directives, austere and uncompromising, symbolize a retreat into archaic governance rather than progress. The Taliban, guided by Pashtunwali and rigid Hanafi interpretations, remains allergic to dissent, elections, or power-sharing. But the blame does not lie on Kabul alone—the international community has stopped "acting" to genuinely alleviate Afghan suffering. By isolating Afghanistan, global powers have become unwilling partners in prolonging its misery. In the end, both the Taliban's stubbornness and the world's indifference have chained the Afghan people to endless hardship, making their plight not just a domestic tragedy but a shared failure of global conscience.

Overview:

The article shows the Taliban's unwavering hold over Afghanistan. It emphasizes how its leadership has rejected inclusivity, sidelined minorities, and discarded democratic possibilities. It highlights how international policies of isolation and conditional aid have failed, often worsening the plight of ordinary Afghans. The article concludes that both the Taliban and the global community are complicit in the suffering, with the former clinging to outdated authority and the latter abandoning meaningful engagement.

NOTES:

The article underlines how the Taliban under Mullah Habibullah Akhundzada has entrenched its grip on Afghanistan by removing the "acting" titles from officials, signaling permanence rather than transition. Despite initial promises of inclusivity, the regime remains dominated by Taliban figures alone with women, minorities, and opposition groups completely excluded. Drawing parallels with Mullah Omar's shadowy rule in the 1990s, Akhundzada too governs from behind the curtain, issuing stern directives and showing no appetite for reform or power-sharing. The Taliban's governance is deeply rooted in Pashtunwali and strict Hanafi jurisprudence, leaving no space for elections, dissent, or pluralism. At the same time the West's carrot-and-stick approach, linking aid and frozen assets to reform

has backfired, worsening humanitarian suffering for ordinary Afghans rather than compelling the Taliban to change. The result is a political stalemate where an uncompromising regime on one hand and an indifferent international community on the other have both become partners in prolonging Afghanistan's misery.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Taliban rule, international isolation, aid politics.
- Current Affairs: Afghanistan's political crisis, global response to Taliban governance.
- Pakistan Affairs: Regional security implications, Pakistan's role and stakes in Afghan stability.
- Political Science: Governance without inclusivity, authoritarian resilience.

Notes for Beginners:

The Taliban is a hardline Islamic group that first ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s and returned to power in August 2021 after the US withdrawal. They promised to form an inclusive government but instead excluded women and minorities, sticking to their traditional practices. For example, girls above grade six are still barred from schools, and women are sidelined from public jobs. On the international stage aid worth billions of dollars was withheld by Western powers, worsening Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis where 24 million people now rely on assistance. This shows how the Taliban's rigid governance style and the world's isolating policies together fuel the suffering of ordinary Afghans.

Facts and Figures:

- Taliban regained power in August 2021 after the US withdrawal.
- The Taliban promised an inclusive government but instead announced an all-male, Taliban-only cabinet.
- Women and minority groups remain excluded from governance and public roles.
- Girls above grade six are still barred from attending school.
- Mullah Habibullah Akhundzada, successor to Mullah Omar, leads the Taliban from behind the scenes, issuing strict directives.
- International aid and Afghan assets remain frozen, worsening the humanitarian crisis.
- Around 24 million Afghans depend on international humanitarian assistance.
- The Taliban dropped the "acting" titles from all officials, marking a shift from temporary rule to permanent control.
- No signs of elections, dissent tolerance, or power-sharing have emerged four years into Taliban rule.

To sum up, The article reminds us that Afghanistan's plight is not merely the making of the Taliban but also of the world that turned its back. The suffering people have become pawns caught between an unyielding regime and a disengaged international community. Unless both sides shift course, the Afghan story will remain a tale of broken promises, frozen hopes, and a nation trapped in the crossfire of indifference and dogma.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

1. Entrenched – firmly established; rooted (Synonyms: ingrained, fixed | Antonyms: unstable, weak)
2. Archaic – outdated, ancient (Synonyms: obsolete, old-fashioned | Antonyms: modern, progressive)
3. Forbearing – patient, self-controlled (Synonyms: tolerant, restrained | Antonyms: harsh, impatient)
4. Camouflages – conceals, hides (Synonyms: disguise, mask | Antonyms: reveal, expose)
5. Stalemate – deadlock, standstill (Synonyms: impasse, gridlock | Antonyms: breakthrough, solution)

WHY ISRAEL FEARS THE GAZA FLOTILLAS

AUTHOR: DR. RAMZY BAROUD

Summary:

The article shares Israel's growing unease with the Gaza solidarity flotillas, particularly the Global Sumud Flotilla, which set sail from Barcelona with the aim of breaking the blockade. Israel's furious response, branding peaceful activists as terrorists, exposes not just its iron-fisted stance but also its deep fear of global civil society standing shoulder to shoulder with Palestinians. The flotillas may not carry enough supplies to feed Gaza's millions, yet their real strength lies in symbolism — a thorn in Israel's side that exposes its policies before the world. From past bloody encounters such as the Mavi Marmara in 2010 to recent drone strikes and boat seizures, Israel's strategy has remained the same: intimidate and criminalize activism. But every act of resistance, every small vessel braving the seas, adds fuel to the fire of international solidarity, which Tel Aviv cannot easily extinguish.

The narrative makes it clear that while Palestinian steadfastness remains the beating heart of the struggle, international activism has grown into a powerful force. From boycotts and divestments to legal advocacy and grassroots campaigns, civil society has taken up responsibilities abdicated by governments and global institutions. Israel's threats, paradoxically, confirm the effectiveness of these flotillas, for they not only challenge the siege but also erode Israel's standing on the international stage. In the long run, these solidarity missions are not about reaching Gaza's shores alone; they are about steering the global conscience toward justice, making Israel increasingly isolated, and ensuring that the cries of Gaza echo across seas and continents.

Overview:

The article highlights Israel's harsh reaction to Gaza solidarity flotillas. The article reveals its fear of civil society's growing influence in shaping global narratives on Palestine. It recounts past violent responses, recent interceptions, and the symbolic value of these missions in mobilizing international solidarity.

NOTES:

The article emphasizes Israel's hostile reaction to the Gaza solidarity flotillas. It portrays them as a serious challenge to its blockade and occupation strategy. It points out that Israel labels peaceful activists as terrorists, reflecting its fear of civil society's growing role in shaping global opinion on Palestine. The author traces the history of flotillas, beginning with the Free Gaza Movement in 2008 and the deadly Mavi Marmara incident in 2010 to the recent Global Sumud Flotilla sailing from Spain. Despite repeated interceptions, drone strikes, and confiscations these missions continue and highlight the humanitarian crisis and the failure of international institutions to act. The article also underlines how civil society movements, through boycotts, advocacy, and grassroots campaigns have filled the vacuum left by governments, giving the Palestinian cause global resonance and threatening Israel's international standing.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations (non-state actors, international law, humanitarian interventions)
- Current Affairs (Middle East conflicts, Palestine-Israel issue, global solidarity movements)
- Political Science (civil society and state dynamics)

Notes for Beginners:

The flotillas are small boats carrying aid and activists that attempt to break Israel's blockade on Gaza. Though they rarely succeed in delivering supplies, they highlight the humanitarian crisis to the world. For instance, in 2010 Israeli forces killed 10 activists on the Mavi Marmara, drawing international criticism. Today flotillas like the Global Sumud continue the struggle, joined by activists from countries like Spain. They show how ordinary people not just governments play a role in shaping international opinion.

Facts and Figures:

- About 2 million people in Gaza are living under blockade and famine-like conditions
- In 2010, 10 activists were killed on the Mavi Marmara during the Gaza Freedom Flotilla
- 6,000 Palestinians detained in Gaza during the first 19 months of the genocide were labeled as “unlawful combatants”
- The Global Sumud Flotilla embarked from Barcelona with dozens of boats joining along the way
- Past flotillas were intercepted in 2011, 2015, and 2018, often with the cooperation of European governments and Israel

To put it simply, the article makes it clear that Israel’s greatest fear is not the boats themselves but the rising tide of civil society that refuses to stay silent. The flotillas may be small in scale, but they carry a weight far greater than their cargo, they carry the voice of global conscience, a voice that, sooner or later, will tilt the tide of history against oppression.

Difficult Words with Meanings:

- Flotilla – a small fleet of ships; Syn: squadron, convoy; Ant: single vessel
- Draconian – excessively harsh or severe; Syn: oppressive, tyrannical; Ant: lenient
- Incensed – very angry or enraged; Syn: outraged, infuriated; Ant: calm
- Steadfastness – firm loyalty or determination; Syn: resilience, perseverance; Ant: wavering
- Erode – to gradually wear away; Syn: diminish, weaken; Ant: strengthen

Well-Researched Article –

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON GWADAR: PAKISTAN'S COASTAL REGIONS GROWING CRISIS,

AUTHOR: MIR SHER BAZ KHETRAN

Summary:

The article highlights the ticking climate clock haunting Pakistan's coastal belt, with Gwadar standing at the frontline of this unfolding crisis. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and ecological degradation have turned livelihoods upside down for millions who depend on fishing and coastal resources. Mangroves that once stood as nature's shield are being wiped away, leaving communities bare to the wrath of storms and tidal surges. Fish populations have plummeted, with nearly 70% of species already lost, pushing food insecurity and poverty to alarming levels. What was once a thriving coastline has now been battered into vulnerability, and the people who call it home find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place.

The situation worsens when the looming threat to development initiatives like Gwadar Port and CPEC is factored in. With billions invested, these projects risk being swept away if climate resilience is not stitched into their foundations. Reports warn that by 2050, climate-related damage could cost Pakistan \$14 billion annually. Yet, the country's lack of preparedness, weak adaptation strategies, and scant public awareness have left the region exposed to calamity. The article warns that without immediate and coordinated measures, Pakistan's coastal communities may be staring down a future as bleak as a sinking ship with no lifeboat in sight.

Overview:

This article provides a comprehensive account of how climate change is not just an environmental problem but also an economic, social, and developmental crisis for Pakistan's coastal regions. It highlights the destruction of mangroves, collapse of fisheries, displacement of communities, and risks posed to billion-dollar projects like Gwadar Port. The central argument is that Pakistan's vulnerability demands urgent adaptation strategies, public awareness, and international cooperation, as the future of millions rests on how swiftly the country responds to this crisis.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's alarming vulnerability to climate change, with Gwadar and other coastal regions standing at the frontline of this crisis. It explains how rising sea levels, extreme weather, and ocean acidification are eroding coastlines, killing marine life and destroying mangrove forests which once acted as natural shields. Fisheries, the lifeblood of over 1.8 million people are collapsing with nearly 70% of species already extinct, directly threatening food security and economic stability. Gwadar once a hub of fishing and trade has already lost homes to tidal surges, reflecting the social toll of this crisis. The destruction of ecosystems not only weakens communities but also undermines Pakistan's strategic projects like CPEC and Gwadar Port, which face the looming risk of billions in climate-related damages by 2050. The article emphasizes that without urgent adaptation, resilience-building, and international cooperation, the coastal belt may be pushed into irreversible decline, endangering both livelihoods and national development.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Environmental Science: climate change, rising sea levels, loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation.
- Pakistan Affairs: vulnerability of Gwadar and Balochistan, risks to CPEC and national economy.
- Current Affairs: climate crisis as a global security issue, international cooperation and aid.
- International Relations: climate diplomacy, global responsibility for climate-vulnerable nations.

Notes for Beginners:

Climate change means long-term shifts in weather patterns and temperature. For example, in Gwadar rising sea levels have washed away homes and reduced fishing opportunities, directly affecting people's survival. Mangrove forests which act like natural walls against storms have been destroyed, leaving the coast defenseless. Fishermen who once relied on an abundance of fish now face dwindling catches because warmer waters drive marine life away or kill it. This shows that climate change is not just about hotter summers but about jobs, food, and safety for millions.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan ranks among the top 10 most vulnerable countries to climate change (ND-GAIN).
- Since 2022, Pakistan has faced extreme weather including record floods and heatwaves.
- 40–70% of fish species in Pakistan's coastal waters have already gone extinct (FRAP 2008–2013).
- Over 1.8 million people in Pakistan's coastal regions rely on fishing for their livelihood (World Bank).
- Pakistan has lost 70% of its mangrove forests in the last 50 years (IUCN).
- Climate-related damage could cost Pakistan \$14 billion annually by 2050 (Asian Development Bank).
- Balochistan covers 42% of Pakistan's land, making its ecological health critical for the whole country.

To sum up, this article makes it clear that the crisis lapping at Pakistan's shores is not a distant storm but a present and growing reality. Gwadar and its neighboring coasts are bearing the brunt of climate change, with livelihoods washed away, ecosystems collapsing, and billion-dollar projects hanging by a thread. The warning is unambiguous: without immediate action Pakistan risks watching its coasts slip away like sand between fingers. The time to act is now, or the tide will rise too high to turn back.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

1. Vulnerable – open to harm or damage (Synonyms: exposed, defenseless | Antonyms: protected, secure)
2. Degradation – process of decline or deterioration (Synonyms: decay, erosion | Antonyms: improvement, restoration)
3. Jeopardize – to put at risk (Synonyms: endanger, imperil | Antonyms: safeguard, protect)
4. Alarming – causing fear or concern (Synonyms: shocking, distressing | Antonyms: reassuring, calming)
5. Resilience – ability to recover from difficulties (Synonyms: toughness, adaptability | Antonyms: fragility, weakness)

FROM FOES TO FRIENDS: INDIA-TALIBAN BONHOMIE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS .

AUTHOR: MAHEEN SHAFEEQ

Summary

The article shares the shifting sands of regional politics where India once at loggerheads with the Taliban is now warming up to its former foes. The January 2025 meeting between Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Afghan Acting Foreign Minister Muttaqi was a watershed moment, signalling India's attempt to turn the page. From offering wheat and medicine to eyeing the Chabahar Port as a lifeline for trade, New Delhi is playing its cards carefully to secure a foothold in Kabul. India, rattled by Taliban's closeness with Pakistan and China, seems to have realised that turning its back on Afghanistan is akin to shooting itself in the foot. By sending diplomats, re-opening its embassy, and extending selective cooperation, India is now trying to strike while the iron is hot.

Yet, behind the façade of bonhomie lies a deeper game. The Taliban's sour ties with Islamabad, coupled with India's ambition to encircle Pakistan, reveal a geopolitical tug-of-war. Islamabad, long host to millions of Afghan refugees, now finds the Taliban courting its arch-rival, adding insult to injury. India's alleged support to anti-Pakistan groups

further fuels suspicions of hybrid warfare. While regional peace demands cooperation, the moves resemble a chessboard where every pawn is pushed to corner Pakistan. The article argues that unless sobriety prevails, this newfound India-Taliban engagement may fan the flames of mistrust rather than pave the way for lasting stability.

Overview:

This article dissects the evolving relationship between India and the Taliban, moving from hostility to cautious engagement. It explains how India recalibrated its stance after realising that abandoning Afghanistan would leave the field wide open for Pakistan and China. By focusing on aid, trade routes, and diplomatic channels, New Delhi seeks to regain lost influence while the Taliban exploit these overtures to diversify foreign partnerships. However, Pakistan views this development as part of India's strategy to encircle it, raising concerns of terrorism, security threats, and hybrid warfare.

NOTES:

The article highlights India's strategic shift from hostility to cautious engagement with the Taliban, marked by the January 2025 high-level meeting in Dubai between officials of both sides. It outlines India's provision of humanitarian aid, such as wheat and medicines, and its interest in strengthening trade routes through the Chabahar Port to bypass Pakistan. At the same time it notes India's reopening of its Kabul embassy and deployment of diplomats as signs of long-term engagement. The Taliban, facing strained ties with Pakistan, appear willing to welcome Indian overtures to diversify their partnerships, creating a new axis in regional politics. The article also underscores Pakistan's growing concerns, particularly the fear of encirclement and the possibility of hybrid warfare through Indian influence in Afghanistan. Overall, it portrays an evolving chessboard in South Asia, where India seeks to regain lost ground, the Taliban look for new allies, and Pakistan is left wary of shifting loyalties next door.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: changing dynamics of alliances, India's Afghan policy, balance of power in South Asia.
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, security threats, refugee issues, terrorism concerns.
- Current Affairs: India-Taliban relations, regional diplomacy, geopolitical competition.

Notes for beginners:

India-Taliban ties mean relations between India and the Taliban government of Afghanistan. Earlier, India opposed the Taliban and supported anti-Taliban forces, but now it has started meeting them to protect its interests. For example, India wants to use Iran's Chabahar Port to trade with Afghanistan instead of relying on Pakistan. On the other hand the Taliban welcome India because their relations with Pakistan have soured. This shows how alliances can shift in politics, just like two old enemies shaking hands when they both need each other for survival.

Facts and Figures:

- India-Taliban highest-level meeting took place on January 8, 2025, in Dubai.
- India has provided humanitarian aid such as wheat, medicine, and vaccines to Afghanistan.
- Over four million Afghan refugees are hosted by Pakistan for the last four decades.
- China has proposed expanding CPEC into Afghanistan, alarming India.
- India reopened its embassy in Kabul in 2023 with a "technical team" to monitor developments.

To sum up, this article captures a turning point in South Asian politics, where yesterday's enemies are today's reluctant partners. India's outreach to the Taliban reflects both desperation and calculation, as New Delhi seeks to counter Pakistan and China's growing clout. However for Pakistan this development rings alarm bells, as it sees its western neighbour drifting into India's orbit.

URAAN PAKISTAN : A FIVE-YEAR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION PLAN

AUTHOR: MIAN AHMAD NAEEM SALIK

Summary:

The article shares Pakistan's latest five-year economic roadmap, Uraan Pakistan (2024–29), launched by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as a homegrown strategy to put the economy back on its feet. Built upon the “Five Es” framework such as Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment, Energy, and Equity, the plan sets ambitious targets because it will be doubling exports to \$60 billion, achieving 6% GDP growth, and attracting \$10 billion in private investment annually by 2028. It also eyes creating one million jobs every year, promoting IT exports under the “Made in Pakistan” banner, reforming state-owned enterprises that have bled trillions, and encouraging clean energy solutions like solar power to reduce dependency on costly imports. To ensure execution, the government has established the National Economic Transformation Unit (NETU) to coordinate across ministries, private sector players, and international partners.

Yet the roadmap is not without stumbling blocks. The article flags political instability, bureaucratic inefficiency, and weak policy continuity as major hurdles that could derail the plan before it takes flight. Experts laud the vision but caution against Pakistan's patchy record of implementing structural reforms, such as SOE privatization and tax restructuring. They stress that without policy consistency and institutional discipline, even the grandest blueprint can fall like a house of cards. Recommendations highlight the need for a Charter of Economy, focus on high-impact sectors like renewable energy and digital payments, streamlining bureaucratic red tape, and building an education system that arms the youth with market-ready skills. The article concludes that Uraan Pakistan could be a turning point but only if political will and pragmatic action walk hand in hand.

Overview:

This article provides a detailed examination of Uraan Pakistan, a five-year economic plan aiming to stabilize and transform Pakistan's economy through export-led growth, digital innovation, renewable energy, and inclusive development. It outlines the government's aspirations of turning Pakistan into a trillion-dollar economy by 2035, while also addressing challenges of political discord, policy inconsistency, and institutional inefficiency. The central message is that Pakistan's economic revival hinges not just on lofty goals but on disciplined execution, collective ownership, and sustained commitment.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's ambitious five-year economic transformation plan, Uraan Pakistan (2024–29), which revolves around the “Five Es” framework. These are Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment, Energy, and Equity. It highlights the government's targets of doubling exports to \$60 billion, achieving 6% GDP growth, attracting \$10 billion private investment annually, and generating one million jobs every year by 2028. The plan also emphasizes promoting IT exports under the “Made in Pakistan” vision, reforming loss-making state-owned enterprises that have drained Rs. 6 trillion, and boosting clean energy through solar power to cut reliance on expensive imports. To coordinate and ensure delivery, the National Economic Transformation Unit (NETU) has been established. However, the article underscores challenges such as political instability, bureaucratic inefficiency, and weak policy continuity that may hamper progress. Experts warn that without consistency and institutional discipline even well-crafted policies risk failure, urging for reforms like a Charter of Economy, streamlined bureaucracy, stronger education and skills development, and long-term commitment to digital innovation and renewable energy. The plan is portrayed as a potential turning point, but one whose success depends squarely on pragmatic action and political will.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: economic planning, governance, structural reforms, role of exports.

- Economics: growth strategies, fiscal management, trade policy, digital economy.
- Current Affairs: national economic transformation, political consensus on economy.
- Environmental Science: renewable energy adoption, climate-focused growth policies.

Notes for Beginners:

Uraan Pakistan is a government plan to boost the country's economy over five years. It focuses on five main areas and that are increasing exports, promoting digital technology (like online services and IT exports), using renewable energy such as solar, protecting the environment, and reducing inequality. For example, if Pakistan doubles its exports of textiles and IT services, it will earn more foreign money, create jobs, and reduce dependence on loans. Similarly, encouraging local production of solar panels can cut electricity costs while providing employment. In simple terms, the plan tries to make Pakistan stronger by depending more on its own resources and less on outside borrowing.

Facts and Figures:

- Exports target: \$60 billion by 2028.
- GDP growth: 6% annually by 2028.
- Private investment: \$10 billion annually by 2028.
- Job creation: one million jobs every year.
- SOE losses: Rs. 6 trillion over the last decade.
- Vision 2035: transform Pakistan into a trillion-dollar economy.
- NETU established in June 2024 for policy coordination and accountability.

To sum up, the article makes it clear that Uraan Pakistan is a high-stakes gamble on the country's economic future. It is not just another paper plan but a litmus test of whether Pakistan can break free from cycles of short-term fixes and embark on a path of genuine transformation. With its sights set on exports, innovation, and inclusivity, the plan has all the ingredients of success but the recipe demands political unity, consistent policies, and efficient execution. If pursued with sincerity and discipline, Uraan Pakistan could become the springboard that propels Pakistan into sustainable prosperity; if not, it risks ending up as yet another missed opportunity gathering dust in the archives.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

1. Rejuvenate – to restore strength or energy (Synonyms: revive, refresh | Antonyms: exhaust, weaken)
2. Inefficiency – lack of productivity or effectiveness (Synonyms: wastefulness, inadequacy | Antonyms: efficiency, competence)
3. Trajectory – path or course of development (Synonyms: direction, progression | Antonyms: stagnation, standstill)
4. Sustainability – ability to be maintained over time (Synonyms: durability, viability | Antonyms: fragility, instability)
5. Bureaucratic – related to rigid and complex administrative procedures (Synonyms: procedural, red-tape | Antonyms: flexible, streamlined)

U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM PARIS AGREEMENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE GLOBAL CLIMATE COMMITMENTS

AUTHOR: MIAN AHMAD NAEEM SALIK

Summary

The article shows the twists and turns of U.S. engagement with the Paris Agreement, highlighting a nation that has been blowing hot and cold on climate commitments. It recounts Trump's initial withdrawal in 2017, Biden's swift re-entry in 2021 with ambitious targets, and Trump's second withdrawal in 2025, each shift shaking the very

foundations of global climate diplomacy. The back-and-forth not only exposed America's fickle stance but also left developing nations high and dry, particularly those like Pakistan that bear the brunt of climate disasters despite contributing little to global emissions. With trillions in projected climate finance at stake, the U.S. retreat threatens to widen the funding gap, sap momentum from international cooperation, and embolden other countries to drag their feet on carbon cuts.

Yet the article does not stop at the U.S. alone. It casts a wide net to show how the fragility of the Paris Agreement itself that built on voluntary pledges without binding enforcement has left the world walking on a knife's edge. While countries like the EU and China push ahead with renewable energy transitions, developing economies remain hamstrung by financial shortfalls and energy security needs. Pakistan, already lashed by floods, droughts, and heatwaves, has set ambitious renewable targets but remains starved of funds. The message rings loud and clear: unless nations put their money where their mouth is and act in unison, the global fight against climate change risks becoming a house divided against itself, collapsing under the weight of empty promises.

Overview:

This article examines the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement under Donald Trump in 2025, its impact on global climate diplomacy and the wider weaknesses in international climate governance. It highlights how political instability, financial shortfalls, and the absence of binding enforcement mechanisms threaten the effectiveness of climate action. The article underscores the urgent plight of developing nations, especially Pakistan, and stresses the need for stronger global solidarity, consistent U.S. engagement, and meaningful climate finance.

NOTES:

The article underlines how the U.S. has repeatedly shifted its position on the Paris Agreement such as first withdrawing under Trump in 2017, then rejoining under Biden in 2021 with ambitious climate targets and once again pulling out in 2025 under Trump. This cycle of commitment and withdrawal has weakened international climate cooperation, unsettled financial pledges, and created uncertainty in global climate diplomacy. It points out that the Paris Agreement itself suffers from weaknesses due to its voluntary pledges and lack of binding enforcement, making it fragile in the face of political swings by major emitters. The funding shortfall looms large, as the promised \$100 billion annual climate finance has not been met, while the projected need of \$1.3 trillion by 2035 looks even more daunting. Developing countries like Pakistan are disproportionately affected, contributing less than 1% to global emissions yet suffering billions in losses from climate-related disasters such as the 2022 floods. Despite setting ambitious goals like 60% renewable energy by 2030 and banning new coal plants, Pakistan struggles due to financial and infrastructural constraints. The article stresses that without consistent U.S. engagement, reliable funding, and stronger global solidarity, the Paris Agreement risks turning into an empty shell of promises, unable to deliver the urgent climate action the world desperately needs.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: climate vulnerability, adaptation strategies, economic challenges of climate change
- International Relations: U.S. foreign policy, global climate diplomacy, multilateral agreements
- Current Affairs: climate finance, COP negotiations, renewable energy commitments
- Environmental Science: greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy adoption, global warming targets

Notes for Beginners:

In simple terms, the Paris Agreement is a global plan where countries agree to cut down greenhouse gas emissions to keep the Earth cooler. The U.S. has been inconsistent: it left the agreement under Trump in 2017 came back under Biden in 2021 with big promises and again moved out under Trump in 2025. This makes it hard for other countries to trust the process. For example, developing nations like Pakistan which produce less than 1% of global emissions but suffer huge damages from floods and heatwaves, depend on rich countries' financial help. When the U.S. backs

out, the promised funds fall short, making it difficult for vulnerable countries to shift to clean energy or protect themselves from disasters.

Facts and Figures:

- U.S. pledged \$3 billion to Green Climate Fund under Obama; later cut under Trump
- Global climate finance target: \$100 billion annually, still unmet
- Future target: \$1.3 trillion per year by 2035 for climate finance
- Pakistan's losses from 2022 floods: over \$30 billion
- Pakistan's renewable target: 60% energy from renewables by 2030, ban on new coal plants
- Paris Agreement goal: limit warming to below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C

To sum up, the article shows that the fight against climate change is only as strong as the weakest link and U.S. inconsistency has become a chink in the world's armor. For Pakistan and other vulnerable nations, the stakes are existential as floods, droughts, and heatwaves threaten survival itself. The Paris Agreement still holds promise, but without reliable leadership, consistent funding, and binding commitments it risks becoming more talk than action. The need of the hour is to move from rhetoric to results, from short-term national interests to long-term global survival.

Difficult Words and Meaning:

1. Undermine – to weaken or damage (Synonyms: erode, sabotage | Antonyms: strengthen, reinforce)
2. Oscillate – to move back and forth between choices (Synonyms: fluctuate, waver | Antonyms: remain steady, stabilize)
3. Fragility – weakness or vulnerability (Synonyms: frailty, delicacy | Antonyms: strength, resilience)
4. Mitigation – action to reduce severity of a problem (Synonyms: alleviation, reduction | Antonyms: aggravation, intensification)
5. Precedent – an earlier example that sets a standard (Synonyms: model, benchmark | Antonyms: anomaly, deviation)

The Express Tribune –

CPEC-2: A SHOT IN THE ARM

Summary:

The article shows how Sino-Pak's friendship, often described as “higher than the Himalayas and deeper than the oceans,” is once again standing tall with the renewed pledge of CPEC-2. At a time when Pakistan is grappling with economic woes, China's assurance to upgrade the multibillion-dollar project is nothing short of a shot in the arm. The first phase marked by roads, energy, and communication projects has now graduated into a broader canvas where industrialisation, logistics and regional connectivity will be the new driving forces. Gwadar Port with its pivotal geographical position is set to become a gateway not just for Central Asia and Afghanistan but also a bridge linking Pakistan to five continents.

Equally important are the five new corridors promised by China, coupled with Pakistan's push for early completion of the ML-1 railway, Karakoram Highway realignment and operationalisation of Gwadar. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif leveraging his visit after the SCO summit turned the spotlight on investment opportunities before 500 Chinese entrepreneurs, widening cooperation into IT, minerals, textiles, and agriculture. The signing of the Joint Action Plan 2024-2029 further laid the foundation for sustainable growth. However what remains essential is not just lofty pledges but unwavering institutional backing at home to ensure that CPEC-2 is realised in real time and does not end up as another half-done dream.

Overview:

The editorial stresses that CPEC-2 represents not only economic revival but also the strengthening of Pakistan's regional connectivity and industrialisation. It shows how the partnership with China is evolving from infrastructure building to deeper economic cooperation in diverse sectors. With the promise of new corridors, strategic projects, and business-to-business engagements, Pakistan stands at the threshold of a new phase of growth. Yet institutional capacity and politics will remain key to translating promises into practical results.

NOTES:

The article underscores that CPEC-2 has emerged as a renewed economic lifeline for Pakistan. It shifts focus from phase one's infrastructure and energy projects toward phase two's industrialisation, logistics, and sectoral diversification. Gwadar Port with its strategic location is projected to serve as a hub for Central Asia, Afghanistan and beyond, while the promised five new corridors and expedited projects like ML-1 and Karakoram Highway upgrades add to its significance. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's engagement with over 500 Chinese entrepreneurs reflects the emphasis on broadening cooperation in IT, agriculture, minerals, and textiles with the Joint Action Plan 2024–2029 serving as a framework for sustained growth. However, the editorial stresses that without strong institutional backing and political will, lofty pledges may not translate into reality, making governance and implementation the key determinants of CPEC-2's success.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: CPEC, Sino-Pak relations, economic revival strategies
- Current Affairs: regional connectivity, foreign investment, economic diplomacy
- International Relations: China's role in South Asia, Belt and Road Initiative, strategic partnerships
- Economics: infrastructure development, trade corridors, industrialisation models

Notes for Beginners:

CPEC-2 means the second stage of the big project between Pakistan and China. In the first stage, roads and power plants were built to improve Pakistan's basic needs. Now the second stage will focus on building industries, factories and trade centers so that Pakistan can earn more and grow its economy. The Gwadar Port will be used to trade with

other countries, especially Central Asia, making Pakistan an important link between regions. China has promised new projects, while Pakistan is asking for early completion of big railway and highway projects. This is a chance for Pakistan to fix its economy, but it needs strong institutions to carry it out successfully.

Facts and Figures:

- CPEC total investment stands at around \$60 billion
- Phase one focused on energy and communication networks
- Phase two includes five new economic corridors
- Over 500 Chinese entrepreneurs attended the B2B conference with Shehbaz Sharif
- Joint Action Plan 2024-2029 signed to deepen cooperation in IT, agriculture, minerals, textiles, and industry

To sum up, the editorial shares the message that CPEC-2 is more than a project because it is Pakistan's economic lifeline in troubled waters. The promises of new corridors and investment could lift the country from its economic malaise, but success depends on iron-clad institutional commitment at home. The winds of opportunity are blowing, but whether Pakistan can hoist its sails or let the tide slip away will define the future of CPEC-2 and indeed the country's economic destiny.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Encompassed – surrounded, included (synonym: embraced, antonym: excluded)
- Fomenting – encouraging or promoting (synonym: instigating, antonym: suppressing)
- Lifeline – vital support or source of survival (synonym: mainstay, antonym: liability)
- Synergise – to combine for greater effect (synonym: integrate, antonym: isolate)
- Indispensable – absolutely necessary (synonym: essential, antonym: dispensable)

AI'S RAPID DEVELOPMENT — ADVANTAGES AND DANGERS

AUTHOR: SHAHID JAVED BURKI

Summary:

The article suggests artificial intelligence as both a boon and a bane, a double-edged sword racing ahead with breakneck speed. From its promise of a second industrial explosion that could dwarf the gains of past centuries to its threat of deepening income divides, AI is shown as a force that could change the rules of the game forever. On one hand projections suggest economic growth may skyrocket once machines can perform nearly a third of human tasks, but on the other workers at the lower rungs will see their wages squeezed while the wealthy grow richer. The fierce global race with the US and China locked horn to horn has created an environment where safety concerns are brushed under the carpet while the chase for superintelligence gallops forward.

At the same time the debate is far from one-sided. Experts like Shane Legg have rung alarm bells, warning of AI misalignment, misuse, and unintended consequences ranging from rogue models to climate risks caused by power-hungry systems. Others, however, wave away such fears, insisting humans will remain masters of the machine. With massive investments Amazon alone poured \$100 billion in 2025, the stakes could not be higher. The article makes it plain that AI's rise is not just a technological story but a human one, a tale of ambition, rivalry, and the ever-present danger of letting the genie out of the bottle without knowing if it will serve or destroy us.

Overview:

The article highlights AI's rapid march toward artificial general intelligence, its potential to transform economies and the risks of inequality, misuse, and environmental harm. It underscores how global competition especially between the US and China fuels this race while safety lags behind. The article captures both optimism and anxiety by showing AI as mankind's greatest leap forward and its gravest gamble.

NOTES:

The article highlights that artificial intelligence is advancing at an unprecedented pace. It carries both opportunities and dangers for humanity. It explains how AI has the potential to trigger a second wave of industrial growth with projections showing that once AI handles 30 percent of human tasks, global growth could surge beyond 30 percent annually. Yet, this progress risks deepening income inequality by depressing wages for low-skilled workers while boosting profits for investors. The fierce competition between the United States and China is pushing AI development forward at breakneck speed, sidelining safety concerns in the process. Major corporations such as Amazon, Alphabet, Meta, and Microsoft are investing billions with global investment in AI reaching \$320 billion in 2025 alone. Experts like Shane Legg have warned about four potential risks: deliberate misuse by malicious actors, misalignment between AI and human goals, mistakes due to real-world complexity, and structural risks such as the climate impact of energy-hungry AI systems. Despite these alarms, optimists argue humans will remain in control, viewing AI as a tool rather than a threat. The article ultimately stresses that AI's rise is not just a technological shift but a defining test of governance, human judgment, and global responsibility.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Global competition between the US and China over AI dominance
- Current Affairs: Technological innovation, governance challenges, and international cooperation
- Economics: AI-driven economic growth, income inequality, and labor market disruption
- Environmental Science: Energy consumption of AI systems and risks of climate change

Notes for Beginners:

Artificial intelligence means creating machines that can think and act like humans. At first, it was used for simple tasks but now it is moving toward artificial general intelligence where machines can do almost anything a person with a desk job can. For example, AI can already write text, design software and even diagnose diseases. Companies like Amazon and Google are spending billions to stay ahead in this race. In 2025 AI investments reached \$320 billion, ten times higher than a decade ago and experts predict that by 2027 top AI models will work as efficiently as human technical staff. But there are risks too. If AI makes mistakes or is misused, it could cause harm and running these systems needs so much energy that it can add to climate change. This shows why experts are debating whether AI will become humanity's most useful servant or its most dangerous master.

Facts and Figures:

- Global AI investment in 2025 reached \$320 billion
- Amazon invested \$100 billion, Alphabet \$75 billion, followed by Meta and Microsoft
- AI projected to handle 30 percent of human tasks, with growth possibly exceeding 30 percent annually
- By 2027, AI models expected to match technical workers in labs
- AI growth could widen income inequality, reducing low-end wages while boosting returns for investors

To sum up, this article reminds us that AI is not just a marvel of science but a test of human judgment. It carries the promise of prosperity beyond imagination but also the peril of mistakes too costly to bear. The race to build smarter machines may light up the future or set the stage for disaster, depending on how wisely humanity balances ambition with caution. In the end whether AI becomes mankind's golden goose or Pandora's box rests squarely on how we choose to steer this relentless tide of innovation.

THE GREAT DISORDER

AUTHOR: SHAHZAD CHAUDHRY

Summary:

The article highlights today's international order, likening it to the chaos of the Weimar Republic, when disorder paved the way for Hitler's rise. With the collapse of rule-based mechanisms and unchecked aggressors like Israel striking Qatar under US watch, the world seems trapped in a cycle of betrayal and impunity. The author argues that America's fear of losing its dominance especially in the face of China's technological rise is pushing it to weaponise proxies and undermine institutions like the UN and WTO. Instead of offering leadership, Washington appears to be fanning flames, letting its allies run roughshod over global norms, and thereby hollowing out its own credibility. The Gaza war and Netanyahu's adventurism are cited as stark reminders of what happens when the so-called arbiter of peace fuels disorder instead of taming it.

The narrative further warns that US paranoia, driven by fears of losing global primacy, risks unraveling the very system it built after WWII. By encouraging Israel, Ukraine and India while ignoring the collapse of conflict-resolution mechanisms, America is hastening the decline of its own influence. China and much of the world have thrived under predictability and stability, but US missteps have put that in jeopardy. The article concludes that rather than playing second fiddle to Israeli ambitions or pushing the world into rigid blocs, the US should adopt fairness and restraint to conserve its power. For countries like Pakistan, the lesson is clear: avoid empty rhetoric, focus on internal priorities, and recognize who truly shapes global affairs.

Overview:

The article highlights the erosion of the post-WWII global order, America's growing insecurity in the face of China's rise and Israel's unchecked aggression as symptoms of international instability. It underlines how US-led unilateralism, fear-driven strategies and misuse of proxies are dismantling institutions meant to safeguard peace, leaving smaller states vulnerable to chaos.

NOTES:

The article shows how the world is drifting into chaos with the collapse of rule-based mechanisms, leaving unchecked aggressors like Israel to exploit the vacuum. America once seen as the guarantor of stability is now driven by paranoia of losing its dominance, particularly against China's rapid advances in technology and AI. Instead of strengthening institutions like the UN and WTO, Washington is undermining them by empowering proxies such as Israel, Ukraine, and India to pursue aggressive policies. This has hollowed out America's credibility and exposed the fragility of the post-WWII order. The Gaza war and Israel's attack on Qatar are presented as prime examples of how global trust is being eroded by impunity and betrayal of commitments. The writer stresses that the real threat lies not in rising powers but in America's fearful overreach, which risks unraveling the very system it built. For countries like Pakistan, the lesson is to avoid loud but hollow rhetoric, conserve its strength, focus on internal development, and engage cautiously in geopolitics where great powers are shaping outcomes.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

1. International Relations

- Decline of the rule-based international order
- US-China competition and multipolarity
- Role and limitations of international institutions (UN, WTO, Bretton Woods system)
- Use of proxies in global politics (Israel, Ukraine, India)

2. Current Affairs

- US foreign policy and its global impact
- Israeli aggression in Gaza and the Qatar strike

- Erosion of global conflict-resolution mechanisms
- Shifts in alliances and bloc politics

3. Pakistan Affairs

- Pakistan's strategic positioning in turbulent geopolitics
- Lessons for Pakistan in avoiding bloc politics
- Focus on internal priorities versus external rhetoric

Notes for Beginners:

The article says the world is in disorder because the old system of rules is breaking down. America afraid of losing its top position to China is supporting allies like Israel even when they act against peace such as bombing Qatar during Gaza negotiations. This shows the US is more worried about power than fairness. The UN and other world bodies are becoming weak, so no one can stop powerful countries from breaking rules. For example, Israel keeps attacking, the US keeps protecting it, and smaller states cannot stop them. The writer suggests Pakistan should not get trapped in empty slogans but focus on its own progress and carefully choose its alliances.

Facts and Figures:

- Israel's attack on Qatar came during US-sponsored Gaza ceasefire talks
- Over 65,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza since the war began
- UN ceasefire efforts blocked six times by US veto
- China rising rapidly in AI and technology, unsettling US dominance
- The world economy is still rooted in the Bretton Woods system led by the US

To sum up, the article suggests that global disorder is not simply the fault of rising powers like China but largely the outcome of America's own fear-driven policies. By reinforcing aggressors and undermining institutions, the US is tearing apart the very system it built. For Pakistan, the best approach lies in pragmatism: steer clear of bloc politics, prioritize domestic growth, and avoid shackling itself with empty rhetoric while global giants play their high-stakes chess.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Tumultuous – full of disorder; synonym: chaotic; antonym: calm
- Impunity – exemption from punishment; synonym: immunity; antonym: accountability
- Arbiter – one who resolves disputes; synonym: judge; antonym: disputant
- Licentious – morally unrestrained; synonym: lawless; antonym: disciplined
- Preeminence – superiority; synonym: dominance; antonym: inferiority

TERRORISM RESURGENCE AND THE NEED FOR UNITY

AUTHOR: DURDANA NAJAM

Summary:

The article highlights terrorism's resurgence in Pakistan. It reminds us that this menace is no ghost of the past but a living, breathing threat that mutates with time. From the Lal Masjid crisis to years of suicide bombings and sectarian bloodshed, Pakistan has walked through fire, paying a colossal price in lives and economic ruin. Today, the threat is back in full swing with the TTP, BLA, and ISKP gaining strength, nurtured by Afghan instability and foreign sponsorship. The writer makes it clear that Pakistan cannot afford to sweep this danger under the carpet because the challenge is not only external but also internal where political fragmentation and mistrust weaken the national response.

Yet, amid this storm, the call is not for blind force but for unity of purpose. The article stresses that Pakistan's salvation lies not in going solo but in rallying its fractured polity. The voices of PTI and PTM, representing constituencies scarred by conflict, must not be sidelined but included in shaping the counterterrorism narrative. The military's might may hold the frontlines, but without political ownership, social trust, and national inclusion, operations risk becoming hollow victories. The writer suggests that Pakistan has already buried over 80,000 of its people, it cannot afford further divisions.

Overview:

The article explores Pakistan's ongoing battle with terrorism, tracing its history from 9/11 fallout to present-day militant threats. It highlights how external forces, Afghan instability, and India's backing of insurgent groups worsen the crisis, while internal political rifts weaken national resolve. The central argument is that defeating terrorism requires both military strength and political unity.

NOTES:

The article underlines how terrorism remains Pakistan's most persistent challenge, evolving in form even after decades of military campaigns. It recalls the turning point of the Lal Masjid crisis in 2007 and the years of suicide bombings, sectarian killings, and violent attacks that followed. Despite Pakistan's extensive counterterrorism operations since 2002, the threat has resurfaced with groups like TTP, BLA, and ISKP regaining strength, supported by Afghan instability, cross-border sanctuaries, and foreign sponsorship. The writer stresses that Pakistan's Achilles' heel is not merely external but internal disunity, as political fragmentation weakens the national narrative against terrorism. PTI and PTM with their influence in conflict-hit regions cannot be excluded from the counterterrorism framework as their role is essential in shaping public opinion. The article concludes that while the military's efforts are indispensable, true victory requires political inclusion, national consensus, and a united response that blends military might with social trust.

Related CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Current Affairs – terrorism resurgence, regional instability, Pakistan's internal challenges.
- Pakistan Affairs – history of militancy, Lal Masjid crisis, counterterrorism operations.
- International Relations – Afghan instability, foreign sponsorship of terrorism, India's role.
- Political Science – importance of political unity, civil-military coordination, governance failures.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that terrorism in Pakistan did not end after the big military operations. Instead, it has changed form and returned. For example, groups like TTP and ISKP are once again attacking often with help from across the Afghan border. India's support for BLA and TTP adds more fuel to the fire. At the same time, Pakistani politics is divided, with PTI and PTM representing important voices from conflict-hit regions. The writer suggests that Pakistan cannot win this fight through military action alone; the people and leaders must come together to build trust, include all political groups, and address grievances in places like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 80,000 Pakistanis have been killed in terrorist violence.
- Since 2002, Pakistan has carried out multiple counterterrorism operations across tribal areas.
- At least 57 terrorist camps operate from Afghan soil.
- In 2025 alone, 125 Afghan nationals fighting alongside TTP were neutralised by Pakistani forces.
- Billions of dollars have been lost in economic damage due to terrorism.

To sum up, The article reminds that terrorism remains Pakistan's Achilles' heel, constantly reinventing itself to exploit every crack in the system. Military operations may win battles but the war against terror can only be won with national unity, political convergence and social trust. Pakistan has paid too heavy a price in lives and resources

to let divisions weaken its resolve. The road ahead demands that the nation stands as one, not fragmented and not estranged, but united against a threat that thrives on disunity.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE DYNAMICS

AUTHOR: SAIRA SAMO

Summary:

Democracy hailed as government “of the people, by the people, for the people” stands as a beacon of collective empowerment. It safeguards liberty and ensures the accountability through popular participation. The article underscores its role in protecting rights, curbing tyranny, and promoting socio-economic growth by guaranteeing transparency, checks and balances, and inclusivity. Beyond borders democracy nurtures peace through diplomacy and cooperation, while at home it strengthens unity by embracing diversity and safeguarding freedoms. Yet, its fabric is constantly tested by populism, authoritarian impulses, and manipulation through digital misinformation. In Pakistan’s case the promise of democracy remains fragile as governments have often stumbled amid corruption and instability, yet the hope of completing constitutional tenures continues to inspire aspirations for a peaceful and just order.

Seen in this light, democracy is not merely a governance system but a living, breathing force demanding vigilance, participation, and resilience. It empowers individuals to be custodians of justice, unity, and progress but also warns against complacency in the face of rising authoritarian threats. The article calls upon nations particularly Pakistan to renew their democratic spirit, strengthen institutions, and restore trust between rulers and the ruled. Only then can democracy truly become the bedrock of prosperity, peace, and stability both nationally and globally.

Overview:

The article highlights democracy’s essential elements: people’s sovereignty, free elections, protection of rights, transparency, and socio-economic development. It stresses global and domestic stability through democratic norms while addressing threats like authoritarianism, populism, corruption, and digital manipulation. Special focus is given to Pakistan’s struggle to uphold democracy since independence, reflecting its fragile institutions and recurring political crises.

NOTES:

The article shows democracy as a governance system rooted in popular sovereignty, equality, and participation which enables citizens to shape national destiny through free and fair elections while holding rulers accountable. It emphasizes the safeguards of separation of powers, checks and balances, and the rule of law in preventing tyranny and protecting individual rights. Democracy is portrayed as a catalyst for socio-economic progress by ensuring transparency, curbing corruption, and fostering equitable distribution of resources. Globally, it contributes to peace and stability through dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperation, while domestically, it strengthens legitimacy, unity, and inclusivity by protecting minority rights and promoting social justice. However, the article highlights pressing threats such as populism, authoritarian tendencies, attacks on press freedom, judicial manipulation, and digital misinformation, which erode democratic norms and public trust. Reflecting on Pakistan’s experience, it notes persistent instability, corruption, and incomplete tenures despite 76 years of independence, yet it concludes with optimism that future governments may fulfill the democratic aspirations long awaited since independence.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan’s democratic evolution, governance challenges, and institutional development
- Political Science – Concepts of democracy, separation of powers, and accountability mechanisms
- International Relations – Democracy as a tool for global peace, diplomacy, and cooperation
- Current Affairs – Contemporary challenges like populism, authoritarianism, and misinformation

Notes for Beginners:

Democracy means the people are the real rulers. For example, when citizens vote freely in elections, they shape their country's future. Checks and balances mean no one has too much power for instance, courts can stop governments from breaking the law. If a leader tries to stay in power by silencing the media, that is against democracy. Pakistan's unstable governments show how corruption and weak institutions damage democratic progress, but the hope for complete democratic tenures represents the ongoing struggle for a true democratic culture.

Facts and Figures:

- Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy as "government of the people, by the people, for the people" is central.
- Pakistan has had 76 years of independence yet continues to face political instability and incomplete democratic tenures.
- Globally, research shows democracies are less likely to go to war with each other and more likely to foster trade and cooperation.

To sum up, the article represents democracy as both a promise and a responsibility. It is a system that flourishes on participation, accountability, and fairness, yet falters when plagued by corruption, authoritarianism, and apathy. For Pakistan the path to a vibrant democratic order lies in completing tenures, strengthening institutions, and rebuilding trust. Democracy's strength is not guaranteed but it must be nurtured constantly to deliver peace, prosperity, and justice.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Tyranny – Cruel or oppressive rule (Syn: despotism, oppression | Ant: freedom, democracy)
- Sovereignty – Supreme power or authority (Syn: autonomy, self-rule | Ant: subordination, dependence)
- Populism – Political approach appealing to ordinary people against elites (Syn: demagoguery | Ant: elitism, technocracy)
- Xenophobia – Fear or dislike of foreigners (Syn: prejudice, intolerance | Ant: tolerance, acceptance)
- Demagoguery – Manipulative appeal to emotions by leaders (Syn: rabble-rousing | Ant: statesmanship, diplomacy)

FOCUSING ON IMPROVING GOVERNANCE

AUTHOR: TALAT MASOOD

Summary:

The article shares Pakistan's current political and economic quagmire. It argues that conflict-ridden politics, the weakening of opposition, and the dominance of the establishment have pushed the country into a stalemate that erodes democratic norms. With the PTI dismantled, parliament hollowed, and media and think-tanks failing to spark meaningful debate, democracy has been reduced to a shell. Coupled with economic dependence on the IMF, World Bank, and foreign donors, Pakistan's sovereignty stands compromised and the masses are left to grapple with rising poverty and diminishing hope. The writer contends that the leadership's obsession with borrowing rather than building self-reliance has further aggravated instability and undercut national strength.

In the wider frame, the article stresses that politics and foreign policy are inseparable; Pakistan's internal distortions have weakened its global standing, leaving India to exploit its fragility. Security concerns in KP and Balochistan compounded by Afghan refugee pressures highlight the urgency of reform and effective governance. The author warns that only corrective measures within constitutional boundaries, coupled with public resistance to distortions, can bring change. Without this, the vicious cycle of poor governance and instability will persist, leaving the dream

of Quaid-e-Azam unfulfilled. The article calls for leadership to rise above self-interest and commit to long-term nation-building with vision and resolve.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's prolonged political stalemate, economic dependency, weakening of opposition, and fragile democracy. It stresses that governance failures have diminished Pakistan's strategic weight, strained its foreign relations, and undermined security in restive provinces. The author insists that overcoming these challenges requires unity, constitutional adherence, and genuine democratic engagement.

NOTES:

The article underlines the historic meeting between Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and the Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in Dubai on January 8, 2025, marking the highest-level engagement since Kabul's fall in 2021. The talks emphasized India's interest in reviving developmental projects, enhancing bilateral cooperation, and expanding humanitarian assistance such as wheat, medicines, and vaccines. Both sides explored the strategic utility of Iran's Chabahar Port to facilitate trade and aid delivery, while Afghanistan requested India's support in health, refugee rehabilitation, and sports. Importantly, the Taliban acknowledged India's security concerns, reflecting a growing maturity in dialogue. The discussion signals a significant shift in India-Taliban relations, from adversaries to cautious partners, with broader implications for regional politics, trade corridors, and Pakistan's strategic calculus.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Political instability, governance challenges, and democratic evolution
- Political Science – Role of opposition, checks and balances, legitimacy of governance
- Current Affairs – Civil-military imbalance, IMF dependency, and foreign policy implications
- International Relations – Impact of domestic crises on global standing and regional dynamics

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is stuck in a cycle of weak politics and dependence on foreign aid. For example instead of building industries or exports, the country keeps borrowing from IMF and rich countries which reduces independence. When the main opposition party was sidelined, parliament lost its strength, making democracy weaker. Security problems in KP and Balochistan show that internal issues affect the whole country's progress. The writer suggests that unless leaders follow the Constitution and the people push for change, Pakistan will not move forward.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has been heavily dependent on IMF, World Bank, and foreign donors since its inception.
- It is the world's second most populous Muslim country with nuclear and conventional force capabilities.
- Millions of Afghan refugees currently reside in KP and Balochistan, adding to economic and security burdens.
- Seventy-six years after independence, Pakistan still struggles to establish a stable and self-reliant democracy.

To sum up, The article reminds us that no country can prosper by hollowing out democracy and relying solely on borrowed crutches. Pakistan's salvation lies not in quick fixes or foreign bailouts but in building resilient institutions, empowering opposition, and reviving constitutional order. Leadership must shed short-term gamesmanship and embrace a vision rooted in unity, self-reliance, and justice. Only then can the country rise from its shackles and reclaim the promise envisioned at independence.

HER ROLE IN BUILDING A NATION

AUTHOR: SAIRA SAMO

Summary:

The article brings into sharp relief how no nation can dream of progress by sidelining half of its population. Women in Pakistan have been the silent strength and unsung backbone. They contribute in every sphere from politics and education to business and technology, yet their role is often undermined. The writer likens a society that cages its women to a lion stripped of its freedom, mighty in appearance but powerless in action. From Fatima Jinnah's unwavering support during independence to Benazir Bhutto's groundbreaking premiership, and Asma Jahangir's fearless advocacy of human rights, women have time and again proven to be the torchbearers of resilience and progress. But despite these triumphs, millions of girls remain trapped in illiteracy due to poverty, social taboos, and systemic neglect. Even voices like Malala Yousafzai, raised for education, faced bullets in their path.

The narrative highlights how women are breaking barriers in business through entrepreneurship, driving economic diversification with initiatives like Womenomics, and excelling in technology, exemplified by prodigies such as Arfa Karim Randhawa and scientists like Dr Nergis Mavalvala. Yet the harsh truth remains: Pakistan still ranks abysmally low in the Global Gender Gap Index, far behind regional neighbours like Bangladesh and India. With nearly half of the population being female, sidelining women is nothing short of national self-sabotage. The article gives the message that empowering women is not a luxury or a moral favour but an existential necessity for sustainable growth, competitiveness and national survival in the modern world.

Overview:

The article underscores women's indispensable role in nation-building, weaving together examples from history, politics, business, and science to show their transformative potential. It also exposes the entrenched gender gap in education, economic participation, and health, stressing that without reforms Pakistan will remain stuck in reverse gear. The article advocates for policy interventions that ensure equality, shared responsibility, and inclusion of women in decision-making at all levels.

NOTES:

The article highlights that women are central to Pakistan's progress yet remain underutilized due to systemic neglect, cultural taboos, and poverty. It recalls historic contributions by Fatima Jinnah, Benazir Bhutto, and Asma Jahangir, alongside contemporary figures like Malala Yousafzai, Arfa Karim Randhawa, and Dr Nergis Mavalvala to show how women have shaped politics, human rights, education, and science. Despite their proven resilience, Pakistan lags far behind on the Global Gender Gap Index especially in education, economic participation and health, while regional neighbours like Bangladesh and India perform better. Women are breaking barriers in entrepreneurship and technology through initiatives like Womenomics, but millions of girls remain deprived of education, weakening national capacity. With nearly half of the population female, the article stresses that excluding women from development is akin to crippling the nation itself, making empowerment not a choice but an absolute necessity for sustainable growth and survival.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Role of women in national progress and challenges in governance
- Current Affairs – Gender equality, social justice, and women's empowerment
- Sociology – Cultural barriers and gender roles in Pakistani society
- Gender Studies – Case studies of women leaders, literacy challenges, and empowerment models
- International Relations – Global Gender Gap Index and comparisons with regional states

Notes for Beginners: The article shows that women are vital for Pakistan's growth. Just as a bird cannot fly with one wing, a country cannot move forward if half of its people are left behind. For instance, when girls are denied

schooling due to poverty, the whole society suffers because fewer doctors, teachers, and leaders are produced. Yet when women like Malala or Arfa Karim are given opportunities, they achieve extraordinary things that make Pakistan proud. Similarly, women running small businesses or farms are helping families earn more and communities grow stronger.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's female population stands at 48.51% according to the 2023 census
- 25 million children are out of school, with girls forming the majority
- Pakistan ranked 143rd in economic participation, 139th in education, and 132nd in health in the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index
- Bangladesh ranked 99th and India 129th in the same index, performing better than Pakistan
- Women's participation is rising in start-ups, rural farming, and technology sectors, contributing to both local and global progress

To sum up, The article is a clarion call that women are not bystanders but equal stakeholders in shaping Pakistan's destiny. To keep them shackled by outdated norms is to cripple the nation's own potential. With nearly half the population being female, empowering women is not simply about fairness; it is about survival, progress, and placing Pakistan on the map of thriving nations.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE.

AUTHOR: YANG YUNDONG

Summary:

The article highlights China's Global Governance Initiative (GGI), introduced by President Xi Jinping at the SCO Tianjin Summit as the world commemorates 80 years since the UN's founding. The initiative calls for a fairer and more inclusive global order by upholding sovereign equality, strengthening multilateralism, and ensuring people-centred development. It aims to tackle glaring gaps in the current system, such as the under-representation of the Global South, the erosion of international law's authority, and the urgent need for more effective governance. With the world grappling with turbulence, protectionism, and Cold War mentalities, GGI emerges as Beijing's timely answer to pressing global concerns.

GGI focuses on reforming vital but strained areas like climate change, AI, cyberspace, trade, and outer space while emphasizing practical action over hollow promises. It positions China as a provider of public goods, complementing earlier initiatives on security, development, and civilization, thereby painting Beijing as a responsible global actor. By championing inclusivity and multilateral cooperation, GGI seeks to bridge divides, rectify historical injustices, and offer developing nations a louder voice in shaping the future. China stresses that this reform does not aim to dismantle the existing order but to make it more adaptable, responsive, and equitable, ensuring a shared destiny for all nations.

Overview:

The article highlights China's attempt to shape global governance in line with its vision of equity and cooperation. It emphasizes that GGI is not a replacement of existing frameworks but an effort to refine them for inclusivity, particularly for developing countries. It highlights sovereignty, law, multilateralism, and people-focused progress as its guiding principles, while placing China at the forefront of peace, development, and reform.

NOTES:

The article highlights how China through the Global Governance Initiative (GGI) seeks to reshape international governance by emphasizing inclusivity, multilateralism, and sovereign equality. It underlines the major

shortcomings of the current global Order such as the weak representation of the Global South, declining authority of international law, and the lack of effectiveness in global institutions. By proposing reforms in crucial areas like climate change, artificial intelligence, cyberspace, trade, and outer space GGI positions itself as a timely response to contemporary global challenges. The article also illustrates how China projects itself as a responsible actor by providing public goods, rectifying historical injustices, and strengthening the role of developing nations in decision-making.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Global governance, multilateralism, UN reforms, China's foreign policy
- Current Affairs: Shifts in global power structures, role of the Global South, climate change, AI governance
- Pakistan Affairs: China-Pakistan cooperation within global initiatives and diplomacy

Notes for Beginners:

The Global Governance Initiative is China's proposal to make international systems fairer and more inclusive. It means all countries, whether big or small should have an equal say in global affairs. For example, smaller developing nations often feel ignored in major decisions, and GGI aims to fix this by giving them more voice. It also looks at practical global problems like climate change, digital security, and trade imbalances, suggesting countries should work together instead of competing. China argues this is not about destroying the UN system but making it stronger and fairer. For Pakistan, this matters because as China's close partner Pakistan can benefit from such reforms and have more representation globally.

Facts and Figures:

- 80th anniversary of UN's founding and Anti-Fascist War victory in 2025
- China proposed GGI at the SCO Tianjin Summit
- GGI follows three other Chinese initiatives: Global Development, Global Security, Global Civilization
- GGI addresses under-representation of the Global South, erosion of authority, and governance effectiveness gaps
- Priority areas: climate change, cyberspace, AI, international finance, trade, and outer space

To sum up, the article presents the GGI as China's vision to reshape global governance by making it more inclusive, lawful and people-oriented. At a time of shifting power balances and rising global challenges, this initiative portrays China as a champion of cooperation and fairness. For Pakistan and the Global South it holds the promise of stronger representation and meaningful participation in international decision-making, ensuring that the voices of smaller states are not drowned out by the few powerful ones.

SCO — ELEPHANT AND DRAGON **AUTHOR: ANEELA SHAHZAD**

Summary:

The article highlights the shifting sands of global politics through the SCO Summit, where China and Russia pitched a vision of fairer global governance, while the Global North doubled down on resistance. The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of wars in Gaza, Ukraine, and Venezuela, and the staggering inequality where a tiny elite sits on mountains of wealth while billions struggle with poverty and mental health crises. Amid this turmoil, the so-called Global South seeks a way forward, but the proverbial Elephant in the room such as India keeps trampling on any path of collective integration. Caught between its ambitions and its entanglement with the United States, India refuses to shed its egoistic stance and instead plays both sides of the chessboard, weakening the very framework meant to uplift the South.

The article argues that India's desire for parity with China and Russia coupled with its strategic alignment with the West keeps it from embracing real multipolarity. Its oppressive policies in Kashmir and beyond expose its despotic

streak, while its dependence on Western weaponry ties its hands diplomatically. The metaphor of the Elephant and the Dragon captures the central tension: while China plays the flute of peace and invites all to the banquet of cooperation, India clings to its dream of regional hegemony. Unless New Delhi overhauls its mindset and hardware, it risks isolation in a world inching toward a new order.

Overview:

The article underscores the tug of war between visions of a multipolar world and India's unilateral ambitions. It highlights how China and Russia are attempting to lead the Global South into a shared governance framework but India's closeness with the US, opposition to BRI and strategic rivalries undermine this possibility. The article concludes that global peace and equality depend on inclusivity, yet India's ego and the West's hegemonism keep the world locked in instability.

NOTES:

The article provides critical analysis into the SCO's evolving role in shaping multipolarity and the competing strategies of global powers. It explains how China and Russia seek to integrate the Global South into governance structures while India acts as a spoiler due to its Western alliances and regional ambitions. For aspirants this provides material on multipolarity, the balance of power, India's foreign policy contradictions and the broader clash between hegemonism and multilateralism. The discussion also reinforces how economic inequality and persistent conflicts influence global governance debates.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Multipolarity, SCO, global governance, China-Russia cooperation
- Current Affairs: Regional instability, wars in Gaza, Ukraine, and Venezuela, inequality and governance
- Pakistan Affairs: India's policies towards Pakistan, China-Pakistan strategic coordination within SCO
- Political Science: Balance of power, hegemony vs. multilateralism, role of regional organisations

Notes for Beginners:

The SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) is a group led by China and Russia that promotes cooperation among Asian countries. They want to reduce the dominance of the West and give more say to developing countries which is called multipolarity. However, India is blocking full cooperation because it has close ties with the United States and opposes projects like the Belt and Road Initiative. For example, while China supports Pakistan's security and regional development, India keeps disputes alive through its actions in Kashmir and hostility toward BRI. The article also shows the reality of inequality: 1 percent of people control about 40 percent of global wealth, while half of the world survives on just 2 percent. Meanwhile, over one billion people face mental health issues according to WHO. This highlights why cooperation is needed but difficult when big powers like India and the US push their own agendas.

Facts and Figures:

- SCO condemned recent terrorist attacks in Jaffar Express, Khuzdar, and Pahalgalam
- 1 percent of global population controls around 40 percent of world wealth
- 50 percent of humanity lives on just 2 percent of global wealth
- Over one billion people suffer from mental health conditions (WHO findings)
- India's trade with the US grew from \$5 billion in 1991 to \$128 billion in 2024
- India imported over \$20 billion in defense from the US during this period
- India cancelled Russian Mi-17 V5 and Ka-31 helicopter orders in 2022

To wrap up, the article makes it clear that global governance is at a crossroads: while China and Russia try to set the stage for equality and peace, India clings to its self-image as South Asia's big brother. This tug of war between the Elephant and the Dragon defines today's multipolar contest. If India refuses to drop its ego and continues siding with hegemonistic powers it risks being left out of the new world order. The future, as the article suggests, will be

shaped not by those who hoard power but by those willing to share it, making cooperation the true key to global peace and prosperity.

WHY AMERICAN POWER IS DECLINING

AUTHOR: DR MOONIS AHMAR

Summary:

The article traces the meteoric rise and steady decline of American power. It shows how a nation once built from scratch into the mightiest global superpower now finds itself losing its grip on world leadership. From its birth in 1776 to its dominance after World War II, America carried the torch of influence, but in recent years its authority has slipped away. The war in Ukraine, Israel's unchecked aggression, and mounting debt have exposed Washington's waning writ. Despite Trump's boastful pledge to "Make America Great Again," America is riddled with internal polarisation, declining ethics, and the inability to rein in allies like Israel. This paradox of holding vast military and economic tools yet failing to maintain global credibility is painted as America's greatest weakness. Still, the writer insists the US is not yet a sinking ship. With unmatched research, creativity, and innovation, America still attracts global talent and holds a technological edge. But without rethinking its foreign policy, addressing racism, bridging internal divides, and restoring the moral compass that once gave it legitimacy, its decline will deepen. The message is clear that slogans alone cannot revive American greatness. Unless the leadership learns from its past, mends its fractured society, and adopts a pragmatic and just approach, history will remember this as the era when the American dream began to unravel.

Overview:

The article examines the gradual decline of US leadership despite its unmatched resources and influence. It argues that mismanagement of foreign policy, internal polarisation, and ethical erosion have weakened America's global standing, while China and Russia rise as challengers. The decline is not absolute but conditional, America still has the tools to recover if it redefines its leadership with inclusivity, justice, and pragmatism.

NOTES:

The article highlights America's journey from its rise as a superpower to its present decline, underscoring the factors that erode its global standing. It stresses the consequences of foreign policy failures such as the war in Ukraine and Israel's unchecked aggression, which expose Washington's inability to control allies or maintain credibility despite its vast military and economic resources. Internal challenges like deep political polarisation, growing racism, and erosion of ethical values further weaken its authority. The worsening debt crisis where liabilities surpass the GDP undermines its economic leadership, while competing blocs like SCO and BRICS reflect the momentum of multipolarity. Yet, the article also underlines America's unmatched technological innovation, creativity, and ability to attract global talent, which keeps it from being written off as a declining empire. The author concludes that America's survival as a credible leader depends on pragmatic foreign policy, restoration of its moral compass, and healing its fractured society.

Related CSS Syllabus or Subjects

- Current Affairs – contemporary global politics, decline of US hegemony.
- International Relations – multipolar world order, China and Russia's challenge, US foreign policy.
- US History – rise of America from 1776 to superpower status and its subsequent decline.
- Political Science – leadership, governance, ethics, and polarisation in global politics.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that America became the world's most powerful country but is now losing its influence because of wars, rising debt and poor leadership. For example, even though it spends nearly a trillion dollars on defense, it

cannot stop Israel from aggressive actions in Gaza and beyond. Similarly, while America has the largest economy, its debt is even bigger than its GDP which weakens its credibility. The writer points out that true strength is not only in weapons or money but in fair leadership and unity at home. If America learns from its past and focuses on justice, education, and inclusiveness, it can rebuild its leadership role.

Facts and Figures:

- US economy: \$30 trillion, but debt has reached \$38 trillion.
- Defense spending: nearly \$1 trillion annually.
- Population: about 330 million.
- US rise: regional power by 1898, global superpower after World War II.
- SCO and BRICS summits signal growing multipolarity challenging US dominance.

To sum up, the article reminds us that America's decline is not about losing weapons or wealth, but about losing credibility, morality, and unity. It stands at a crossroads. Either continue down the road of arrogance, polarisation, and unjust foreign policy, or learn from its past, embrace inclusivity, and act pragmatically.

GOVERNANCE WITHOUT JUSTICE FAILS

AUTHOR: SAIRA SAMO

Summary:

The article draws inspiration from George Jordac's celebrated work on Imam Ali, underscoring that a society may survive without faith but not without justice. It highlights Imam Ali as a towering figure who combined unmatched courage with compassion, faith with fairness, and eloquence with equity. His governance philosophy, epitomised in the letter to Malik Ashtar called for rulers to treat public resources as a sacred trust, to shun lavishness, to stand by the poor, and to prevent hoarding and exploitation. For him, injustice was worse than thorns under one's feet, and oppression the gravest betrayal of leadership. His vision rooted in the welfare of the people becomes a timeless lesson that governance without justice is nothing more than tyranny dressed in official robes.

In sharp contrast, the article laments Pakistan's present governance where justice remains a distant dream. With courts clogged by 1.86 million pending cases, corruption entrenched, and Pakistan's global ranking on justice and rights sliding to abysmal lows, citizens are left at the mercy of rulers who misuse authority for personal gain. The yawning gap between Imam Ali's ideal of leadership as public service and Pakistan's reality of exploitation and impunity is striking. The writer argues that unless rigorous accountability and genuine commitment to justice are pursued, the dream of a just and equitable society will remain as elusive as a mirage shimmering in the desert of misrule.

Overview:

The article compares Imam Ali's philosophy of justice and governance with the dismal state of justice in Pakistan. It highlights Imam Ali's timeless teachings on equity, honesty, and responsibility in leadership, contrasting them with rampant corruption, backlog of cases, misuse of resources, and poor rankings in global justice indicators. The message is clear that governance without justice collapses under its own weight.

NOTES:

The article highlights Imam Ali's timeless philosophy of justice as the foundation of governance, portraying him as a leader who combined faith, courage, eloquence and compassion with fairness and accountability. His letter to Malik Ashtar stands out as a guiding document where he stressed that rulers must treat public resources as a trust, fulfil people's needs, avoid gifts and luxury, and ensure the welfare of the poor while preventing hoarding and exploitation. For him, injustice was worse than physical pain and oppression the gravest betrayal of leadership. The article contrasts this with Pakistan's present governance, where justice remains elusive due to corruption, misuse of

authority, and an overwhelmed judicial system with 1.86 million pending cases, most of which are civil. Pakistan's poor rankings in the World Justice Project further reveal institutional weaknesses, with corruption, lack of rights, and weak civil justice undermining citizens' trust. The writer concludes that unless Pakistan adopts Imam Ali's principles of equity, accountability, and public service, justice will remain a mirage and governance a hollow claim.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – governance crisis, judicial backlog, corruption
- Islamic Studies – Imam Ali's philosophy of justice, letter to Malik Ashtar
- Political Science – leadership, accountability, equity in governance
- Current Affairs – corruption, WJP justice rankings, misuse of authority
- Public Administration – principles of fair administration, resource management

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how Imam Ali believed justice should be the backbone of governance. For example, he instructed his governor to avoid luxury, not misuse public wealth and ensure the poor are never neglected. He warned against hoarding because it hurts ordinary people. However, today in Pakistan leaders often use their power for personal gain, while common citizens suffer. Courts are overloaded with cases, meaning justice is delayed and often denied. The article teaches that if leaders follow Imam Ali's principles of fairness and honesty, society can flourish, but if injustice continues, people will always suffer.

Facts and Figures:

- At the district court level, 1.86 million cases remain pending, making up 82% of all cases in Pakistan's judicial system
- Civil cases constitute 64% of the backlog while 36% are criminal cases
- Pakistan's ranking in the 2024 World Justice Project: 120th in corruption, 125th in fundamental rights, 128th in civil justice, and 98th in criminal justice

To put it simply, this article is both a reminder and a rebuke. It reminds us of Imam Ali's timeless principles where governance is a trust and justice the lifeblood of society. At the same time, it rebukes Pakistan's leaders for failing to live up to even the bare minimum of those ideals. Governance without justice is like a body without a soul - lifeless, hollow, and destined to collapse.

- QATAR ... WHAT NEXT?

AUTHOR: INAM UL HAQUE

Summary:

Israel's brazen strike on Qatari soil has once again exposed the sheer audacity of Netanyahu's government and the deep cracks in the so-called rules-based world order. Doha once seen as a neutral broker suddenly found itself in the eye of the storm when Israeli missiles targeted a Hamas compound and killed six including a Qatari officer. The move cloaked in the rhetoric of vengeance set tongues wagging across the globe. The UNSC condemned it unanimously, the Arab League and OIC roared in unison, yet Israel emerged unscathed, thumbing its nose at international law. The episode reveals a hard truth: might is right, and weakness, no matter how gilded with money or modern weapons, invites aggression. For Qatar, with its billions in defence spending but little will to bite, the strike was a rude awakening that charm offensives, flashy deals and even hosting CENTCOM's crown jewel, Al-Udeid Air Base, cannot buy security.

The article goes further to show that this is not just Qatar's problem but a mirror reflecting broader geopolitical realities. Israel has perfected its doctrine of disproportionate deterrence under the Dahiya strategy, backed to the hilt by US bipartisan support and the Jewish lobby's stranglehold over American levers of power. International

institutions appear reduced to little more than rubber stamps. The dream of a Greater Israel, however, remains a dangerous fantasy, for numbers eventually overwhelm force, especially in an age where social media magnifies every injustice. For Pakistan, the lesson is stark: Israel, emboldened by India, could toy with the idea of probing its nuclear thresholds. The response must be unflinching, deadly and decisive for in a world that respects brute strength above noble clichés survival is not granted but earned through power and resolve.

Overview:

The article portrays how Israel's aggression in Doha is not an isolated act but part of a larger power play where deterrence, propaganda, and geopolitical alliances eclipse international law. It critiques Arab passivity, questions Qatar's weak response despite its military might, and warns Pakistan about potential Israeli-Indian mischief against its strategic assets. The narrative underscores that dignity and survival in global politics hinge not on wealth or alliances but on credible deterrence and the will to wield power.

NOTES:

The article highlights Israel's unilateral missile strike in Doha that killed six people, including a Qatari officer, exposing Qatar's vulnerability despite its massive \$15.5 billion defence budget, 22,000 troops and nearly 96 modern aircraft. It underscores how Israel's Dahiya Doctrine of disproportionate retaliation backed by US bipartisan support and Jewish lobbying power has reduced global institutions like the UN to ineffective bystanders. The article questions Qatar's muted response, despite hosting the US Al-Udeid Air Base with around 10,000 foreign troops and argues that military capability without the will to use it becomes meaningless. The author stresses that Israel's aggression is not just about Hamas but part of a larger assertion of dominance, while the fantasy of a Greater Israel is ultimately unsustainable against the demographic weight of the Arab and Muslim world. It also notes that the strike sabotaged ceasefire talks mediated by Qatar and points to the dangerous possibility of Israel collaborating with India to undermine Pakistan's nuclear deterrence. The core message is that dignity and survival in international politics rest on decisive strength, not wealth, charm offensives, or blind reliance on alliances.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – Middle Eastern conflicts, decline of international law, US-Israel nexus
- Current Affairs – Qatar-Israel strike, Arab League-OIC response, UNSC reaction
- Political Science – deterrence doctrines, power politics, failure of international institutions
- Pakistan Affairs – nuclear deterrence, Indo-Israel collaboration risks, lessons for national security

Notes for Beginners:

The article tells us that Israel attacked a place in Qatar where Hamas leaders were meeting, killing six people. This shocked the world because Qatar hosts America's biggest air base in the region, but even that could not stop Israel. For example, Qatar spends billions on defence and has modern planes, but since it does not show the will to fight it remains vulnerable. Israel uses a policy of punishing enemies harshly to scare them and because the US supports Israel strongly even the UN cannot stop it. The writer warns Pakistan that Israel working with India might one day try to test Pakistan's nuclear strength. The lesson is clear that power without the will to use it invites trouble, so countries must be ready to defend themselves firmly.

Facts and Figures:

- Israeli strike on Doha killed 6, including 5 Hamas members and 1 Qatari officer
- Qatar spends around \$15.5 billion annually on defence
- Qatar's military has about 22,000 active-duty troops and nearly 96 modern aircraft
- Al-Udeid Air Base hosts around 10,000 US, UK, and Australian troops
- GCC pledged to activate a joint defence mechanism, though without a concrete roadmap

To wrap up, the article reminds us that in global politics dignity and survival are secured not by wealth or alliances alone but by raw power and credible deterrence. Qatar's soft response to Israel's aggression shows how weakness

can embolden adversaries. For Pakistan, the message rings loud and clear: it must remain vigilant against Indo-Israel mischief and be ready to respond decisively. In a world tilting towards might over right, those who blink risk losing not just influence but their very sovereignty.

PAKISTAN'S SELF-INFLICTED AGRICULTURAL DECAY

AUTHOR: DR SHUJJAT AHMED

Summary:

The article exposes the deep-seated crisis in Pakistan's agricultural sector, which has been bleeding silently under feudal control and political negligence. The writer argues that since 1948 Pakistan has been trapped in a vicious circle created by the Feudal-Military-Bureaucratic alliance, which strangled land reforms to protect its vested interests. As a result, millions of small farmers struggle on fragmented plots averaging less than 2.5 acres, while a handful of large landowners reap the benefits of policy favoritism. Agricultural growth has limped at 2.63% over 25 years, barely keeping up with population growth, pushing rural communities further into poverty. The government's rhetoric of "Kisan-friendly policies" masks the real disease, a structurally flawed system that rewards feudal privilege, distorts crop priorities, and drains foreign exchange through reckless imports. What makes it worse is that agriculture, once the backbone of Pakistan's economy, has now turned into a burden, a sector alive on subsidies but dead in productivity.

The writer highlights misplaced priorities and economic myopia. While smallholders feed the nation with 70–86% of staple production, they remain deprived of resources, credit, and technology. In contrast, feudal elites exploit cash crops for profit, contributing little to food security. The article dissects crop-wise failures: wheat production fell, rice exports drained water resources, sugarcane manipulation persisted, and cotton collapsed under bad policies. Ironically, the government imports what it already overproduces and exports what it desperately needs, a paradox that drains billions in foreign reserves. The writer warns that Pakistan's agricultural model is structurally unviable, built on political patronage rather than reform. The only way forward lies in collective and contract farming, transparent subsidy systems, and land optimization models. Unless Pakistan reclaims Jinnah's forgotten vision of equitable land distribution, it risks not just economic collapse but divine reckoning.

Overview:

The article dissects Pakistan's agricultural decay, attributing it to historical feudal dominance, policy inertia, and systemic land inequality. It demonstrates how micro-farms dominate food production but remain poverty-stricken, while mega-farms focus on profit-based cash crops. The writer underscores the irony of Pakistan's policy framework such as favoring imports over self-reliance, rewarding inefficiency, and neglecting reform. Through data-driven analysis, the article calls for a complete structural overhaul of Pakistan's agricultural system to ensure sustainability, equity, and national food security.

NOTES:

The article provides a thorough examination of Pakistan's prolonged agricultural stagnation, tracing its roots to the entrenched feudal system and the political alliance between the landed elite, military, and bureaucracy. It highlights that after the abandonment of land reforms in 1977 small farmers were left struggling on tiny, fragmented plots that cannot sustain viable production, while a few feudal landlords dominate vast fertile lands for cash crops. Despite contributing 70–86% of staple food production, smallholders remain trapped in poverty with little access to credit, technology, or fair markets. Over the past 25 years, agriculture has grown at a sluggish 2.63%, barely matching population growth, reflecting policy paralysis and misplaced priorities. The government's "Kisan-friendly" slogans hide the harsh reality of a system designed to protect elites through subsidies, import manipulation, and export distortions. Data from FY25 reveals severe crop mismanagement: wheat output fell by 8.9%, cotton collapsed by

over 30%, and rice exports drained vital water resources, while sugarcane and maize were mishandled. Ironically, Pakistan imports food it can grow and exports crops it should conserve, leading to a \$4.86 billion forex deficit. The article stresses that agriculture once the backbone of Pakistan's economy has turned into a politically manipulated burden sustained by subsidies and corruption. The writer urges a structural transformation through contract farming, land collectives, and modern digital subsidy tracking. Unless Pakistan breaks free from its feudal chains and reforms its agrarian system, food insecurity, economic decline, and social inequity will continue to haunt the nation.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Land reforms, feudalism, rural poverty, food insecurity
- Economics – Agricultural policy, subsidies, productivity, import-export balance
- Current Affairs – Governance failure, institutional capture, forex crisis
- Public Administration – Policy formulation, bureaucratic inefficiency, reform needs

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's agriculture is crumbling because most farmers own very small lands that cannot produce enough to sustain them. The government keeps blaming weather or pests but ignores the real issue that is unequal land ownership. For example, rich landlords owning hundreds of acres grow cash crops for profit, while small farmers producing wheat for the nation barely survive. This inequality forces the country to import food it could easily grow itself, wasting billions in foreign exchange. If Pakistan adopted fair land reforms and supported small farmers through modern techniques and collective farming, it could not only feed its people but also strengthen its economy.

Facts and Figures:

- Agricultural growth (FY00–FY25) averaged only 2.63% while the population grew 2.32%.
- Per capita agricultural GDP rose just 0.29% in 25 years.
- Subsistence farms (<12.5 acres) make up 71.5% of the cropped area, yet half are smaller than 2.5 acres.
- Wheat production fell 8.9% YoY in FY25, causing a deficit of 1.92 MMT.
- Pakistan ranks 109th out of 127 on the 2024 Global Hunger Index.
- Agricultural imports exceeded exports by \$4.86 billion in FY25.

To wrap up, the article stands as a wake-up call for a nation that has mistaken political convenience for agricultural policy. Pakistan's fields are not barren by fate but by choice, the choice to uphold feudal privileges and ignore reform. Real progress demands courage to uproot this feudal-military-bureaucratic nexus and empower the small farmer. The time for cosmetic reforms has passed; only structural change can save Pakistan's agriculture from collapsing under its own weight. The nation must either till the soil of justice and reform or reap the bitter harvest of its own neglect.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Patronage – Political support in exchange for loyalty; Synonym: favoritism; Antonym: impartiality
- Fragmented – Broken into small parts; Synonym: divided; Antonym: unified
- Subsistence – Minimum level to sustain life; Synonym: survival; Antonym: abundance
- Unviable – Not capable of working successfully; Synonym: impractical; Antonym: feasible
- Myopia – Lack of foresight; Synonym: shortsightedness; Antonym: vision

WHY PAKISTAN, INDIA MUST FORGE STRATEGIC CLIMATE PARTNERSHIP

AUTHOR: SHAKEEL AHMED SHAH

Summary:

When the skies of Lahore and Delhi turn murky with the same smog and their mountains groan beneath the same cloudbursts, the line dividing the two nations fades momentarily, only to be redrawn by politics the next day. The article highlights a shared environmental fate between India and Pakistan where floods, smog, and glacial bursts pay no heed to borders made by men. The writer argues that these are not isolated calamities but interconnected warnings of a warming planet. Despite countless calls for cooperation, regional climate diplomacy remains confined to papers, overshadowed by deep-seated mistrust and geopolitical insecurities. Climate change has already stepped into the realm of security, turning water, air and land into tools of power politics. With India suspending the Indus Waters Treaty in April 2025, water has become a weapon in the diplomatic arsenal. It proves that environmental issues are now inseparable from national security.

The writer urges that a Climate Strategic Partnership between India and Pakistan must move beyond good intentions and focus on practical cooperation anchored in mutual security interests. Shared early warning systems, joint data observatories, and coordinated efforts at global climate forums like COP are essential to turn rhetoric into results. In a world where China leads in green technology and traditional alliances are wavering under global political shifts, collaboration is not just idealistic but it's survivalist. The author reminds both nations that bridging the climate divide could prevent future crises from igniting new conflicts. This is not merely about clearing the skies or cooling the earth but it is about safeguarding lives, economies, and regional stability. If ever there was a time for action, it is now.

Overview:

The article highlights how climate disasters like floods, smog, and glacier bursts blur political boundaries between India and Pakistan exposing a shared vulnerability. It emphasizes that climate change has become a pressing security issue, demanding strategic cooperation. The article advocates for a Climate Strategic Partnership focusing on early warning systems, transparent data sharing, and joint diplomatic efforts to access climate finance.

NOTES:

The article underscores the urgency for India and Pakistan to collaborate on climate security as both nations face intertwined environmental challenges that transcend political boundaries. It highlights the catastrophic floods, glacial lake bursts, and severe smog episodes that struck both sides of the border in 2025 which proves that nature does not recognize man-made divisions. The writer stresses that climate change has evolved from a scientific concern into a strategic security issue, as reflected in India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty which turned water into a diplomatic weapon. The article calls for a Climate Strategic Partnership built upon mutual trust, early warning systems, and transparent data-sharing mechanisms to prevent environmental disasters from escalating into political crises. It also suggests coordinated action at global climate forums to attract climate finance for joint adaptation measures, particularly in the Indus and Himalayan regions. Furthermore, the article draws attention to China's dominance in green technology and the shifting global alliances, positioning regional cooperation as both a necessity and an opportunity. Ultimately, it conveys that addressing climate threats together is not just an act of goodwill but a matter of survival, one that could safeguard the region's peace, stability, and prosperity.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations – Regional Cooperation and Conflict in South Asia
- Pakistan Affairs – Water and Environmental Issues in Pakistan
- Environmental Science – Climate Change and Global Warming
- Current Affairs – Regional Security and Climate Diplomacy

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that both India and Pakistan face the same climate disasters such as floods and smog, meaning the air and water do not stop at borders. For example, the Indus River flows through both nations so a flood or drought affects each side equally. The writer suggests that if both countries share data about weather and glacier conditions, they can warn people early and avoid losses. It's like two neighbors fixing a shared roof instead of waiting for it to collapse on both. Therefore climate cooperation is not only about saving nature but also about saving peace.

Facts and Figures:

- In 2025, record rains and landslides killed hundreds in both India and Pakistan.
- Glacial lake bursts destroyed villages and bridges in Gilgit-Baltistan and Uttarakhand.
- The Indus Waters Treaty, signed in 1960, was suspended by India in April 2025, highlighting the politicization of water.

To sum up, the article is a call for India and Pakistan to rise above their political animosities and forge a pragmatic climate alliance. Nature does not respect borders, and neither should climate action. Shared disasters demand shared solutions; otherwise, both nations will continue to choke under the same sky of indifference.

PAK-SAUDI AGREEMENT: DAWN OF A NEW ERA

AUTHOR: DR RAZA MUHAMMAD

Summary

The article shows a significant turning point in Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations with the signing of the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) on September 17, 2025. The pact is described as the culmination of decades of brotherly cooperation, deeply rooted in shared faith and mutual respect. The article highlights that the agreement, defensive in nature, binds both nations to treat an attack on one as an attack on the other. It symbolizes not only military collaboration but also a convergence of economic, diplomatic, and strategic goals. The author underscores that this partnership will require recalibrating national security strategies, joint intelligence sharing, and interoperability of military forces. The SMDA thus breathes new life into the longstanding partnership, giving it a structured and forward-looking shape that may influence the regional balance of power.

The writer further explains that while the agreement may spark speculation about a "Muslim NATO" or a shift in Middle Eastern alliances, it must be viewed as a bilateral pact for peace and deterrence, not aggression. The accord also opens economic avenues, as Saudi Arabia is expected to increase investments in Pakistan's oil, gas, minerals and agriculture sectors. Yet, Dr. Raza reminds that such investment demands a stable and investor-friendly environment within Pakistan. The article concludes on an optimistic yet pragmatic note, asserting that perseverance and unity will determine the success of this strategic partnership. Despite external apprehensions, the Pak-Saudi alliance described as a pact between two brothers in faith, aims to ensure peace, stability, and mutual security in a volatile region.

Overview:

This article examines the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as a milestone in regional diplomacy. It portrays the pact as a symbol of military solidarity and economic cooperation rooted in shared spiritual and historical ties. The author emphasizes its defensive essence, rejecting the idea that it targets any specific nation, and highlights its potential to strengthen Pakistan's economy through Saudi investment and deepen its role in regional security frameworks.

NOTES :

The article highlights the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on September 17, 2025 as a landmark development that redefines their long-standing partnership. Rooted in shared faith and mutual respect, the pact signifies decades of brotherly cooperation extending across military, economic, and diplomatic domains. It binds both nations to act collectively against any external aggression, reflecting a defensive rather than offensive intent. The author underscores that the agreement will require both countries to revisit their national security strategies, enhance intelligence sharing, and develop military interoperability through joint training and exercises. Beyond defence, the SMDA opens economic opportunities, with Saudi Arabia showing interest in investing in Pakistan's oil, gas, mineral, and agriculture sectors. The article also stresses that Pakistan must ensure a secure and business-friendly environment to attract and sustain Saudi investment. While acknowledging the speculation that this alliance might evolve into a "Muslim NATO," the writer dismisses such notions, reaffirming that the agreement is primarily for peace and stability. Concluding on a hopeful note, the article emphasizes perseverance, unity, and mutual trust as the driving forces behind this alliance, portraying the SMDA as a shield of peace and a strategic step toward regional stability and prosperity.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations – Regional Security and Defence Cooperation
- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan's Foreign Policy towards the Middle East
- Current Affairs – Defence Diplomacy and Strategic Partnerships
- International Law and Security Studies – Collective Defence Agreements

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a defence agreement that strengthens their bond in security and economic matters. It means if one country is attacked, the other will defend it too. For example, similar to how NATO members respond collectively to aggression, the SMDA ensures mutual protection. The agreement also opens doors for Saudi investment in Pakistan's economy, but Pakistan must provide a stable environment for investors. The writer emphasizes that this partnership promotes peace and cooperation rather than hostility, and reflects trust built over decades of friendship and shared goals.

Facts and Figures:

- The Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) was signed on September 17, 2025.
- There are about 2.5 million Pakistanis living and working in Saudi Arabia.
- Pakistan trained and deployed military contingents in Saudi Arabia during the 1980s for defence support.
- Saudi Arabia has expressed interest in investing in Pakistan's oil, gas, mineral, and agriculture sectors.

To sum up, the article shows the Pak-Saudi defence pact as a bold stride toward deeper regional cooperation and stability. It stands as a testament to shared faith, mutual trust and a collective vision for peace. While challenges and skepticism remain, the agreement reflects the maturity of both nations in balancing power, security, and diplomacy. As the writer concludes, this pact is not a sword for aggression but a shield for peace, a cornerstone in shaping a secure and prosperous future for both brotherly nations.

PAKISTAN'S INVESTMENT CRISIS

AUTHOR: JAZIB MUMTAZ

summary:

Pakistan's economy long fueled by consumption rather than production is now at a breaking point as its investment-to-GDP ratio has plummeted to the lowest in 64 years. The writer argues that this persistent crisis stems from the state's failure to broaden the tax base and from misplaced incentives that push money into unproductive sectors like

real estate. With over 60 percent of federal resources swallowed by debt servicing, the state has little room left to finance large-scale infrastructure without external borrowing. This vicious cycle of de-industrialisation has chipped away at Pakistan's competitiveness, reflected in its declining share of industry in GDP and its poor ranking on the Competitive Industrial Performance Index. Put simply, the economy is running on fumes, with policy inertia and short-term fixes standing in the way of long-term stability.

The article makes a strong case for structural reforms that could turn the tide if policymakers muster the courage to bite the bullet. It calls for raising the investment-to-GDP ratio to 20 percent by prioritising key industries such as petrochemicals, IT services, and engineering, while shifting capital away from speculative real estate ventures. Measures such as reducing borrowing costs, cutting corporate taxes, reviving export finance, and easing tariffs on raw materials could breathe new life into manufacturing. The writer warns that unless Pakistan steers away from its consumption-driven model and creates room for productive investment, it will continue to lag behind regional competitors like India, Bangladesh, and Vietnam. Either reform now and build a sustainable foundation, or keep papering over the cracks until the whole edifice comes tumbling down.

Overview:

The article dissects Pakistan's investment drought and its consequences for economic growth and competitiveness. It shows the structural flaws that prevent capital from flowing into productive sectors and suggests concrete reforms to break the cycle of dependency, debt, and de-industrialisation.

NOTES :

The article critically examines Pakistan's declining investment-to-GDP Ratio which has fallen to its lowest level in 64 years, signalling an economy running on borrowed time. It highlights how Pakistan's economic model, heavily dependent on consumption rather than production, has deepened its structural weaknesses. The writer notes that more than 60 percent of federal resources are consumed by debt servicing, leaving minimal space for developmental spending. Instead of channelling funds into productive sectors such as industry and technology, money continues to flow into unproductive areas like real estate, worsening de-industrialisation and eroding competitiveness. Pakistan's industrial share in GDP has also declined, and its global ranking on competitiveness has deteriorated, reflecting weak policymaking and misplaced priorities. The writer urges the government to raise the investment-to-GDP ratio to 20 percent by encouraging industries like petrochemicals, IT, and engineering while reducing borrowing costs, cutting corporate taxes, and liberalising tariffs on raw materials. Unless Pakistan breaks free from its consumption-driven cycle and prioritises long-term industrial growth over short-term relief, it risks being left behind by regional economies such as India, Bangladesh, and Vietnam.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic challenges, fiscal deficits, de-industrialisation
- Current Affairs: Regional competitiveness, South Asian economies
- International Relations: Comparative development and global competitiveness

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan invests very little in factories, industries, and infrastructure compared to its neighbors which is why its economy is weak. Most of the money goes into paying back loans and daily expenses, leaving little for development. For example, Pakistan's investment-to-GDP ratio is only 13.1 percent, while India invests over 33 percent. Instead of putting money into real estate for quick profits, the article suggests investing in industries like IT and manufacturing, which create jobs and exports. If Pakistan follows this path, it can improve its economy in the long run.

Facts and Figures:

- Investment-to-GDP ratio in FY24: 13.1 percent, lowest in 64 years
- Highest investment-to-GDP ratio: 24.6 percent in FY65

- South Asian average in 2023: 31.8 percent; India 33.74 percent, Bangladesh 30.95 percent, Vietnam 32.75 percent
- Industry's share of GDP fell from 22.3 percent in 1980 to 20.8 percent in 2023
- Over 60 percent of federal fiscal resources go to debt servicing

In essence, this article is a wake-up call for Pakistan's policymakers. It warns that the old habit of running the economy on consumption and loans cannot continue forever. If Pakistan truly wishes to stand shoulder to shoulder with its regional peers, it must break free from its addiction to short-term fixes and chart a new course that prioritises investment, productivity, and long-term development.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- De-industrialisation – decline in industrial activity; Synonym: collapse; Antonym: expansion
- Speculative – based on risky financial guesses; Synonym: risky; Antonym: secure
- Productivity – efficiency of production; Synonym: output; Antonym: inefficiency
- Fiscal deficit – excess of expenditure over revenue; Synonym: budget gap; Antonym: surplus
- Liberalising – making rules less strict; Synonym: easing; Antonym: restricting
- Competitiveness – ability to compete effectively; Synonym: capability; Antonym: weakness
- Prudent – wise or careful; Synonym: judicious; Antonym: reckless

NATURE, NATIONS & FLOODS: SOUTH ASIA'S SURVIVAL STRATEGY

AUTHOR: WAQAR HASSAN

summary:

South Asia is standing on shaky ground as climate change unleashes floods of unprecedented scale, threatening lives and economies alike. The article highlights how governments have long leaned on grey infrastructure such as embankments, dams, and levees but these defenses are increasingly falling short in the face of intensifying climate extremes. While early warning systems have reduced fatalities, the economic losses keep piling up, largely because unplanned urbanization has stripped wetlands and natural buffers that once absorbed floodwaters. What emerges is a stark realization that concrete alone cannot hold back the tide. Nature-based solutions like restored wetlands, community woodlands, permeable pavements, and green roofs are no longer a luxury but a necessity, proving more effective in soaking up excess water, curbing erosion, and enhancing urban livability. At the same time people themselves must be placed at the heart of disaster response with community-driven warning systems and localized adaptation strategies that empower the vulnerable.

Beyond the local picture, the article stresses that rivers defy political boundaries, flowing across South Asia's fractured landscape, making regional cooperation a matter of survival rather than choice. Cross-border data sharing, transboundary river basin management, and ecosystem preservation are presented as linchpins of flood resilience. Frameworks such as the Sendai Agreement and SAARC's disaster management centre offer platforms, yet formal region-wide treaties remain absent, leaving much of the cooperation piecemeal and voluntary. The South Asia Water Initiative and World Bank-backed projects show how harmonizing grey infrastructure with green solutions can build resilience. Ultimately, the writer drives home the point that the survival of nearly 80 million people who face floods annually hinges not on isolated national efforts but on a collective, united front where engineering, nature, technology, and political will go hand in hand.

Overview:

The article highlights South Asia's urgent flood crisis, exposing the weaknesses of conventional flood defenses and underscoring the necessity of blending engineered solutions with nature-based approaches. It emphasizes community participation, regional cooperation, and international frameworks to address a challenge that transcends borders and demands collective survival strategies.

NOTES:

The article highlights that South Asia faces recurring and devastating floods. It affects nearly 80 million people annually and accounting for 41 percent of recorded disasters in the region. It underlines the limitations of relying solely on grey infrastructure such as embankments, levees, and dams which are proving inadequate against the intensifying impact of climate change and unplanned urbanization. Natural ecosystems like wetlands, forests, and floodplains are presented as vital solutions as they act like sponges to absorb excess water while also improving urban livability. The article stresses the importance of combining engineered structures with nature-based approaches, adopting green roofs, permeable pavements, and restoring wetlands as sustainable strategies. Equally important is the role of communities in managing floods through localized early warning systems, mobile technology, and cultural adaptation programs that ensure better response and preparedness. Moreover, the writer draws attention to the urgent need for cross-border collaboration in managing river basins like the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra, where data sharing, regional coordination, and multilateral frameworks such as the Sendai Agreement and SAARC disaster management initiatives can enhance resilience. Ultimately, the article portrays

floods not merely as environmental hazards but as tests of governance, cooperation, and the collective survival strategy of South Asian nations.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Environmental Science: Climate change adaptation, sustainable development, disaster management
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's vulnerability to floods, role in SAARC and regional cooperation
- International Relations: Global climate agreements, transboundary water cooperation, Sendai Framework

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that South Asia suffers badly from floods every year, affecting millions of people and damaging homes, cities, and farms. In the past, governments mostly built dams, levees, and walls to stop floods, but these are no longer enough because of worsening climate change. A better way is to use natural solutions such as planting trees, restoring wetlands, and making cities greener which can soak up rainwater and reduce flood risks. Local communities also play an important role through early warning systems, radio, and mobile networks, helping people move to safety on time. Since big rivers like the Indus and Ganges cross different countries, South Asian nations need to work together by sharing data and managing rivers collectively.

Facts and Figures:

- About 80 million people in South Asia are affected by floods each year
- Floods account for 41 percent of recorded disasters in the region
- In Colombo, a World Bank project is restoring 20 km² of wetlands and lakes
- Wetlands in Colombo absorb nearly 90 percent of the city's greenhouse gas emissions
- Early warning systems lead to 90 percent of households taking preventive action

In a nutshell, the article makes it clear that the old playbook of building embankments and dams alone cannot secure South Asia from recurring floods. Real resilience lies in marrying modern engineering with natural ecosystems, empowering local communities, and forging regional cooperation. Unless South Asian countries learn to row in the same boat, their survival against the rising tide of climate change will remain in jeopardy.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Mitigation: Reduction of severity, relief, alleviation (Synonym: lessening, Antonym: intensification)
- Efficacy: Effectiveness or ability to produce results (Synonym: efficiency, Antonym: ineffectiveness)
- Resilience: Ability to recover quickly from difficulties (Synonym: toughness, Antonym: fragility)
- Transboundary: Extending across or beyond boundaries (Synonym: cross-border, Antonym: domestic)
- Degradation: Deterioration or decline in quality (Synonym: decay, Antonym: improvement)
- Livelihoods: Means of securing necessities of life (Synonym: sustenance, Antonym: deprivation)

HOW TO FILL THE GAPS IN GOVERNANCE

AUTHOR: DR SYED AKHTAR ALI SHAH

Summary:

Pakistan's governance woes have once again been thrust into the spotlight, with General Asim Munir's pointed question showing a painful truth: the armed forces cannot forever plug the holes left by weak civilian institutions. The article traces how persistent governance gaps, ranging from political instability and civil-military tensions to terrorism and distributive injustice have crippled the state's ability to provide stability and progress. Echoing theorists like Charles Tilly and Francis Fukuyama, it argues that violence and unrest often stem from weak or unjust governance, where deprivation, marginalisation and imbalance of power deepen social divides. Pakistan's fractured system, riddled with feudal dominance, oligarchic elites, ideological wrangling, and external dependencies, has allowed militancy and extremism to take root, making governance failures a litmus test for national security itself.

The article stresses that the road to good governance, though uphill, is not blocked. True reform requires shaking off the old habits of clientelism and hybrid models, replacing them with merit-based civil service, institutional strengthening, and a commitment to accountability and transparency. Governance must become more than crisis management — it should work as the bedrock of economic revival, social inclusion, and national stability. Expanding the tax base, investing in education and female literacy, enhancing vocational training, and ensuring law and order are all vital steps. Like a double-edged sword, governance can either keep Pakistan shackled in the cycle of instability or, if handled wisely, become the key that unlocks sustainable progress and global relevance.

Overview:

The article analyses Pakistan's chronic governance gaps, their roots in history and theory, and their far-reaching consequences for stability and development. It highlights both the structural flaws such as political, economic, and ideological and the potential remedies. It argues that only inclusive, transparent and rule-based governance can prevent Pakistan from repeatedly stumbling into crisis.

NOTES:

The article underlines that Pakistan's governance failures lie at the heart of its instability, ranging from political fragility, civil-military imbalance, extremism and terrorism to distributive injustice and economic decline. General Asim Munir's remarks in Parliament underscored how weak civilian institutions have forced the armed forces to shoulder burdens that should rest with governance structures. Drawing upon scholars like Charles Tilly, Francis Fukuyama, Maleeha Lodhi and Hussain Haqqani, it shows how deprivation, marginalisation and weak state monopoly over force fuel unrest and militancy, while feudal dominance, oligarchic elites, ideological divides and external dependencies keep the system fractured. Key cracks include imbalance of power, feudal clientelism, ideological wrangling over religion, overemphasis on security at the cost of democracy, and elite resistance to taxation. The way forward, the article stresses, lies in institutional reforms, transparency, merit-based civil service, depoliticisation of governance, accountability, economic revival through tax expansion, female literacy, vocational training, and ensuring law and order. Only by addressing these structural gaps with vision and political will can Pakistan move beyond crisis management to sustainable stability and inclusive development.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Governance challenges, institutional weaknesses, civil-military relations
- Current Affairs: Political instability, extremism, terrorism, economic decline
- Political Science: State theory, legitimacy, distributive justice, clientelism, oligarchic structures
- Governance and Public Policy: Good governance indicators, institutional reforms, policy-making challenges
- International Relations: Fragile states and terrorism, post-9/11 security discourse

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan faces many problems because its system of governance does not work properly. Weak institutions, political instability, and misuse of power have created divisions in society which lead to extremism and unrest. Experts say that when people feel deprived or treated unfairly, they are more likely to protest or turn to violence. To solve these problems, Pakistan needs to strengthen its institutions, reduce corruption, and make sure laws are applied equally to everyone. For example, improving tax collection, promoting female education, and creating jobs through vocational training can help. Good governance means a system that is fair, transparent, and accountable, so that people trust the government and the country develops peacefully.

Facts and Figures:

- Five key governance fault lines in Pakistan identified by Maleeha Lodhi: imbalance of power, feudal political culture, oligarchic elite resisting taxation, geography as leverage, and ideological divisions
- Francis Fukuyama: governance requires state monopoly on legitimate force

- Charles Tilly: violence arises from inequalities and deprivation
- Education and female literacy highlighted as essential for long-term governance reform
- Pakistan continues to struggle with external financial dependence, weak institutions, and civil-military imbalance

To sum up, the article shares Pakistan's governance crisis with both clarity and urgency. It shows that poor governance is not just an administrative failure but the root cause of unrest, militancy, and economic stagnation. Yet it also highlights that solutions exist if political will and institutional reforms align. Good governance is the hinge on which Pakistan's stability and progress swing. Without it the country remains stuck in a vicious cycle, but with it Pakistan can chart a course towards sustainable development and a stronger place in the global community.

PROGRESS OR CURSE: RETHINKING HUMAN ADVANCEMENT

AUTHOR: WAQAR HASSAN

Summary:

The article takes readers on a sobering journey through the paradox of modern progress. What began as a noble pursuit of human development has turned into an exploitative race for wealth, power, and domination. The writer argues that humanity has lost its moral compass what once was guided by humanism and ethical ideals is now dictated by realism and greed. Wealthy nations continue to drain the Global South, extracting its labor and natural resources under the guise of aid and development. From Gaza's tragedy to economic imperialism, progress today often masks oppression. Statistics reveal that the Global South loses trillions annually, while exploitation and colonial legacies persist through global economic institutions. This so-called progress, the writer contends, enriches a few while impoverishing billions. Behind the façade of growth lies a world built on inequality, deceit, and the silent suffering of the powerless.

In the second half, the article highlights how this reckless pursuit of progress has also turned nature into a victim. Industrial greed and environmental apathy have unleashed climate catastrophes, from Pakistan's floods to Amazon's deforestation. Fossil fuels, once symbols of modern success, have become curses fueling global destruction. Forests that once breathed life are now gasping under chainsaws and bulldozers, while carbon emissions spiral out of control. The writer reminds us that true progress lies not in exploiting others but in coexisting harmoniously with nature and humanity. He calls for a moral revival that progresses rooted in compassion, fairness, and sustainability. Just as relationships collapse when driven by selfishness, civilization too crumbles when built on exploitation. Only by restoring trust, valuing dignity, and protecting the environment can humanity greet a dawn where progress ceases to be a curse and becomes a blessing once more.

Overview:

The article critically examines the modern concept of progress, arguing that it has strayed from its original humanistic path and become a mechanism for exploitation and inequality. It exposes how wealthy nations sustain their comfort through the labor and resources of poorer countries and how this cycle of exploitation extends to the environment, resulting in global crises like climate change. The article also links material greed to moral decay, showing how both interpersonal and international relations have grown transactional. Ultimately, it calls for a redefinition of progress one that is ethical, inclusive, and environmentally conscious.

NOTES:

The article exposes how the modern notion of progress has turned into a double-edged sword, benefiting a privileged few while devastating humanity and nature. It traces how human advancement, once rooted in moral vision and collective good, is now driven by greed, materialism, and power politics. Wealthy nations exploit the Global South under the guise of development, draining its resources and labor while maintaining dominance through international

institutions. The writer highlights how economic imperialism and political hypocrisy, from Gaza's destruction to global trade injustices, represent the darker face of progress. Moreover, the reckless pursuit of industrial growth has ravaged the environment such as causing deforestation, pollution, and climate disasters like Pakistan's floods. Forests and ecosystems are sacrificed at the altar of profit, while fossil fuel dependency accelerates global warming. The writer urges a return to ethical humanism and ecological consciousness, emphasizing that real progress should promote equality, compassion, and harmony with nature. Without moral integrity and environmental balance, what humanity calls progress becomes a curse that corrodes civilization from within.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – Power politics, neo-colonialism, global inequality
- Environmental Science – Climate change, deforestation, fossil fuel exploitation
- Current Affairs – Global South exploitation, Gaza conflict, aid politics
- Ethics – Humanism versus materialism, moral decay in modern development

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that today's idea of progress has lost its humanity. Countries that are rich exploit poorer ones by taking their labor and natural resources. For example, rich nations keep the Global South dependent while claiming to offer aid. In Gaza, innocent lives were destroyed under the excuse of security and progress. The same mindset affects nature: trees are cut, rivers polluted, and air filled with smoke just to sustain industries. This is not progress but destruction in disguise. Real progress should be about balance, using what we need, helping others grow and caring for the planet. For instance, renewable energy, fair trade and reforestation are steps that align progress with morality and sustainability.

Facts and Figures:

- The Global South loses about 2.2 trillion dollars annually to the Global North.
- Since 1960, an estimated 62 trillion dollars have been secretly transferred from poorer to richer countries.
- Human Rights Watch's 2025 report recorded over 44,000 deaths and 104,000 injuries in Gaza from 2023 to 2024.
- WWF reported in 2024 that 16.6 million acres of tropical rainforest were lost in one year.
- Over 17% of the Amazon has been cleared for cattle ranching, gold, and oil extraction.

To wrap up, The article gives a piece of suggestion that progress without ethics is like a ship without a compass, drifting toward destruction. The world has mistaken exploitation for advancement and power for success. True progress demands conscience, compassion, and cooperation. It requires respecting nature's limits, protecting human dignity, and ensuring justice across nations. Until humanity learns to build bridges instead of empires, progress will remain a double-edged sword—one that dazzles the eye but wounds the soul.

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