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Dawn –

FIXING THE GOVERNANCE WEB

Author: Aisha Khan

Summary:

The article dissects the tangled roots of Pakistan's governance crisis. It exposes how fragmented policymaking, reactive measures, and political short-sightedness have hollowed out the state's capacity to deliver. She argues that Pakistan's governance model weakened by decades of centralisation and mismanaged devolution has left both the federation and provinces struggling to perform. The 18th Amendment once hailed as a milestone of democracy now stands on trial for creating uneven development and jurisdictional confusion. The author calls out piecemeal solutions like carving new provinces or splitting disaster institutions as half-baked remedies that scratch the surface but ignore the rot underneath. The article shows Pakistan as a state caught in its own web of bureaucracy, warning that without coherence, coordination, and local empowerment, the machinery of governance will keep spinning but never move forward.

The article reveals the dangers of Pakistan's divided disaster management and the folly of creating new provinces without fiscal or institutional readiness. The article highlights examples from countries like Indonesia and Japan to show how unified disaster authorities strengthen resilience, while Pakistan's dual setup breeds confusion. It warns that redrawing maps won't heal political wounds, it might deepen them and given the ethnic and sectarian sensitivities tied to such demands. Instead, it urges strengthening local governments and revisiting the National Finance Commission to ensure fair resource distribution. The article reminds that Pakistan's ailment is not geography but governance. According to article, what the country needs is not a change of shape but a change of spirit, a governance model that delivers, unites, and serves all citizens with purpose and clarity.

Overview:

The article analyzes Pakistan's governance model. It urges reform beyond symbolic measures. It highlights how institutional fragmentation, weak provincial capacity, and misplaced priorities have left the system paralyzed. The author calls for integrated policymaking, strong local governance, and disaster management unity. The author rejects politically motivated solutions like new provinces and emphasises that real change requires functional rather than structural reform.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's tangled system of governance and the roots of its administrative paralysis. The writer exposes how decades of centralized control, weak devolution, and piecemeal reforms have left the state struggling to perform even its basic duties. instead of strengthening democracy, she argues that the 18th Amendment has created new layers of confusion between the federation and the provinces. The author points out that decisions are often made reactively without foresight or coordination which leads to overlapping institutions and wasted resources. The article also examines the disaster management sector, where divided responsibilities between federal and provincial authorities have bred inefficiency and delay during crises. She warns that carving new provinces is not a solution to Pakistan's governance

failures but it is a distraction that could worsen ethnic and political tensions. Her prescription for reform lies in strengthening local governments, ensuring fair distribution of resources through the NFC Award, and promoting institutional synergy rather than administrative fragmentation. According to Author Pakistan's problem is not geographical, it is structural and moral, rooted in weak governance that lacks coherence, accountability, and direction.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Governance, Federalism, and Devolution of Power
- Public Administration – Policy Implementation, Local Government, and Institutional Reform
- Environmental Governance – Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Management
- Current Affairs – National Integration and Political Stability

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's governance problems stem from confusion between federal and provincial responsibilities. After the 18th Amendment, provinces got more power but were not ready to handle it effectively, leading to poor coordination and uneven progress. For example, instead of working together during floods or earthquakes, separate institutions often overlap or delay action. Aisha Khan says creating more provinces will not solve these issues. It will make them worse as each new province needs huge funds and political agreement. She suggests empowering district-level governments and improving the National Finance Commission Award so that funds reach neglected areas fairly. This way, governance will become more effective without redrawing the map or increasing political friction.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan is among the top 10 countries most vulnerable to climate-induced disasters.
- Punjab alone accounts for over 50 percent of Pakistan's population, creating federal imbalance.
- The 18th Amendment was passed in 2010 to strengthen provincial autonomy.
- Countries like Japan and Indonesia manage disaster response under unified authorities, not divided systems.

To sum up, the article diagnoses Pakistan's administrative malaise with clarity and foresight. Through a blend of logic and urgency, the author warns against quick fixes and cosmetic solutions. Pakistan doesn't need more provinces or more bureaucracy; it needs coherence, competence, and courage to rebuild the trust between the state and its people. The article calls policymakers to untangle the governance web before it strangles progress altogether.

CHANCE FOR GAZA PEACE

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary

The article shares hope emerging from President Donald Trump's newly announced Gaza peace plan, which has stirred cautious optimism alongside deep scepticism. The proposal, comprising ceasefire terms, hostage exchanges, and the demilitarisation of Gaza, appeared more of a script written in Tel Aviv than Washington, heavily tilted in Israel's favour. The article reveals how the plan's altered clauses influenced by Netanyahu's pressure infuriated Arab mediators and stripped Palestinians of meaningful agency. Hamas in a rare tone of restraint responded with guarded pragmatism, agreeing to certain terms while demanding

revisions to protect Palestinian sovereignty. The article expresses the diplomatic theatre unfolding in real time, where every handshake hides a dagger, and every promise carries a shadow. The article exposes how the plan though branded as peace risks entrenching occupation beneath layers of diplomatic jargon.

In the latter half, the article dissects the plan's hollow core—a patchwork proposal lacking timelines, guarantees, and moral clarity. The article warns that Israel's "security perimeter" could easily become a permanent occupation under another name. The inclusion of a "Board of Peace," led by Trump and Tony Blair, strikes her as a colonial echo of past interventions where the oppressed were told their freedom would come through supervision. While the plan dangles the illusion of "self-determination," its conditions betray a one-sided design that undermines the two-state principle. The author warns that peace without justice is an illusion destined to fracture. She suggests that perhaps, amid posturing and propaganda, this fragile opening might still lead to real negotiations of trust, fairness, and international will prevail over political vanity.

Overview:

The article critically examines the Trump-led Gaza peace initiative and its implications for regional diplomacy. The author outlines how the plan, although presented as a peace framework, largely serves Israeli objectives while sidelining Palestinian aspirations. The article underlines the ambiguity surrounding Israeli withdrawal, the absence of a clear ceasefire mechanism, and the controversial governance model that imposes foreign control over Palestinian affairs. The article exposes how global politics often dresses strategic dominance in the garb of peace and urges a return to genuine diplomacy anchored in equity and law.

NOTES:

The article portrays the deceptive optimism surrounding Trump's Gaza peace proposal, which claims to end hostilities but in reality consolidates Israeli dominance. The plan framed under the guise of reconciliation includes ceasefire clauses, prisoner exchanges, and Gaza's demilitarisation, yet omits genuine assurances of Palestinian sovereignty. The article highlights how Netanyahu's influence reshaped the document to favour Israel, alienating Arab mediators and diminishing Palestinian agency. Hamas's guarded response of accepting limited provisions but resisting disarmament without political guarantees reveals the complexity of regional diplomacy. The article also highlights the hollowness of the proposed "Board of Peace" led by Trump and Blair, portraying it as a modern echo of colonial oversight disguised as mediation. The article warns that Israel's "security perimeter" risks becoming a perpetual occupation, and that without timelines, mutual trust, and moral accountability, this plan remains another political façade. The author, Maliha Lodhi concludes that genuine peace requires justice, equality, and mutual respect.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – Global Peace and Conflict Resolution
- Current Affairs – Middle East Crisis and US Foreign Policy
- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan's Diplomatic Role in Muslim World Issues
- Political Science – Sovereignty and International Mediation Mechanisms

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Trump's Gaza peace plan though presented as a step towards ending war mainly favours Israel by offering no guarantee of a permanent ceasefire or full withdrawal. Hamas agreed to discuss parts of it but refused to disarm without real sovereignty. The plan suggests a foreign-led governance system for Gaza, raising concerns that Palestinians will lose control of their own future. For example, the "Board of Peace" headed by Trump and Blair is seen as undermining Palestinian independence. The absence of timelines and Israel's continued security presence make the deal fragile and uncertain. Lodhi suggests that for peace to hold, all sides must act in good faith, ensure fairness, and commit to a lasting two-state solution that recognizes Palestinian rights.

Facts and Figures:

- The Gaza war has lasted over two years, with thousands of civilian casualties and massive infrastructure loss.
- The Trump plan includes 20 key points focusing on ceasefire, hostage exchange, and Gaza's demilitarisation.
- Eight Muslim countries, including Pakistan, were initially consulted but later withdrew support after changes to the plan.
- Israel insists on maintaining a "security perimeter" in Gaza under the proposed agreement.

To sum up, the article reveals how politics often masquerades as peace. The article reminds readers that true peace is not crafted through coercion or conditional promises but through justice, equality, and respect for the right of self-determination.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Demilitarisation – removal of military forces from an area (Synonym: disarmament; Antonym: militarisation)
- Ambiguity – uncertainty or lack of clarity (Synonym: vagueness; Antonym: certainty)
- Consensus – general agreement (Synonym: accord; Antonym: disagreement)
- Precarious – uncertain or risky (Synonym: unstable; Antonym: secure)
- Perimeter – outer boundary or border (Synonym: edge; Antonym: center)
- Occupation – control of a territory by foreign power (Synonym: domination; Antonym: liberation)
- Mediation – intervention to settle a dispute (Synonym: arbitration; Antonym: confrontation)
- Sovereignty – supreme authority within a territory (Synonym: autonomy; Antonym: subjugation)

RESCUING PAKISTAN'S ECONOMY

Author: Aasim Mairaj Husain

Summary:

The article highlights Pakistan's economic decline, tracing how a once-promising nation has gradually slipped into stagnation. The writer shows decades of poor governance, unchecked population growth, and reckless borrowing that have drained the country's fiscal strength. Pakistan once wealthier than its South Asian neighbours now lags far behind due to mismanagement and a failure to invest in its people. The author sows how the state's addiction to debt and IMF bailouts has become a vicious cycle, where rising interest payments devour national resources, leaving crumbs for public welfare. The article reveals a land

caught between lofty promises and economic quicksand. The article reminds that progress isn't built on borrowed money but on the solid ground of planning, productivity, and people's empowerment.

In the latter half, the author shifts from diagnosis to prescription, outlining how Pakistan can break free from this spiral. He calls for a fair and broad-based tax system, better investment in education, healthcare, and family planning, especially for women, and a shift towards long-term structural reform rather than quick-fix bailouts. The author argues that only 1–2 percent of citizens paying income tax is untenable, while huge sectors like agriculture and real estate remain untaxed. He warns that without deeper reforms, Pakistan risks remaining trapped in debt and dependency. If Pakistan collects more revenue, invests wisely, and secures international support through concessional financing, it can still rise from the ashes. A nation that invests in its people writes its own redemption story.

Overview:

This article examines Pakistan's prolonged economic downturn and the path toward sustainable recovery. The author explains that uncontrolled population growth, chronic fiscal indiscipline, and repeated IMF reliance have crippled the economy. He stresses that meaningful reform lies not in austerity alone but in broadening the tax base, investing in human capital, and improving social infrastructure. The article underscores that economic stability and social justice are inseparable and that Pakistan's revival hinges on empowering its citizens, especially women, through education, health, and equitable opportunities.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's alarming economic decline and the urgent need for structural reform. Once ahead of its South Asian neighbours, Pakistan now lags behind due to poor governance, fiscal indiscipline, and rapid population growth that has weakened its capacity to save and invest. The writer highlights how the country's excessive borrowing and dependency on IMF bailouts have created a cycle of debt where interest payments consume nearly 60 percent of government revenue, leaving little room for social spending. With only 1–2 percent of citizens paying income tax and major sectors like agriculture and real estate outside the tax net, the state's financial foundation remains fragile. The author argues that recovery depends on broadening the tax base, investing in health, education, and family planning especially for women, and adopting long-term strategies rather than short-term fixes. The article stresses that Pakistan's saving rate could have been 10 percentage points higher if its working-age population ratio matched that of neighbouring countries. The article also underlines the importance of concessional financing from global institutions to prevent the economy from being strangled by high-interest loans. In conclusion, author warns that without serious reforms, Pakistan risks remaining trapped in stagnation but with prudent governance, fair taxation, and investment in human capital, the country can rebuild a sustainable and self-reliant economic future.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Economic Challenges and Reforms in Pakistan
- Current Affairs – IMF Policies and Developing Economies
- Economics – Fiscal Policy, Taxation, and Human Capital Development
- Governance and Public Policy – Sustainable Development and Institutional Reform

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan was once wealthier than its South Asian neighbours but now faces deep economic troubles due to poor management and uncontrolled population growth. Because too many people depend on too few earners, savings remain low, and the government borrows heavily from the IMF to stay afloat. Only a small fraction of Pakistanis pay income tax, while large sectors like agriculture and real estate escape taxation. The author suggests fixing this imbalance by expanding the tax system, improving education and healthcare, and empowering women through family planning and jobs. For instance, Bangladesh increased its savings and economic growth by improving female literacy and reducing population growth. If Pakistan follows similar steps, it can stabilise its economy and ensure sustainable development.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's population has quadrupled in 50 years, sharply reducing per capita income.
- Interest payments now consume about 60 percent of government revenue.
- Only 1–2 percent of Pakistanis pay income tax.
- Pakistan's revenue-to-GDP ratio stands at roughly 12 percent — among the world's lowest.
- The IMF has been approached over 20 times for bailouts.

To sum up, the article is a reflection on Pakistan's economic crossroads. It peels away the illusion of stability to reveal deep-rooted structural flaws that demand urgent reform. The writer blends hard facts with a tone of accountability, arguing that sustainable growth can only come through fairness, foresight, and investment in human potential. The article suggests that no bailout can rescue a nation unwilling to rescue itself.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Fiscal – relating to government revenue or finances (Synonym: financial; Antonym: nonfinancial)
- Concessional – offered on favourable terms (Synonym: subsidised; Antonym: expensive)
- Stagnation – lack of growth or movement (Synonym: standstill; Antonym: progress)
- Rollovers – extension of loan repayment (Synonym: deferment; Antonym: settlement)
- Demographics – statistical data relating to populations (Synonym: population profile; Antonym: individuality)
- Subsidy – government financial aid to support certain sectors (Synonym: grant; Antonym: tax)
- Deficit – shortfall between income and expenditure (Synonym: shortage; Antonym: surplus)
- Dependency – reliance on external sources (Synonym: subordination; Antonym: independence)

GRAND STRATEGY

Author: Khurram Abbas

Summary:

The article examines Pakistan's newfound assertiveness on the global stage. The writer describes how Islamabad, after years of diplomatic inertia, has swung into action such as mending ties with Dhaka, warming relations with Washington, strengthening its partnership with Beijing, and signing a strategic defence pact with Riyadh. He argues that Pakistan is rebranding itself as a “net security stabiliser” in South Asia and a “security provider” in the Gulf. This grand strategy aims to restore Pakistan's long-sought

strategic relevance which had dwindled after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. The author notes that Islamabad's renewed vigour in diplomacy is not mere symbolism; it is a calculated move to reassert its importance in a rapidly shifting global order where economic and security partnerships determine power dynamics.

The article explores how Pakistan's manoeuvring mirrors both ambition and overreach. By deepening relations with both Washington and Beijing, Islamabad seems to be walking a tightrope, attempting to balance two rival giants without falling between them. Pakistan's participation in trilateral forums with China, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, alongside its collaboration with the U.S. on trade and counterterrorism, demonstrates its dual-track diplomacy. Yet, the author warns that this grand vision may be overstretching Pakistan's real capacity, given its internal security challenges, economic fragility, and governance failures. The article ends with a subtle warning: while Pakistan's global aspirations are commendable, sustainability remains uncertain unless domestic stability and coherent policymaking keep pace with external ambitions.

Overview:

The article presents an examination of Pakistan's shifting foreign policy under its evolving "grand strategy." It shows how Islamabad is diversifying its alliances beyond traditional Western dependence while engaging emerging power centers like China and Saudi Arabia. The article stands out for highlighting the fine balance Pakistan must maintain between ambition and practicality between projecting global relevance and managing domestic weaknesses.

NOTES:

The article underscores Pakistan's vigorous diplomatic revival and its emerging role in regional and global politics. Islamabad has actively reshaped its foreign relations by improving ties with Dhaka, strengthening its partnership with Beijing, re-engaging with Washington, and signing a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement with Riyadh. Through this grand strategy, Pakistan seeks to reassert its strategic relevance that had weakened after the U.S. exit from Afghanistan. The author highlights how Islamabad aims to present itself as a "net security stabiliser" in South Asia and a "security provider" in the Arab Gulf. Simultaneously, Pakistan is pursuing a dual approach by deepening ties with the U.S. while engaging China to balance power dynamics in the region. The author notes that Islamabad has capitalised on India's growing differences with Washington by offering cooperation in trade, counterterrorism, and diplomatic initiatives such as extraditing an IS terrorist to the U.S. and proposing President Trump's name for the Nobel Peace Prize. Furthermore, Pakistan has established new trilateral forums involving China, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh to create regional collaboration alternatives after the failure of Saarc. However, the writer warns that Pakistan's aspirations may exceed its capacity, as the country continues to face economic fragility, governance issues, and internal security challenges. The author concludes that while Pakistan's grand strategy reflects ambition, foresight and a desire for global recognition, its sustainability depends on strengthening domestic foundations to support its expanding diplomatic vision.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs – Foreign Policy of Pakistan, Relations with Muslim Countries, Pakistan's Strategic Significance

- International Relations – Regional Cooperation in South Asia, Global Power Politics, Pakistan-U.S.-China Relations
- Current Affairs – Pakistan’s Role in Global Peace and Regional Stability

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is no longer sitting idle on the global stage. It has started building stronger ties with countries like the U.S., China, Saudi Arabia, and Bangladesh to make itself strategically important in the modern world. The writer compares Pakistan’s approach to walking a fine line—trying to be friends with both America and China while keeping India’s influence in check. For example, Pakistan’s defence pact with Saudi Arabia and its new trade agreements with Washington show its attempt to secure both economic and security benefits. However, the author warns that despite this global push, internal issues like weak governance and economic instability might slow down progress.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan recently signed a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement with Saudi Arabia.
- It has created two new trilateral forums with China—one involving Afghanistan and the other Bangladesh.
- Islamabad’s recent trade deal and counterterrorism collaboration with the U.S. indicate a revived diplomatic momentum.

To sum up, the article is an incisive reflection on Pakistan’s evolving foreign policy. It portrays a country that is learning to play the global game with renewed purpose, weaving diplomacy into a web of opportunities. Yet, as the writer reminds us, lofty visions demand stable foundations. Without addressing internal economic and governance weaknesses, Pakistan’s grand strategy may remain a beautiful dream suspended in a fragile reality.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Estrangement – alienation or separation; synonym: detachment, antonym: closeness
- Calculus – strategic reasoning or logic; synonym: framework, antonym: randomness
- Trilateral – involving three parties; synonym: tripartite, antonym: unilateral
- Proactiveness – taking initiative in advance; synonym: foresight, antonym: passivity
- Overstretch – to go beyond one’s limits; synonym: overextend, antonym: restrain

WATER REALITY

Author: Zafar U. Ahmed

Summary:

The article dismantles the popular myth that Pakistan is running out of water and instead turns the spotlight on mismanagement, inefficiency, and flawed policy. The author explains that while Pakistan receives ample annual inflows—most of it from snow and glacier melt—the country loses more than half of its water before it even reaches farmlands. Less than 10 percent of this resource is used for urban and industrial needs, yet the outcry of water scarcity keeps echoing. The writer argues that Pakistan’s problem lies not in nature’s stinginess but in human negligence. Poor irrigation methods, unplanned settlements in flood zones, and unchecked groundwater extraction have made matters worse. The author vividly contrasts Pakistan’s water productivity with that of China and reveals that Pakistan produces only one-sixth of what

China achieves using the same amount of water. He points out that policies continue to be shaped by misplaced fears and excuses such as climate change, urbanisation, and population growth, while governance failures go unnoticed.

The article calls for a shift from water scarcity to water security. He argues that Pakistan's fixation on scarcity ignores the floods that drown the country every year, proving that abundance isn't the issue but the management is. Instead of pouring billions into new dams and exaggerated projections, he urges policymakers to plug the leaks in the system: fix irrigation inefficiencies, improve drainage, and plan urban growth wisely. The author exposes the hypocrisy of alarmists while urging rational, evidence-based water management. It suggests that Pakistan doesn't need more water, it needs wisdom in handling what it already has.

Overview:

The article challenges Pakistan's water scarcity narrative by exposing the underlying issues of poor governance, wastage, and outdated agricultural practices. It highlights misuse of resources and the country's failure to convert natural abundance into productivity.

NOTES:

The article provides a critical analysis of Pakistan's water situation. It asserts that the country's issue is not scarcity but gross mismanagement. The writer highlights that although Pakistan receives sufficient annual inflows from glaciers, snow, and rainfall, more than half of this water is wasted before reaching farms. Only 5 to 10 percent is allocated to cities and industries, while the agricultural sector consumes the rest inefficiently through outdated flood irrigation methods. The author draws comparisons with countries like China to emphasize Pakistan's poor water productivity, producing only one-sixth of what China achieves with similar water use. He underlines that the narrative of water scarcity is misleading and driven by alarmist forecasts such as the PCRWR's 2015 claim that Pakistan would face absolute scarcity by 2025. It is a prediction proven false by the recurring floods that submerge vast areas each year. The article calls for an urgent shift from focusing on water scarcity to ensuring water security through better governance, improved irrigation efficiency, fair distribution, controlled groundwater extraction, and smart urban planning. The author criticizes the government's misplaced priorities, poor policies and lack of long-term planning and insists that Pakistan's true crisis lies in inefficiency and mismanagement rather than natural deficiency.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs – Natural Resources of Pakistan, Water Crisis and Management
- Environmental Science – Water Conservation, Sustainable Development, Climate Change Impact
- Governance and Public Administration – Policy Implementation, Institutional Reforms

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains that Pakistan does not face a water shortage but rather a water mismanagement problem. Most of the country's water, around 90 percent, is used in agriculture and even that is wasted due to flood irrigation and leaking canals. Only a small part goes to cities and industries. For example, Pakistan's water productivity is far below China's, meaning Pakistan uses more water to produce fewer crops. The author says the real problem is bad planning and poor governance. If Pakistan stores floodwater

properly, improves irrigation systems and uses modern techniques, it can easily meet its needs without fear of running dry.

Facts and Figures:

- Only 5–10 percent of Pakistan’s water goes to urb industrial sectors.
- Over 50 percent of agricultural water never reaches fields due to loss and wastage.
- Pakistan’s water productivity is one-sixth of China’s for cereal crops.
- Around 50–80 percent of annual inflows come from mountain snowmelt and 18 percent from glacial melt.

To sum up, the article shifts the debate from fear-driven scarcity to evidence-based water security. It exposes how inefficiency and neglect, not nature, have left Pakistan parched. The nation’s water crisis is induced by humans, and only good governance and foresight can turn the tide.

ECONOMIC BALANCE

Author: Ghulam Shabbir

Summary:

The article traces the roots of Islam’s economic philosophy to the Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) struggle for socioeconomic justice. The author contends that the Prophet’s mission was not limited to spiritual reformation but aimed at dismantling the unjust socioeconomic structures of his time to establish a system grounded in equality and moral fairness. The Prophet believed that true faith could not flourish in a society plagued by economic disparities, so he created the “Cooperative Commonwealth of Islam” in Madinah. It was a society where competition centered on virtue, not wealth. The author skillfully contrasts this model with Marxist thought, arguing that while Marxism confines man to material progress, Islam envisions economic reform as a means to unlock intellectual, moral, and creative potential. Through zakat and the prohibition of riba, Islam built a framework that safeguarded the poor, ensured equitable distribution, and preserved human dignity.

In the later part of the article, the Author mourns how these principles were eroded over time. With the fall of the central Islamic state and the advent of colonialism, zakat was reduced to private charity, losing its role as a state mechanism for social welfare. He argues that zakat, if properly institutionalized, can fund modern state functions like education, health, defense, and communication. The writer insists that equating riba with banking interest is an oversimplification since riba covers all forms of economic exploitation. He highlights Pakistan’s present economic condition, warning that the country stands on the edge of “socioeconomic suicide” due to its detachment from Quranic economics. He urges Pakistan to adopt an egalitarian model rooted in faith, morality, and justice to bridge the divide between the rich and the poor.

Overview:

The article highlights the Prophet’s (PBUH) vision of economic balance as the foundation of an egalitarian society. It connects faith with justice, suggesting how Islamic economics promotes welfare through zakat and bans exploitative practices like riba. The author challenges modern systems that prioritize material wealth over moral well-being and stresses that Islamic principles offer a timeless alternative for sustainable and equitable growth.

NOTES:

The article highlights the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) vision of creating a just and balanced society where faith and economics walk hand in hand. The writer explains that the Prophet's mission extended beyond spiritual awakening as it was also a socioeconomic revolution against exploitation and inequality. He built the "Cooperative Commonwealth of Islam" in Madinah where competition was based on virtue, not wealth and economic justice was ensured through zakat and the prohibition of riba. These principles aimed to maintain fairness, prevent hoarding, and support collective welfare. However, after the decline of Islamic governance and the rise of colonialism, these foundations weakened as zakat became personal charity instead of a state institution. The article stresses that zakat, if properly revived, can sustain essential state functions like education, healthcare, and defense. He also clarifies that riba is broader than banking interest because it represents all forms of economic exploitation. The author warns that Pakistan's economic struggles stem from abandoning the Quranic economic model, resulting in widening inequality and moral decay. He urges policymakers to revive Islamic economic principles to achieve a just, humane, and self-sustaining system rooted in faith, equality, and moral responsibility.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Islamic Studies – Economic system of Islam, Zakat and Riba, Socioeconomic justice
- Pakistan Affairs – Ideological foundations of Pakistan, Islamic welfare state
- Governance and Public Policy – Fiscal reforms, Welfare economics, Policy implementation in Islamic framework

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains that Islam's economic system is based on fairness and equality rather than wealth accumulation. The Prophet (PBUH) built a society where everyone supported each other and money was used to serve people, not dominate them. Zakat was designed to cover social welfare costs like education, health, and defense while riba was banned to stop exploitation. For instance, if zakat were collected and distributed by the state today, Pakistan could fund many public services without heavy taxes. The author argues that Islam views wealth as a trust from God and warns that hoarding it leads to social destruction. The real solution to Pakistan's economic crisis lies in adopting a moral and equitable economic system.

Facts and Figures:

- Islam links faith directly with social and economic justice.
- The Prophet (PBUH) established a cooperative welfare model in Madinah.
- Around 2.5% zakat rate can finance social services if applied effectively.
- According to Islamic scholars Riba encompasses all exploitative practices, not just bank interest.
- Pakistan's Constitution promises an egalitarian economic order but fails in practice.

To wrap up, this article works as a reminder that economic reform without a moral foundation is hollow. The author calls for a return to the Prophet's (PBUH) economic model where faith, fairness, and fraternity go hand in hand. His message resonates deeply in a time when materialism has overshadowed ethics. He warns that Pakistan must either embrace justice and equality or continue drifting toward economic and moral collapse.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Equilibrium – balance or stability; synonym: harmony; antonym: imbalance

- Egalitarianism – belief in equality for all; synonym: fairness; antonym: inequality
- Disparity – a great difference; synonym: inequality; antonym: similarity
- Exploitation – unfair treatment for personal gain; synonym: abuse; antonym: fairness
- Panacea – a universal remedy; synonym: cure-all; antonym: problem

PAKISTAN, SEEN FROM EUROPE

Author: Khurram Husain

Summary:

The article looks into a rare shift in how Pakistan is now perceived on the global stage. The writer, reflecting on his recent visit to Brussels as part of a journalist delegation, observes a striking change — gone are the days when Pakistan was on the defensive, haunted by accusations of terrorism or governance scandals. Instead, he finds a newfound respect in European corridors of power where Pakistan is being viewed through a more positive lens due to its improving ties with key players like the US, China, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye. The highlight of Pakistan's engagement with the EU remains the GSP-Plus trade status which earned the country a \$6 billion trade surplus last year. However, Husain warns that while progress on human rights, minority protections, and labor reforms is acknowledged, complacency would be a fatal misstep. The winds may have changed in Pakistan's favor, but the storm clouds of global politics are never too far away.

As the author digs deeper into European perspectives, the article highlights a continent caught between a crumbling security umbrella and rising protectionism. Europe is struggling to navigate the aftershocks of Trump's unpredictable foreign policy and the war in Ukraine, both of which have shaken its economic and moral foundations. The EU is scrambling to diversify its trade to offset the loss of the American market, but its internal political fragmentation and financial strain make this a tightrope walk. Husain's conversations also show Europe's double standards—its hesitation to take a strong moral stance on Gaza exposes the gap between its rhetoric of values and the reality of political convenience. The article is a mirror held up to both Pakistan's growing diplomatic confidence and Europe's uncertain future, reminding us that in the grand chessboard of geopolitics, today's allies can quickly become tomorrow's critics.

Overview:

The article reflects the evolving dynamics of Pakistan's image in Europe. It highlights Pakistan's steady rise in diplomatic stature, driven by balanced foreign relations and successful trade ties under the GSP-Plus framework. Simultaneously, it provides analysis of Europe's internal struggles such as economic protectionism, populism, and moral inconsistency and exposes the fragility behind its polished diplomatic façade.

NOTES:

The article highlights how Pakistan's international standing has experienced a remarkable shift particularly in the eyes of Europe. Once burdened by accusations of terrorism and governance flaws, Pakistan now finds itself viewed with renewed respect and diplomatic acceptance. This change stems from its balanced foreign relations with powers like the US, China, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye as well as its successful trade performance under the EU's GSP-Plus status, which brought a \$6 billion surplus last year. However, the author warns that this goodwill must be safeguarded through sustained reforms in human

rights, labor protections, and religious freedom to secure the renewal of GSP-Plus benefits. At the same time, Europe's own challenges like ranging from internal populism and economic protectionism to external crises like the Ukraine war and strained ties with the US, have left it grappling for stability. The article also exposes the EU's moral dilemma, as its silence over Gaza questions its proclaimed commitment to human rights. The article contrasts Pakistan's growing diplomatic confidence with Europe's fragile moral and political footing.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – Pakistan-EU relations, Global trade dynamics, Protectionism
- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan's foreign policy, Economic diplomacy, GSP-Plus
- Current Affairs – European politics, US foreign policy, War in Ukraine, Gaza conflict

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains that Pakistan's image abroad especially in Europe, is improving after years of negative perceptions. The EU sees progress in Pakistan's human rights and trade commitments under the GSP-Plus scheme, which has helped Pakistan earn around \$6 billion in surplus trade. However, Pakistan must continue reforms and avoid overconfidence. On the European side, the continent is facing serious challenges such as rising nationalism, economic pressures, and dependency on the US for security. For example, Europe's reliance on American defense through NATO is being questioned, while the war in Ukraine has further strained its unity. The article also highlights Europe's hesitation in condemning Israel's actions in Gaza, exposing the gap between its moral stance and political interests.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan earned around \$6 billion in trade surplus from the EU under GSP-Plus.
- The GSP-Plus renewal team will visit Pakistan in November 2025.
- Europe aims to recover 75% of lost US trade through new regional deals.
- Pakistan's foreign relations are improving simultaneously with the US, China, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye.
- The EU still considers the Ukraine war an "act of imperialist aggression."

To sum up, The article reflects Pakistan's quiet diplomatic ascent and Europe's uncertain path through turbulent global waters. It reminds us that international standing is never static but it ebbs and flows with political will, economic performance, and moral credibility. The Author suggests that Pakistan must not rest on its laurels but keep pushing for stronger governance and principled diplomacy, for in the global theatre, applause today can turn into criticism tomorrow.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Bonhomie – cheerful friendliness; synonym: cordiality; antonym: hostility
- Palpable – easily perceptible; synonym: tangible; antonym: subtle
- Complacency – self-satisfaction leading to inaction; synonym: smugness; antonym: vigilance
- Protectionism – policy of restricting imports; synonym: isolationism; antonym: free trade
- Capricious – unpredictable; synonym: erratic; antonym: consistent

DEAL OR NO DEAL?

Author: Mahir Ali

Summary:

The article highlights a deal that masquerades as diplomacy but reeks of manipulation and deceit. Behind the polished rhetoric of ceasefire and humanitarian aid lies a blueprint designed to crush Palestinian resistance once and for all. The plan, conveniently edited by figures like Jared Kushner and Netanyahu, gives Israel every advantage while leaving Palestinians with hollow promises and false hopes. The article shows that what's being branded as a "peace process" is in fact a veiled attempt to entrench Israeli occupation under a new name. Like a wolf in sheep's clothing, the deal offers temporary relief to Gazans but permanently denies them justice, dignity, and sovereignty.

The article reveals the hypocrisy of global politics. The so-called International Stabilisation Force, potentially including Pakistani troops, echoes dark historical memories of suppression rather than liberation. The EU's silence, the Arab states' complicity, and the Western world's moral blindness combine into a tragic symphony of betrayal. Even as streets across Europe roar with protests, real change remains a mirage. The author's voice rises with sorrow and indignation as he calls the ongoing bloodshed what it truly is: genocide, not war. The article reminds that when justice is bartered for power, peace becomes nothing more than a political charade.

Overview:

The article is a critical analysis of Trump's so-called Gaza peace plan, exposing its political deceit and the global complicity surrounding it. It underscores how the plan aims not to resolve the conflict but to erase Palestinian resistance and rewrite the narrative of occupation under the guise of peace. It also reflects on the broader hypocrisy of international actors such as America's manipulative diplomacy, Israel's unyielding aggression, and the Arab world's passive consent.

NOTES:

The article reveals the harsh realities behind Trump's so-called Gaza peace plan, revealing it as a deceptive political maneuver aimed at reinforcing Israeli dominance rather than promoting genuine peace. It highlights how figures like Jared Kushner and Netanyahu crafted a proposal that grants Israel extensive power while leaving Palestinians with empty promises. Mahir Ali underscores that the plan's humanitarian rhetoric hides a sinister attempt to suppress Palestinian resistance and legitimize occupation. The writer also highlights the hypocrisy of the global community such as Western nations, Arab governments, and even international institutions, that either remain silent or play along with the injustice. He connects the proposed International Stabilisation Force, potentially involving Pakistani troops, to historical instances of Arab complicity in Palestinian suffering, such as the tragic events of Jordan in 1970. The author regrets the world's moral decay where the language of diplomacy is used to disguise genocide, and where justice has been traded for political expediency. The article exposes the dissonance between global outrage on the streets and the indifference of world leaders, reminding readers that peace without justice is nothing more than a hollow illusion.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – US foreign policy, Middle East peace process, international law and genocide.

- Current Affairs – Israel-Palestine conflict, Trump’s Middle East diplomacy, Arab states’ regional politics.
- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan’s diplomatic stance on Gaza, historical military involvement, and humanitarian perspective.

Notes for Beginners:

The article highlights that Trump’s peace plan for Gaza is not truly about peace, it is a political trick designed to benefit Israel and suppress Palestinians. Although it talks about stopping violence and helping Gazans, the real goal is to eliminate Palestinian resistance. For instance, while the plan mentions humanitarian aid and movement freedom, its hidden clauses allow Israel to control Gaza indirectly. The proposal of an International Stabilisation Force which might even include Pakistani troops reminds readers of past injustices like the killing of Palestinians in Jordan in 1970. The article also stresses how the global powers especially the US and Israel pretend to champion human rights but turn a blind eye to genocide in Gaza. The author calls this hypocrisy a moral collapse of modern diplomacy.

Facts and Figures:

- The plan was mediated by Egypt and Qatar under Trump’s direction.
- The “peace plan” involves leaders like Jared Kushner, Netanyahu, and Tony Blair.
- Over 25,000 Palestinians were killed during Jordan’s 1970 conflict, which is recalled in this context.
- Vast anti-Israel protests across Europe show growing global outrage.
- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) took up South Africa’s genocide case against Israel in 2023.

To sum up, The article is not just an analysis but it is a cry for conscience in an age where morality bends before might. The author strips the mask off global diplomacy and shows how words like “peace” and “stability” are twisted to justify oppression. The article compels us to see Gaza not through the lens of politics but humanity. It reminds the reader that real peace cannot be brokered by those who profit from war, and until justice prevails, every deal will remain no deal at all.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Ultimatum – a final demand or statement of terms; synonym: demand; antonym: request.
- Ambiguous – unclear or open to interpretation; synonym: vague; antonym: clear.
- Emasculated – weakened or deprived of strength; synonym: enfeebled; antonym: empowered.
- Complicit – involved with others in wrongdoing; synonym: conspiratorial; antonym: innocent.
- Genocide – deliberate extermination of a people; synonym: mass killing; antonym: preservation.

DAMAGE CONTROL

Author: Arifa Noor

Summary:

The article shows the confusion and chaos in Pakistan’s political scene, where diplomacy and domestic governance stumble over one another. The article pays attention to how Islamabad’s hasty endorsement of Trump’s Gaza plan tweeted out before the ink had even dried exposed cracks in decision-making at the highest levels. The foreign minister’s belated attempts at clarification only deepened the fog, turning

policy into a guessing game and governance into performance. The article captures a government trying to walk a diplomatic tightrope between Saudi alliances, American expectations, and a public fiercely sympathetic to Palestine, yet falling into a pit of mixed signals and bureaucratic confusion. The article shows how leaders speak in riddles when clarity is most needed and how politics becomes damage control when foresight gives way to impulse.

Secondly, the article shifts to the unrest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, where the government's apathy turned protests into bloodshed. While leaders jetted abroad and media chased international headlines, local grievances festered until violence forced action. Only when the crisis boiled over did officials scramble for face-saving talks, granting concessions that could have been managed long before. The analysis exposes the state's reactive mindset. Whether in diplomacy or domestic affairs, Pakistan's leadership behaves like a firefighter who waits for the blaze to rage before lifting the hose. At the end, the article suggests that this isn't just political mismanagement; it's a dangerous habit of governing in hindsight, a cycle that keeps turning crises into self-inflicted wounds.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's disjointed handling of two crises: its contradictory stance on the Gaza ceasefire plan and its delayed response to protests in Azad Kashmir. It highlights how confusion, poor communication, and delayed decision-making have eroded credibility both abroad and at home. The author portrays a government constantly caught off guard—reacting rather than leading.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's recurring pattern of reacting to crises rather than preventing them both in foreign and domestic affairs. It shows how the government's premature endorsement of Trump's Gaza peace plan exposed a lack of coordination and strategic thinking, turning a diplomatic issue into public embarrassment. The foreign minister's contradictory statements only deepened the perception of confusion at the top levels of governance. Simultaneously, unrest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir revealed the state's neglect of local grievances, which escalated into violence before the authorities finally intervened. Arifa Noor underscores how the leadership prioritizes optics over substance such as tweeting before thinking, and addressing crises only after they spiral out of control. The article creates a bridge between Pakistan's inconsistent foreign diplomacy and its internal governance failures, emphasizing that the nation's credibility both abroad and at home continues to suffer from hasty decisions and delayed responses.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Governance structure, civil-military coordination, crisis management.
- Current Affairs – Pakistan's role in Middle Eastern diplomacy, Gaza conflict, media and governance.
- International Relations – Foreign policy decision-making, alliances, and diplomatic communication.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan's government mishandled two major issues at the same time. First, the Prime Minister quickly supported a Gaza peace plan before knowing all its details, creating confusion when later information came out. The foreign minister tried to fix things but only made the situation worse.

This made Pakistan appear uncertain and poorly coordinated in front of other countries. Second, while the leadership focused on international meetings, protests erupted in Azad Jammu and Kashmir due to local grievances. Initially ignored, these demonstrations turned violent before the government finally stepped in to negotiate. The writer shows that Pakistan's leaders often wait for problems to explode before acting, rather than preventing them through early attention and planning.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan earned diplomatic attention at the UN over its Gaza position in 2025.
- The government's reaction to AJK protests came only after casualties occurred.
- The Prime Minister's tweet supporting the Gaza plan preceded clarification from the foreign minister.
- Pakistan's defense pact with Saudi Arabia was announced around the same period.
- Media coverage of domestic unrest was limited until the situation escalated violently.

To sum up, The article comments on Pakistan's reactive political temperament. It reveals how indecision and miscommunication erode both credibility and control. The article reminds that diplomacy and governance cannot thrive on improvisation; they demand clarity, foresight, and moral consistency. The message is that until Pakistan learns to steer rather than stumble, it will remain trapped in the endless loop of damage control.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Ambiguity – lack of clarity; synonym: vagueness; antonym: transparency.
- Circumspect – cautious or careful; synonym: vigilant; antonym: reckless.
- Dysfunctional – not operating normally; synonym: ineffective; antonym: efficient.
- Conjecture – assumption without proof; synonym: speculation; antonym: certainty.
- Retinue – group of advisors or attendants; synonym: entourage; antonym: individual.

WITHERING GEOECONOMICS

Author: Khurram Husain

Summary:

Three years ago, Moeed Yusuf and Rabia Akhtar called for Pakistan to pivot from geopolitics to geoeconomics such as supporting its security in human dignity, prosperity, and domestic reform. Yet as history often repeats itself, their counsel seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Instead of standing on its own feet, Pakistan continues to chase fleeting geopolitical rents. While the world redefined security through economic empowerment, Pakistan remained trapped in the illusion of strategic importance, unable to break free from its old habits. The irony bites hard: the very global shifts the authors predicted about economic nationalism, the death of neoliberalism, and the reemergence of power blocs have unfolded before our eyes, yet Pakistan remains caught in the same whirlpool of dependency.

The author shows a nation still dancing to the same old tune while the world changes its rhythm. The promise of "connectivity" through energy corridors and regional cooperation has withered under the weight of changing energy trends, regional hostilities, and economic mismanagement. The solar-plus-battery revolution, frozen ties with neighbors, and near-bankruptcy have all turned the dream of investment-driven partnerships into dust. Pakistan now finds itself back at square one, ready to trade its

geopolitical position for another round of temporary inflows. Ironically, while the US, China, and Saudi Arabia extend friendly smiles, the deeper question lingers: will Pakistan ever learn to walk without leaning on others? For now, the answer lies buried under yet another cycle of strategic comfort and economic fragility.

Overview:

The article traces Pakistan's failure to implement the geo-economic vision proposed by Moeed Yusuf and Rabia Akhtar in 2021. Despite clear warnings about overreliance on geopolitical rents, Pakistan's policymakers have reverted to the same patterns, and depend on foreign aid and external alliances rather than building economic independence. Husain emphasizes how global energy transformation, regional instability, and domestic crises have rendered Pakistan's earlier geo-economic aspirations obsolete.

NOTES:

The article underscores Pakistan's inability to shift from a geopolitical mindset to a geo-economic one as advised by Moeed Yusuf and Rabia Akhtar in 2021. It revisits the call for building economic strength through domestic reform, human dignity, and prosperity rather than relying on military-based security or foreign aid. However, Pakistan's policymakers failed to heed this advice, remaining caught in the cycle of dependency on geopolitical rents. The author highlights how the rise of economic nationalism, the decline of neoliberalism, and the global shift toward competing economic blocs have vindicated the authors' earlier predictions. Yet Pakistan remains economically fragile, dependent on strategic positioning instead of sustainable growth. The vision of regional connectivity through projects like gas pipelines and power transmission has crumbled due to changing energy dynamics, strained relations with neighbors, and sanctions on Iran. The solar and battery revolution has rendered old energy plans obsolete, while Pakistan's economic instability has scared off foreign investors. Now as the US, China, and Saudi Arabia show renewed strategic interest, the country is once again leaning toward temporary geopolitical rents rather than genuine economic reform. The author's tone reveals a deep concern that instead of learning from the past, Pakistan is repeating its mistakes, and fails to stand on its own feet while the world moves ahead.

This article is related to CSS syllabus topics:

- Pakistan Affairs – National Security Policy, Economic Dependence, Foreign Policy Orientation
- International Relations – Geoeconomics vs Geopolitics, Global Power Dynamics
- Current Affairs – Energy Revolution, Economic Reforms, Regional Connectivity

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan's economy is still tied to foreign powers instead of becoming self-reliant. Earlier, the government planned to focus on geoeconomics, meaning strengthening the economy through trade, investment and human welfare rather than military power. However, that plan failed because of internal weaknesses and global energy changes. For instance, the rise of solar and battery energy made old gas and oil-based projects irrelevant. Political instability and poor relations with neighboring countries like India, Iran, and Afghanistan further blocked regional trade. The result is that Pakistan now seeks foreign aid again instead of standing on its own, repeating the same mistakes from the past.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's National Security Policy (NSP) 2021 first introduced "geoeconomics" as a core pillar of national security.

- Global investment in solar energy exceeded \$380 billion in 2024, reducing reliance on fossil fuels.
- Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves fell below \$8 billion in 2023, signaling weak economic resilience.
- The CASA-1000 electricity project and Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline remain stalled due to regional tensions.

To wrap up, the article reminds us that no nation can build lasting strength by renting out its geography. Unless Pakistan shifts its compass from geopolitics to genuine economic self-reliance, it will continue to circle in the same orbit of dependency, watching the world move forward while standing still.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Vindicated – Proven right; justified (synonyms: justified, validated; antonyms: disproved, refuted)
- Neoliberalism – Economic policy favoring free markets and minimal government intervention (synonyms: capitalism, market liberalism; antonyms: socialism, protectionism)
- Connectivity – The state of being connected or linked, especially between nations or economies (synonyms: linkage, integration; antonyms: isolation, detachment)

ETHICAL SURVEILLANCE

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

The article captures how societies especially developing ones like Pakistan are caught between the desire for safety and the fear of being watched. CCTV cameras have mushroomed across public and private spaces, promising security, efficiency, and crime deterrence, yet shadowed by ethical concerns. What started as a tool for safety has gradually turned into an instrument of control, making people feel as though they live under a digital gaze that never blinks. The Author underscores that while surveillance may curb theft and aid law enforcement, it also risks eroding human dignity, especially when used without consent or oversight. The piece shows a world where privacy hangs by a thread where the line between protection and intrusion blurs with each lens installed.

The author shares the idea that technology without ethics is a double-edged sword. Pakistan's growing reliance on CCTV surveillance though beneficial in crime prevention demands a strong legal and moral compass. Without proper laws, public consent, and transparency, surveillance could turn oppressive rather than protective. He urges that citizens be informed about camera placements and data usage, emphasizing that hidden cameras and unauthorized sharing invite blackmail and distrust. Without ethical boundaries the eye that guards us might soon become the eye that governs us.

Overview:

The article examines the growing dependence on CCTV surveillance in Pakistan and the world, weighing its benefits against ethical and privacy concerns. While technology aids law enforcement and crime prevention, its misuse and lack of regulation can violate human rights. The author stresses the need for a legal and ethical framework to balance surveillance with respect for personal dignity and constitutional rights.

NOTES:

The article shows the expanding use of CCTV surveillance in Pakistan. The article highlights both its advantages in crime prevention and its potential threats to privacy and human dignity. The Author argues

that while surveillance technology can support law enforcement and ensure public safety, its unregulated use risks turning protective tools into instruments of control and intrusion. He emphasizes that Pakistan's increasing dependence on surveillance systems demands clear legal frameworks, ethical guidelines, and public awareness to ensure that technology serves citizens rather than exploits them. The lack of transparency, consent, and oversight can lead to misuse of recorded data, blackmail, and erosion of trust in institutions. The Author insists that the placement and use of cameras should be transparent, with citizens informed about where and how they are being monitored. He warns that without ethical and legal boundaries, the balance between security and privacy will tilt dangerously toward oppression. Thus, the article underscores the urgent need for accountability, regulation, and moral responsibility in deploying surveillance technologies to protect both safety and personal freedom.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – National security and governance, digital transformation, and privacy protection
- Current Affairs – Technological ethics, law enforcement, and privacy challenges
- Governance & Public Policy – Accountability, transparency, and data regulation frameworks

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that while CCTV cameras help reduce crimes and improve public safety, they can also invade people's privacy if not used responsibly. For example, in Pakistan many offices, markets, and streets now have cameras, but few people know how their footage is used or stored. Without laws such footage can be misused or shared illegally. The writer stresses that cameras should be used transparently with public awareness and clear warnings. People must be told when they are being recorded and strict penalties should exist for misuse. This balance between safety and privacy is vital for a fair society.

Facts and Figures:

- By 2021, there were nearly one billion CCTV cameras worldwide, with China having 200 million and the US 50 million.
- Singapore began large-scale CCTV installation for public safety in 2012.
- Pakistan has expanded surveillance in cities like Lahore and Karachi but still lacks comprehensive legislation to regulate its use.

To sum up, the article shares the age where technology watches more than it protects. The article reminds us that safety built on the sacrifice of privacy is a hollow victory. Unless Pakistan builds clear laws, transparency, and ethical safeguards, the camera meant to shield us might one day strip away the very freedoms it vowed to protect.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Intrusive – Causing disruption or invasion of privacy (synonyms: invasive, disturbing; antonyms: discreet, respectful)
- Apprehend – To catch or arrest someone (synonyms: capture, seize; antonyms: release, free)
- Infringement – Violation or breach of rights (synonyms: breach, encroachment; antonyms: respect, compliance)
- Transparency – Openness or clarity in actions (synonyms: clarity, openness; antonyms: secrecy, concealment)

MIDEAST PEACE?

Summary:

The editorial dissects the hollow theatrics surrounding the so-called “Middle East peace” conference held in Egypt’s Sharm el-Sheikh where world leaders led by US President Donald Trump, proclaimed an end to the Gaza nightmare. Yet beneath the glitter of self-congratulation lies a truth: peace remains a distant mirage. The editorial argues that Trump’s much-praised Gaza plan is nothing but smoke and mirrors, giving no concrete path to Palestinian sovereignty. Egypt’s claim that it leads to a two-state solution is dismissed as wishful thinking, recalling the failed Oslo Accords that collapsed under Israel’s duplicity. The idea of placing Gaza under a foreign-controlled administration, guarded by international troops, is condemned as colonial in nature, a plan doomed to meet the same fate as past interventions in Lebanon and Iraq. The article goes on to highlight the glaring absence of accountability for Israel’s atrocities during the Gaza genocide. It reminds readers that Israel’s unchecked impunity since the Nakba has emboldened it to continue oppressing Palestinians with violence and dispossession. True peace cannot rest on half-measures or political theatrics. It demands justice for the victims of Gaza’s massacre and a firm, time-bound roadmap for a sovereign Palestinian state. Without holding Tel Aviv accountable or ensuring Palestinian self-determination, any peace will be a castle built on sand that is beautiful in appearance but destined to crumble.

Overview:

The article exposes the emptiness of recent Middle East peace claims and criticizes the global community’s hypocrisy in ignoring Palestinian justice. It underlines that genuine peace cannot be achieved through external control or political showmanship but through justice, accountability, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

NOTES:

The article denounces the hollow spectacle of the Middle East peace conference at Sharm el-Sheikh where leaders led by US President Donald Trump declared an end to Gaza’s suffering while offering no real roadmap to Palestinian sovereignty. It criticizes Trump’s Gaza plan as a political performance lacking substance, dismisses Egypt’s claims of a two-state solution as delusional, and recalls how past efforts like the Oslo Accords collapsed under Israel’s duplicity. The idea of foreign-controlled administration in Gaza is condemned as neo-colonial and historically disastrous, while the absence of accountability for Israel’s atrocities exposes global hypocrisy. The editorial insists that genuine peace demands justice for Gaza’s victims and a clear, enforceable path toward a sovereign Palestinian state, warning that without justice and self-determination, all claims of peace remain empty rhetoric—a mirage shimmering over the ruins of Gaza.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Power politics, sovereignty, and conflict resolution
- Current Affairs: Palestine-Israel conflict, Middle East peace process, global diplomacy
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan’s stance on Palestine and Muslim world solidarity

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that world leaders, including the US president claimed to bring peace to Gaza, but their plan lacks real justice or independence for Palestinians. The writer says the idea of letting foreign

troops control Gaza is unfair, like old colonial systems where outsiders ruled local people. She recalls how past peace plans failed because Israel never acted sincerely. The writer stresses that peace cannot come without holding Israel responsible for its crimes during the Gaza genocide. For real peace, Palestinians must have their own independent state with full rights and justice.

Facts and Figures:

- Gaza genocide officially halted but with no political resolution
- Global leaders gathered at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, October 2025
- Trump claimed success of Gaza peace plan without Palestinian sovereignty
- Israel's war crimes since Nakba remain unpunished
- Oslo Accords (1993) collapsed due to Israel's insincerity

To wrap up, the article exposes how hollow political shows masquerade as peace efforts while injustice festers beneath. Without justice, peace is nothing more than a mirage shimmering over the sands of Gaza. Real peace will emerge only when the powerful are held accountable and Palestinians reclaim their right to live with dignity and sovereignty.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Hyperbole – exaggerated statements (Synonym: overstatement; Antonym: understatement)
- Effusive – expressing feelings openly (Synonym: unrestrained; Antonym: reserved)
- Flawed – having mistakes or weaknesses (Synonym: defective; Antonym: perfect)
- Insincerity – lack of genuine feeling (Synonym: hypocrisy; Antonym: honesty)
- Colonial – relating to domination by foreign power (Synonym: imperial; Antonym: independent)

ANOTHER DOHA PACT

Author Muhammad Amir Rana

Summary:

The article highlights the cautious dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan being held in Doha, facilitated by Qatar and Saudi Arabia. While expectations remain low, the writer contends that if the talks yield a pact ensuring that Afghan-based militant groups especially the TTP, cease hostilities against Pakistan, it could reshape the region's political and economic future. Such an agreement might revive prospects for cross-border trade, infrastructure development, and regional connectivity across Central and South Asia. However, the main obstacle lies in the Taliban's rigid worldview which is rooted in their traditional madressah education that blinds them to modern realities. Their leaders, whether moderates or hardliners, share the same belief that the world must adjust to their ways rather than the other way around. This uncompromising mindset fuels policies of repression and isolation that clash with global norms and obstruct meaningful engagement.

The writer shows comparison between Afghanistan and Syria, noting that while Syria's fractured leadership still engages with world powers, the Taliban's supreme leader remains hidden and indecisive. His governance appears trapped in contradictions and confusion, illustrated by his absurd order to block the internet, only to later reverse it upon realizing its impact on his own communications. The author argues that the Taliban's outdated approach frustrates their neighbors especially Pakistan and China, and gives India room to exploit the situation diplomatically. Therefore the Doha talks may only extend a

temporary ceasefire rather than secure a genuine breakthrough. The true solution lies in the Taliban's readiness to honor their earlier commitment to renounce terrorism, as promised in the original Doha Agreement. Until then, Pakistan's hope for peace and stability will remain a mirage in the desert of mistrust.

Overview:

The article presents a critical assessment of the ongoing Afghan-Pakistani dialogue in Doha, focusing on its potential to reshape bilateral relations and regional stability. It highlights how the Taliban's ideological rigidity and internal disarray hinder any real progress, turning opportunities for cooperation into missed chances for peace and prosperity.

NOTES: The article centers on the ongoing talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan in Doha, facilitated by Qatar and Saudi Arabia, following recent border clashes. The writer suggests that if these talks succeed in securing Taliban guarantees against the TTP's cross-border attacks, they could mark a turning point for regional stability, trade, and connectivity across Central and South Asia. The author underscores that the Taliban's rigid, orthodox mindset which is deeply rooted in their traditional madressah upbringing, remains the biggest obstacle to any meaningful progress. This inflexibility prevents them from adapting to global norms or fostering constructive relations with neighbors. Rana highlights how the Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada governs in secrecy, creating a leadership structure marred by confusion and contradiction, exemplified by his contradictory decision to ban and then restore internet access. The article further shows similarities between the Taliban and militant movements in Syria, noting how unlike Syria's leadership, the Taliban remain isolated and unresponsive to external engagement. Their inability to evolve frustrates Pakistan and China, while India takes advantage of their defiance to gain diplomatic leverage. The writer concludes that the Doha ceasefire may only offer a temporary calm unless the Taliban abandon their alliance with militant groups and fulfill their previous Doha Agreement promise to renounce terrorism. True peace demands not just negotiation but transformation.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – Afghanistan's political structure and regional diplomacy
- Current Affairs – Pakistan's security and border conflicts
- Pakistan Affairs – Counterterrorism, cross-border ties, and South Asian stability

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan and Afghanistan are trying to improve their strained relationship through talks in Doha, hoping to stop cross-border violence. If the Taliban agree not to let the TTP attack Pakistan, it could bring peace and regional growth. But the Taliban's leaders think the world should adjust to them, which makes real progress unlikely. For example, their leader once banned the internet across Afghanistan, then lifted the ban when he realized it affected his own communication. This shows how confused their decision-making is. Pakistan, frustrated by repeated attacks from the TTP, wants the Taliban to keep their promises, but they continue to avoid responsibility. The article shows how peace depends on the Taliban's willingness to change and act responsibly.

Facts and Figures:

- The ceasefire between Afghanistan and Pakistan was initially agreed for 48 hours.
- The Doha talks are mediated by Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

- The Taliban leadership remains dominated by religious scholars with limited modern education.
- India uses the Taliban's stance to strengthen its diplomatic influence.
- The Taliban's Supreme Leader, Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada, remains hidden from public view.

To wrap up, The article is about the uneasy relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It unveils how dialogue without transformation becomes diplomacy in vain. Unless the Taliban shed their rigid mindset and sever ties with terrorism, the Doha talks will remain another fleeting pause in a long tale of mistrust. The writer suggests that the peace requires not just negotiation but evolution — a willingness to adapt, to see beyond one's shadow, and to embrace the changing world.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Pragmatically – in a realistic or practical way (Synonym: sensibly; Antonym: ideally)
- Orthodox – following traditional beliefs (Synonym: conservative; Antonym: progressive)
- Compulsion – a strong force or urge (Synonym: obligation; Antonym: freedom)
- Mediation – intervention to resolve conflict (Synonym: arbitration; Antonym: confrontation)
- Leverage – influence or advantage (Synonym: power; Antonym: weakness)

NOW, THE HARD PART

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article reveals the fragile illusion of peace that followed President Donald Trump's intervention in Gaza after two years of Israeli bombardment. Though hailed as a diplomatic victory, the so-called peace summit at Sharm el-Sheikh offered more spectacle than substance. The ceasefire lacking signatures from either Israel or Hamas symbolizes the beginning of a fragile and uncertain process. Trump's 20-point plan promises peace but avoids defining its key terms such as disarmament, Israeli withdrawal, and Palestinian statehood, leaving the road ahead littered with political landmines. Netanyahu's history of defying agreements, coupled with Trump's fleeting attention span, further clouds the prospects of lasting peace. The article portrays the ceasefire as a temporary pause in a long, blood-stained saga rather than a genuine turning point in Middle Eastern diplomacy.

The article highlights the contradictions within Trump's plan, including the proposed multinational "stabilisation force" that lacks legitimacy, clarity, and consent from the people it seeks to govern. The author warns that Gaza risks becoming a "colonial-style enterprise" run by outsiders under the guise of peacekeeping. The absence of a concrete path to Palestinian sovereignty, combined with ongoing Israeli violations, renders the so-called peace a mirage shimmering over devastation. The writer concludes that peace without justice or statehood is an illusion that can crumble at any moment as history repeatedly shows. In essence, the article is a warning piece about how political theatrics, absent sincerity and accountability, only deepen despair rather than deliver peace.

Overview:

The article dissects the hollow promises of Trump's Gaza ceasefire plan and exposes its vague framework, political opportunism, and lack of genuine commitment to Palestinian self-determination. It emphasizes the recurring cycle of false dawns that define Middle Eastern peace efforts, revealing that without justice, any truce is merely a pause before renewed conflict.

NOTES:

The article underlines the deceptive calm following Trump's intervention in Gaza, where a ceasefire was celebrated without resolving the deep-rooted political and humanitarian crisis. It highlights that Trump's so-called peace summit in Sharm el-Sheikh was more theatrical than transformative, producing a declaration filled with generalities and lacking concrete commitments. The plan's ambiguity regarding disarmament, Israeli withdrawal, and Palestinian statehood reflects the fragility of the entire process. Netanyahu's unreliable record, coupled with Trump's limited attention to detail, casts doubt on any lasting peace. The writer further reveals how the proposed multinational stabilisation force and temporary governance system could turn Gaza into a quasi-colonial experiment, undermining Palestinian self-rule. By emphasizing continued Israeli violations even after the ceasefire and the absence of a defined path to sovereignty, the article portrays the peace process as a mirage—promising relief but delivering uncertainty. Ultimately, it concludes that without justice, accountability, and genuine recognition of Palestinian rights, the illusion of peace will crumble, leaving Gaza's people trapped in the same cycle of violence and despair.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- International Relations – US foreign policy in the Middle East
- Current Affairs – Gaza crisis and peace diplomacy
- Political Science – State sovereignty and legitimacy
- Pakistan Affairs – Muslim world diplomacy and its limitations

Notes for Beginners:

The article discusses how Trump brokered a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas after years of violence, but this peace is fragile and uncertain. The main issue is that Israel and Hamas do not agree on major points such as disarming Hamas or establishing a Palestinian state. The plan also suggests foreign control over Gaza which many see as modern-day colonialism. For example, while Trump claims success, Israel continues to violate the ceasefire, making peace impossible. The article helps readers understand that real peace requires justice, equal power, and genuine negotiation, not just political declarations.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 67,000 Palestinians were killed in the two-year Israeli offensive
- Trump's 20-point plan calls for demilitarisation, Israeli withdrawal, and a multinational stabilisation force.
- The US has already deployed 200 troops to Israel for coordination purposes.

To sum up, The article reminds that peace cannot be built on hollow promises or political showmanship. It urges the global community to see beyond diplomatic illusions and address the real causes of Gaza's suffering such as occupation, injustice, and denial of sovereignty. The article implies that the true peace demands more than ceasefires as it requires moral courage and a steadfast commitment to equality and justice.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Hectic – very busy or intense (Synonym: frantic; Antonym: calm)
- Ceasefire – a temporary suspension of fighting (Synonym: truce; Antonym: war)
- Demilitarisation – removal of military forces (Synonym: disarmament; Antonym: militarisation)

- Baulked – hesitated or resisted (Synonym: refused; Antonym: accepted)
- Convergence – coming together in agreement (Synonym: unity; Antonym: divergence)
- Trusteeship – administrative control over a territory (Synonym: guardianship; Antonym: independence)
- Derail – to obstruct progress (Synonym: hinder; Antonym: advance)

FROM SAR TO MENAAP

Author: Shazia Rafi

Summary:

The article highlights the World Bank's quiet but significant decision to shift Pakistan and Afghanistan from the South Asia Region (SAR) to the Middle East-North Africa and Afghanistan-Pakistan (MENAAP) region. The writer begins with her discovery of this realignment, noting the lack of awareness among Pakistan's policymakers and the absence of transparency in the decision-making process. The move approved in April 2025 and announced in July has far-reaching implications for Pakistan's economic positioning, development priorities, and climate-related funding. Despite initial confusion, the World Bank's MENAAP Vice President Dr. Ousmane Dione later reaffirmed a \$20 billion lending program for Pakistan from 2026 to 2035, focusing on macroeconomic stability, productivity enhancement, renewable energy, and human capital development. However, the Author expresses concern that shifting Pakistan's economic identity could complicate coordination on key regional issues, especially those tied to shared ecosystems like the Indus Basin, governed by the Indus Waters Treaty.

In the latter part, the Author argues that this restructuring must not weaken Pakistan's climate resilience or development agenda. The Author warns that climate change already costs Pakistan billions annually, with future damages projected to rise dramatically if cross-regional collaboration diminishes. To safeguard national interests, the Author advises Pakistan to initiate joint assessments with both SAR and MENAAP regions, establish a standing liaison for Indus Basin projects, and independently evaluate funding prospects, especially climate financing. The Author highlights both opportunities and risks in Pakistan's new regional grouping and emphasizes that proactive diplomacy is essential to turn this transition into an advantage. Ultimately, Rafi urges Pakistan to claim a seat on the World Bank's Development Committee to influence global economic decisions directly, stressing that in today's interconnected world, absence from the table often means absence from the outcome.

Overview:

The article explores Pakistan's repositioning within the World Bank's regional framework and its potential impact on the economy, climate strategy, and development planning. It underscores the need for greater institutional awareness, diplomatic engagement, and strategic foresight to turn this shift into a platform for renewed economic opportunity rather than passive adjustment.

NOTES:

The article emphasizes Pakistan's unexpected shift from the South Asia Region (SAR) to the Middle East-North Africa and Afghanistan-Pakistan (MENAAP) region under the World Bank's reorganization. This transition, finalized in April 2025 and publicized in July, occurred without adequate awareness among Pakistan's policymakers, raising concerns about transparency and preparedness. The writer highlights that

this move will reshape Pakistan's economic identity, affecting its development strategy, climate financing, and coordination on shared resources like the Indus Basin. Despite initial uncertainty, the World Bank reaffirmed a \$20 billion lending program for Pakistan from 2026 to 2035, aimed at macroeconomic stability, productivity growth, renewable energy, and human capital. However, the shift also poses risks, as weaker ties with South Asian economies could hinder collaborative climate responses and regional integration. The author urges Pakistan to proactively engage with both SAR and MENAAP regions, establish strong institutional mechanisms for joint water and climate projects, and independently assess its funding prospects. She draws lessons from Egypt's experience to show that the new grouping offers potential benefits if Pakistan adopts strategic diplomacy and asserts its interests. Ultimately, the article calls for Pakistan to claim representation in global financial decision-making forums like the World Bank's Development Committee, stressing that passive acceptance of such changes could undermine the country's economic and environmental future.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – Global governance and multilateral financial institutions
- Pakistan Affairs – Economic policy, foreign aid, and development partnerships
- Current Affairs – Climate diplomacy and international financial restructuring
- Environmental Studies – Sustainable development and climate adaptation strategies

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the World Bank has shifted Pakistan from the South Asia group to a new one called MENAAP, which includes Middle Eastern and North African countries. Many Pakistani officials were unaware of this change until it became official. The writer says Pakistan must use this new placement wisely because it affects how loans, projects, and climate funds will be managed. She emphasizes that Pakistan already faces major losses due to climate change like floods and melting glaciers and the country must ensure that climate-related projects continue without interruption. She also compares Pakistan's situation to Egypt's, suggesting that Pakistan can benefit if it learns to cooperate economically within the new region and builds stronger links with oil-rich nations for development funding.

Facts and Figures:

- The World Bank approved the regional shift of Pakistan and Afghanistan in April 2025 and made it public in July 2025.
- Pakistan's lending program with the World Bank is valued at \$20 billion for 2026–2035.
- Climate change cost Pakistan \$3.8 billion annually in 2021 and \$15.2 billion in the 2022 floods.
- Future economic damage from floods and melting glaciers could reach \$38 billion annually by mid-century.
- World Bank lending in 2024 amounted to \$15.9 billion for SAR and \$4.6 billion for MENA.

To sum up, the article reminds that Pakistan's global economic position cannot be left to bureaucratic happenstance. The shift from SAR to MENAAP presents both peril and promise. If handled with strategic insight, it could open new doors for investment, regional cooperation, and climate financing. But if ignored or mismanaged, it risks further marginalization and economic vulnerability. Pakistan must act, not react to global changes shaping its future.

CONSTITUTIONAL HERO

Author: Hamdah Tahir

Summary:

The article reflects Pakistan's chronic deviation from constitutionalism and its fascination with extra-legal saviours. The article asserts that the 1973 Constitution is not flawed in design but in implementation, as power repeatedly shifts into the hands of those unauthorized by the Constitution. From Justice Munir's doctrine of necessity to successive judicial validations of military coups, Pakistan's history reads like a chronicle of constitutional surrender. The writer observes that every institution such as judiciary, executive, and parliament has at some point compromised the principle of separation of powers, feeding into a larger national psyche that glorifies individuals who defy rules to "save" the nation. The Author warns that this obsession with heroism beyond the law has corroded democracy and accountability, turning the Constitution into a mere spectator rather than the state's anchor.

In the latter part, the Author argues that while moral defiance like the 2007 Lawyers' Movement or Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests may sometimes uphold justice, most power grabs have been acts of ambition disguised as necessity. She emphasizes that Pakistan has seldom faced a genuine constitutional crisis that could justify abandoning democracy. Instead, the real crisis lies in the country's refusal to trust its own institutions. One who defends the Constitution rather than distorts it, who chooses the slower but righteous path of institutional integrity over personal glory. True salvation, she argues, lies not in messianic leadership but in fidelity to constitutional order and the collective discipline of law.

Overview:

This article explores Pakistan's recurring cycle of constitutional violations and its deep-seated attraction to authoritarian "heroes." It explains how institutions have consistently undermined the Constitution, justifying extra-legal actions as patriotism. The writer insists that genuine progress depends on upholding the rule of law, respecting institutional boundaries, and nurturing constitutional heroes who strengthen democracy instead of bypassing it.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's persistent failure to uphold its Constitution, not because of flaws in its text but due to the deliberate surrender of power to non-constitutional forces. The Author underscores how the 1973 Constitution based on the separation of powers has repeatedly been undermined by military takeovers and judicial validations such as the infamous Doctrine of Necessity. The Author points out that every major state institution has, at one point, compromised its constitutional duty, creating a culture where defying the law is romanticized as heroism. This misplaced admiration for rule-breakers has eroded democratic values and replaced institutional accountability with the myth of the "saviour figure." The Author pays attention to the difference between morally justified defiance, such as the 2007 Lawyers' Movement or the 1998 nuclear tests, and reckless power grabs that harm democracy. She argues that Pakistan has rarely faced a true constitutional crisis warranting extra-legal measures, yet it continues to repeat this cycle due to mistrust in institutions. She calls for a "constitutional hero," someone who upholds the rule of law, strengthens institutions, and chooses the difficult but dignified path of constitutional integrity over the allure of quick fixes or authoritarian dominance.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Evolution of constitutional development and civil-military relations
- Political Science – Principles of separation of powers and constitutionalism
- Current Affairs – Governance crisis and the rule of law in Pakistan

Notes for Beginners:

The article discusses how Pakistan's political problems are not caused by a weak Constitution but by the repeated disregard of it. The writer explains that Pakistan's 1973 Constitution clearly divides power among the judiciary, parliament, and executive, but all have at times surrendered to non-democratic forces like the military. People often admire "heroes" who take shortcuts or break rules, yet such actions harm democracy. The writer calls for a new mindset where the real hero is one who protects the Constitution, respects the law, and patiently works for reforms within the system. For example, movements like the Lawyers' Movement in 2007 upheld justice by restoring judicial independence rather than toppling institutions.

Facts and Figures:

- The 1973 Constitution established the tripartite system of government in Pakistan, separating powers among the judiciary, executive, and legislature.
- Justice Munir's "Doctrine of Necessity" in 1954 justified the dismissal of the first Constituent Assembly.
- Major military interventions validated by courts occurred under Ayub Khan (Dosso case), Zia-ul-Haq (Nusrat Bhutto case), and Pervez Musharraf (Zafar Ali Shah case).
- The 2007 Lawyers' Movement restored the judiciary's independence after Musharraf's unconstitutional actions.

To sum up, the article is a critical analysis of Pakistan's political conscience. It dismantles the illusion that strongmen save nations, arguing that true strength lies in obedience to the Constitution and patience with democratic processes. Her call for a "constitutional hero" is both moral and urgent which is a reminder that Pakistan's redemption will not come from defiance of law but from its devoted preservation.

A LINE OF CONTENTION

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article examines the increasing tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan following their brief but fierce border conflict, which ended in a ceasefire brokered in Doha. Despite the truce, the situation remains fragile as the Taliban leadership refuses to recognise the Durand Line, calling it an "imaginary" border. Zahid Hussain traces this dispute to the 1893 agreement that defined the frontier between British India and Afghanistan, later inherited by Pakistan. Although the border is legitimate under international law, successive Afghan governments, including the current Taliban regime, have rejected it. The article notes how the Taliban's revived rhetoric on Afghan nationalism seems to be a diversion from their domestic failures, international isolation, and ties with militant groups like the TTP. Meanwhile, Pakistan justifies its military retaliation as lawful self-defence against cross-border terrorism, which has intensified in recent years, particularly in KP and Balochistan.

The writer warns that this spiralling hostility serves neither side's interest. He argues Pakistan's expulsion of Afghan refugees has deepened resentment, while the Taliban's defiant stance risks fuelling extremism in the region. The article calls for prudence and diplomacy, emphasising that dialogue, not aggression, remains the only sustainable way forward. It acknowledges the upcoming Istanbul peace talks as a potential opportunity to ease tensions and promote regional stability. The article concludes that both countries bound by geography and history must rise above mistrust and nationalist provocations to prevent the border from becoming a perpetual flashpoint that endangers millions of lives on either side.

Overview:

The article highlights the deep-rooted Durand Line dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan, showing how historical grievances and political insecurities continue to shape their strained relations. It critically evaluates both sides' actions, Pakistan's military assertiveness and the Taliban's nationalist posturing, within a broader regional security context. The author stresses that peace depends on mutual restraint, diplomatic engagement, and regional cooperation rather than emotional or militaristic responses.

NOTES:

The article highlights the fragile peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan following a ceasefire brokered in Doha after intense border clashes. It explains that the core of the dispute lies in the Durand Line, a 2,300-kilometre border drawn in 1893 between British India and Afghanistan, which Pakistan inherited after independence. Despite being recognised under international law, successive Afghan governments, including the current Taliban regime, have refused to accept it, calling it an imaginary divide. Zahid Hussain argues that the Taliban's aggressive revival of Afghan nationalism works as a political distraction from internal failures, international sanctions, and their ties with militant groups such as the TTP. On the other hand Pakistan claims its military strikes were legitimate acts of self-defence against rising cross-border terrorism in KP and Balochistan. However, the expulsion of Afghan refugees and growing hostility have worsened bilateral relations, threatening regional stability. The writer warns that both nations must abandon provocations and adopt diplomacy as the only viable route to peace. He views the upcoming Istanbul talks as a chance to rebuild trust and emphasises that dialogue, patience, and cooperation, not confrontation are essential for lasting stability in the region.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy and relations with neighbouring countries.
- Current Affairs: Regional conflicts, border disputes, and peace diplomacy.
- International Relations: The role of international law and peace agreements in interstate conflicts.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the Durand Line is the official border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, drawn during British rule in 1893. However, Afghanistan never formally accepted it. After the Taliban took control of Kabul again, tensions reignited as they questioned this border's legitimacy. Pakistan accuses the Taliban of allowing terrorist groups like TTP to operate from Afghan soil, while the Taliban criticise Pakistan's treatment of Afghan refugees. The article suggests that military action will only worsen the crisis and that both countries should focus on diplomacy and cooperation. For example, upcoming peace talks in Istanbul could serve as a forum to rebuild trust and prevent further bloodshed.

Facts and Figures:

- The Durand Line is 2,300 kilometres long, dividing the Pashtun population across Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Pakistan has suffered hundreds of military casualties in cross-border terrorist attacks over the past decade.
- Afghanistan remains under international sanctions due to restrictions on women's rights and governance issues.

To wrap up, the article reflects that conflict born of mistrust and nationalism only perpetuates suffering. The border may separate the two nations geographically, but their destinies are intertwined by culture, history, and faith. Lasting peace will depend not on the might of arms but on the strength of dialogue, patience, and mutual respect.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Volatile – unstable or explosive in nature (synonym: unpredictable, antonym: stable)
- Expediency – the quality of being convenient though possibly improper (synonym: practicality, antonym: morality)
- Retrogressive – moving backward or becoming worse (synonym: regressive, antonym: progressive)
- Provocation – action intended to anger or incite (synonym: instigation, antonym: pacification)
- De facto – existing in fact though not officially recognised (synonym: actual, antonym: nominal)

HUNGERING FOR GROWTH

Author: Khurram Husain

Summary:

The article examines Pakistan's economic dilemma, where repeated cycles of boom and bust have left the country trapped in a state of peak stability. The Author explains that while strict measures such as higher taxes and interest rates have curbed inflation and halted the decline of foreign reserves, they have also strangled economic growth. Pakistan's long-standing challenge lies in reigniting growth without reigniting the same deficits that force it back into IMF programs. From Musharraf's post-9/11 windfall to the Covid-era inflows, every government has relied on temporary financial lifelines rather than structural reforms. Once growth resumes, imports surge, reserves fall, and the cycle of crisis begins anew. The author highlights an economy gasping for sustainable momentum, stuck in a loop where each government blames its predecessor for the inevitable collapse that follows short-lived progress.

The Author stresses that the present government, much like those before it, stands at the same critical point. Having achieved macroeconomic stability, it struggles to generate jobs for the nearly two million new entrants into the labour market each year. Rising unemployment and stagnating middle-class incomes have bred public discontent, compelling policymakers to seek growth at any cost. Yet without real reform, this hunger for growth risks triggering the same economic meltdown Pakistan has faced for decades. The writer urges the leadership to break this vicious pattern and rethink economic planning beyond short-term fixes and borrowed inflows. The recurring story, he warns, will continue to end in crisis unless Pakistan embraces a long-term, home-grown strategy built on productivity, exports, and fiscal discipline

Overview:

The article highlights the cyclical nature of Pakistan's economic management, which alternates between painful stabilisation and unsustainable growth. The article exposes how each government inherits the same broken system, applies the same measures, and eventually returns to the IMF once reserves dwindle. The article reflects the structural weaknesses of Pakistan's economy—its overreliance on external inflows, chronic import dependency, and lack of productive growth. The Author concludes with message that a stability without reform is an illusion that postpones collapse rather than prevents it.

NOTES:

The article shows Pakistan's recurring economic trap, where every effort to stabilise the economy leads to stagnation and ultimately to another cycle of crisis. It highlights how the government's reliance on traditional stabilisation tools such as high taxes and interest rates temporarily curbs inflation and stabilises reserves but suffocates growth. Once small signs of recovery emerge, rising imports again overwhelm exports, depleting reserves and forcing yet another IMF return. The Author recounts how every administration from Musharraf to Imran Khan repeated the same pattern such as claiming success during its tenure but leaving behind the same financial wreckage. He also notes that nearly two million individuals enter the labour force annually, worsening unemployment when the economy fails to expand. As poverty deepens and the middle class loses purchasing power, public frustration grows, prompting governments to seek growth at any cost. The author insists that this short-term mindset has turned stability into illusion, arguing that sustainable progress demands bold structural reforms, investment in production, and reduction in import dependency rather than another round of borrowed relief or policy patchwork.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic development, structural challenges, and fiscal management.
- Current Affairs: IMF programs, unemployment, and public debt.
- Economics: Macroeconomic stability, inflation control, and balance of payments crisis.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan's economy often repeats the same pattern: it stabilises through tough measures like higher taxes and interest rates, but when growth restarts, imports rise faster than exports. This leads to deficits, depletion of reserves and a return to IMF programs. The government then borrows more to stay afloat, creating a cycle that never ends. For example, every leader from Musharraf to Imran Khan has followed this same trajectory—temporary stability followed by financial collapse. The Author highlights that millions of young people enter the job market yearly, but the economy cannot absorb them, increasing poverty and frustration. The only real solution lies in reforming industries, boosting exports, and encouraging sustainable growth rather than relying on foreign bailouts.

Facts and Figures:

- Around two million Pakistanis enter the labour market annually, yet job creation remains far below this level.
- The Durand Line of economic cycles has persisted since 1988, with each government turning to the IMF roughly every three to five years.
- Pakistan's foreign reserves often peak before each crisis, only to fall sharply as imports rise faster than exports.

To sum up, the real growth cannot be built on borrowed dollars or short-term measures. If Pakistan wishes to break free from this endless circle, it must invest in productivity, human capital, and fiscal honesty. The hunger for growth must be matched by the will to reform, or the country will continue to chase prosperity that always slips through its fingers.

A US-PAKISTAN OPPORTUNITY

Author: Fahad Hashmi

Summary:

The article presents the recent shipment of rare earth and critical minerals from Pakistan to the United States as more than a business transaction—it is a symbolic moment that could redefine bilateral relations. The Author argues that as the world transitions towards clean energy and advanced technologies, minerals like copper, antimony, and rare earth elements have become the backbone of the modern economy. With an estimated six trillion dollars' worth of untapped mineral reserves, Pakistan stands at the threshold of transforming its economic landscape. The author stresses that the partnership between the US and Pakistan should not repeat the exploitative patterns of the past. Instead, it must rest on sustainability, transparency, and shared prosperity, ensuring that local communities and the national economy benefit equally.

Hashmi envisions a five-pillar strategy to make this partnership a model of ethical resource cooperation. It includes joint exploration, environmental protection, infrastructure development, community inclusion, and in-country mineral processing. He suggests that Pakistan should adopt global frameworks like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to ensure open reporting and investor confidence. By doing so, Pakistan could move from being a raw exporter to a value creator, laying the foundation for sustainable growth. The article concludes that this mineral partnership holds the promise to strengthen regional stability, generate employment, and help Pakistan engage the global market on equal footing. For the US, it's an opportunity to diversify mineral supply chains; for Pakistan, it's a chance to unlock economic sovereignty through responsible development and strategic diplomacy.

Overview:

The article works as a vision statement for redefining US-Pakistan relations through resource diplomacy. The Author portrays mineral cooperation not merely as trade but as a strategic partnership that could reshape Pakistan's global standing. The article underscores the need for responsible extraction, equitable benefit-sharing, and transparent governance to turn Pakistan's mineral potential into real national prosperity. It shows contrast between short-term exploitation and long-term sustainability, presenting the mineral sector as a test of whether Pakistan can finally rise above dependency and mismanagement.

NOTES:

The article underscores Pakistan's landmark shipment of rare earth and critical minerals to the United States, framing it as a turning point in redefining bilateral relations through resource diplomacy. Fahad Hashmi emphasizes that Pakistan, with over six trillion dollars' worth of untapped mineral reserves, has the potential to transform its economy if it avoids the exploitative trends of the past and adopts a sustainable, transparent, and equitable approach. He outlines a five-pillar framework for this partnership, focusing on joint exploration, environmental protection, infrastructure development, community participation, and in-country processing to ensure long-term national benefit. The writer highlights the

importance of global standards like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative for building trust and accountability. He argues that by processing minerals domestically, Pakistan can move from being a raw exporter to a value-driven economy, creating jobs and strengthening sovereignty. The article concludes that this cooperation offers the US a chance to diversify its mineral supply chains while giving Pakistan a historic opportunity to achieve economic independence through responsible governance and ethical resource management.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic development, industrial growth, and resource management
- International Relations: Bilateral cooperation, trade diplomacy, and strategic partnerships
- Current Affairs: Sustainable development, global energy transition, and governance reforms

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan recently sent a shipment of valuable minerals to the US, marking a turning point in their relations. These minerals, essential for electric vehicles and renewable energy, can make Pakistan a key player in the global economy if handled properly. The writer warns against simply exporting raw materials as in the past, arguing instead for investment in processing and manufacturing industries at home. For instance, by refining minerals locally, Pakistan could earn more revenue, create jobs, and reduce poverty. The author also suggests that transparency and environmental care should guide these partnerships to ensure the wealth benefits the people rather than a few elites.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's mineral reserves are estimated at over six trillion dollars in value.
- The first shipment to the US was made under a five-hundred-million-dollar investment deal.
- Global demand for critical minerals is expected to triple by 2030, while battery minerals may increase thirtyfold by 2040.
- Pakistan's population stands around two hundred and forty million, with a growing need for employment opportunities.

To sum up, this article is a timely call for Pakistan to convert its immense mineral wealth into lasting national prosperity through foresight and responsibility. It reminds both nations that partnerships must go beyond profit, grounded in trust and mutual progress. If Pakistan can embrace transparency, sustainability, and value creation, this cooperation could become a cornerstone of economic renewal. The article urges that the real test lies not in what Pakistan possesses beneath its soil but in how wisely it chooses to unearth and use it.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Bonanza – a source of sudden wealth or profit (synonym: windfall, antonym: loss)
- Beneficiation – improving the value of raw minerals (synonym: enrichment, antonym: degradation)
- Stewardship – careful management of something entrusted (synonym: supervision, antonym: neglect)
- Transparency – openness and clarity in operations (synonym: accountability, antonym: secrecy)

THE DURAND BORDER

Author: Ahmer Bilal Soofi

Summary:

The article examines the longstanding dispute over the Durand Line, asserting that Afghanistan's denial of it as an international border lacks historical and legal credibility. The article explains that under international law, borders symbolize a state's sovereignty, and any denial undermines global peace and order. The Author highlights that Kabul's resistance, visible even in its objection to the use of the term "border" in a Doha peace statement, stems from an outdated political mindset rather than valid legal grounds. He debunks Afghanistan's claim that the 1893 Durand Agreement was signed "under duress," clarifying that successive Afghan rulers reaffirmed it in later treaties, including the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi and the 1921 and 1930 Kabul Agreements. Citing Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), he argues that every state is obliged to honour its international commitments in good faith, and that the VCLT, being a codifying treaty, reinforces rather than invalidates the Durand Line's legitimacy.

The writer further argues that under international legal principles such as *uti possidetis juris* and the Vienna Convention on State Succession, Pakistan inherited the Durand Line as a lawful border upon independence. He recalls that its legitimacy has been affirmed globally: the UN recognized Pakistan's boundaries upon admission in 1947, while the US, USSR, and Britain reiterated the Durand Line's status in later decades. He dismisses claims of easement rights and objections to border fencing, noting that Pakistan's actions align with international norms of territorial security, much like the US-Mexico border fence under the Secure Fence Act of 2006. Soofi concludes that Afghanistan's stance is neither tenable under law nor supported internationally. The Durand Line, he suggests, stands as a legitimate and settled boundary, symbolizing Pakistan's sovereignty and reflecting the world's recognition of its territorial integrity.

Overview:

The article provides a lucid legal and historical defense of the Durand Line as the recognized international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Author dissects Afghanistan's arguments with precision, grounding his reasoning in international law, historical treaties, and UN precedents. The author asserts that Kabul's denial is politically motivated rather than law-based. This piece of writing reminds that the sanctity of international borders ensures global order, and undermining them risks diplomatic instability in a volatile region.

NOTES:

The article presents a comprehensive legal and historical justification for the Durand Line as the internationally recognized border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Author emphasizes that Afghanistan's refusal to acknowledge the border holds no legal validity, as successive Afghan governments reaffirmed it through multiple treaties, including the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi and later Kabul Agreements. He clarifies that under international law, particularly the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and the principle of *uti possidetis juris*, Pakistan lawfully inherited this border upon independence. The UN, US, USSR, and Britain have all endorsed the Durand Line's legitimacy, further solidifying its international recognition. The author explains that Afghanistan's argument of the 1893

agreement being signed “under duress” is baseless, as repeated affirmations by Afghan rulers confirm its acceptance. Additionally, Pakistan’s decision to fence the border aligns with global security practices, similar to the US-Mexico boundary measures. Soofi concludes that the Durand Line represents Pakistan’s sovereign frontier, and its legitimacy is deeply rooted in historical continuity, legal precedent, and international consensus, leaving Afghanistan’s objections without lawful foundation.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects::

- Pakistan Affairs: Border disputes, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, and territorial sovereignty
- International Law: Vienna Convention, state succession, and uti possidetis juris principle
- Current Affairs: Regional security, border management, and diplomatic relations in South Asia

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan’s border with Afghanistan known as the Durand Line was officially marked in 1893 and reaffirmed several times afterward. Despite this, Afghanistan denies it as an international border, claiming it was forced upon them. The writer shows that these claims hold no ground because both history and international law confirm the Durand Line’s legitimacy. For example, treaties like the Rawalpindi and Kabul Agreements endorsed it, and major powers such as the US and UN have recognized it as Pakistan’s lawful boundary. Pakistan’s fencing of the border is therefore an act of national security, similar to how the United States fenced its border with Mexico. The article clarifies that international law does not permit Afghanistan to object to this or claim easement rights across the border.

Facts and Figures:

- The Durand Line spans about 2,300 kilometers, dividing Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- It was first agreed upon in 1893 between Sir Mortimer Durand and Amir Abdur Rahman Khan.
- The Treaty of Rawalpindi (1919) and Kabul Agreements (1921, 1930) reaffirmed the border.
- Pakistan’s UN membership in 1947 implied international recognition of its inherited boundaries.
- UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) reaffirmed the Durand Line as a de jure international border.

In a nutshell, this article stands as a masterful exposition of legal logic and historical clarity. The reasoning of Author dismantles political rhetoric with evidence grounded in law, history, and global consensus. The article reinforces that the Durand Line is not merely a geographical divide but a symbol of Pakistan’s sovereignty, recognized by the world. Peace and regional stability rest not on denial but on respect for international boundaries and the principles that uphold them.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- **Obduracy** – stubborn refusal to change one’s opinion (synonym: stubbornness, antonym: flexibility)
- **Affirmed** – declared or confirmed formally (synonym: validated, antonym: denied)
- **Retroactive** – applying to the past (synonym: retrospective, antonym: prospective)
- **Codifying** – arranging and recording systematically (synonym: organizing, antonym: disorganizing)
- **Easement** – a legal right to use another’s land for a specific purpose (synonym: access, antonym: restriction)

AN IDEOLOGICAL SHIFT?

Author: Muhammad Amir Rana

Summary:

The article discusses about Pakistan's shifting ideological landscape. It explores how the state's sudden crackdown on the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) has sparked debate over whether this marks a real ideological shift or merely a tactical retreat. The writer argues that although the state has acted decisively, its heart may not have changed; genuine transformation, he suggests, demands more than coercion as it requires an alternative narrative capable of inspiring unity beyond religio-national slogans. The Author contends that Pakistan has long sought cohesion through religion rather than through constitutional consensus or pluralism. Without a credible vision of moderate Islam rooted in indigenous reform or secular modernity, the ideological vacuum left by extremism risks being filled by another wave of dogma. He warns that reclaiming the narrative from the clergy is no easy feat, as it demands creativity, conviction, and ideological depth—qualities alien to the state's bureaucratic machinery.

The writer goes on to show that the state's new outlook might tilt toward a pragmatic, anti-India narrative, reframing religion as a cultural boundary rather than a theocratic goal. Yet, this ideological renovation faces deep resistance from entrenched religious networks and the thousands of seminaries shaping public attitudes. The article highlights a nation caught between the ghosts of its own making and the allure of a rational, modern identity. While the state's recent suppression of TLP may buy temporary peace, the embers of its ideas still smoulder beneath the surface, ready to reignite. The author suggests that true ideological transformation cannot be achieved through force alone. It must come from within the nation's conscience, through intellectual honesty, social reform, and a renewed sense of national purpose.

Overview:

The article probes Pakistan's complex ideological crossroads, questioning whether the state's decisive stance against the TLP signals genuine change or another tactical manoeuvre. The analysis moves beyond political surface to expose the deeper structural challenge: the absence of a coherent national narrative rooted in moderation and pluralism. The article stands out for its analytical clarity, weaving political insight with social critique. The Author suggests that unless Pakistan redefines its ideological compass, it will continue oscillating between religious populism and shallow pragmatism.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's ongoing struggle to redefine its ideological foundations in the aftermath of its crackdown on Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). The writer underscores that while the state's decisive move against TLP suggests a shift, it may be more tactical than transformative, as the state still lacks a coherent alternative ideology capable of inspiring national cohesion. Pakistan, he explains, has historically relied on religion as a unifying force instead of embracing constitutional and pluralistic values. The writer notes that the absence of a viable model of moderate Islam whether modernist or reformist, continues to leave an ideological vacuum that extremist elements can easily exploit. He further examines how the state's emerging discourse appears to be tilting toward an anti-India stance, using religion as a cultural boundary marker rather than a political doctrine. However, this attempt at narrative reconstruction faces resistance from entrenched religious institutions, including over 40,000 seminaries and hundreds of religious parties that have deeply influenced public opinion and policymaking. The article also pays

attention to how state efforts to suppress TLP through asset freezes and internal divisions may yield temporary calm but do not guarantee ideological change. The deeper challenge lies in confronting the long-standing religious legacies embedded in society's mindset. He concludes that sustainable transformation requires intellectual honesty, societal reform, and a sincere effort to build a balanced, inclusive, and modern national identity.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Religious politics, national ideology, and state narrative-building
- Current Affairs: Internal security, radicalisation, and counter-extremism strategy
- Political Science: Relationship between state power and ideology formation
- International Relations: Impact of ideological shifts on Pakistan's regional image

Notes for Beginners:

The article discusses how Pakistan's government took strict action against the TLP, a religious group that once had state support. The writer questions whether this change shows a real shift in thinking or just a temporary move. He explains that Pakistan has long tied its national unity to religion rather than fairness, equality, or respect for diversity. The government now seems to be trying to build a new identity—less religious but still nationalistic, especially with a stronger anti-India tone. However, changing ideology is difficult because religion has been part of Pakistan's politics and education for decades. For example, more than 40,000 seminaries influence the country's youth and social systems. The article suggests that real change will only happen if the state, society, and intellectuals work together to create a fair and modern vision for Pakistan's future.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 40,000 religious seminaries operate across Pakistan.
- There are around 248 religiously inspired political parties.
- The state's previous counter-extremism strategies spanned nearly two decades.
- The TLP's street power was curbed through asset freezes and internal divisions.

To sum up, The article analyzes Pakistan's ideological fabric, exposing how the struggle between faith, nationalism, and pragmatism shapes its political soul. The Author's reflections remind readers that a nation cannot simply silence extremism, but it must outthink it. The true battle, he implies, is not on the streets but in the realm of ideas. Unless Pakistan develops an inclusive, forward-looking narrative, it will remain haunted by the shadows of its past, caught between piety and progress, between identity and ideology.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Suppression – the act of forcibly ending or restraining something (synonym: repression, antonym: encouragement)
- Ideological – related to a set of beliefs or ideas (synonym: doctrinal, antonym: practical)
- Cohesion – unity or togetherness (synonym: solidarity, antonym: fragmentation)
- Vacuum – an empty space or absence of something (synonym: void, antonym: presence)
- Entrenched – firmly established and difficult to change (synonym: rooted, antonym: unstable)

KABUL-TTP TIES OVERSHADOW TALKS

Author: Abbas Nasir

Summary:

The article looks into the fragile and complex relationship between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban, particularly concerning the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It discusses recent diplomatic efforts in Doha and Istanbul to halt cross-border attacks carried out by the TTP from Afghan territory. The author highlights that while Pakistan has used military force, including aerial strikes deep into Afghanistan, these measures only led to temporary ceasefires. The Afghan Taliban's deep ideological affinity with the TTP has made Pakistan's demands for curbing their activities difficult to achieve. Despite hopes that the Haqqani group within the Taliban would restrain the TTP, the opposite has occurred, as attacks against Pakistani forces have increased. The Taliban's internal unity, ideological solidarity with the TTP, and reluctance to act against their "brothers in arms" have rendered diplomatic efforts fragile and uncertain.

The writer shows the irony of Pakistan's situation: the very militants once nurtured by its security establishment have now become its Achilles heel. He underscores that Pakistan's expectation of leverage over the Taliban has proven misguided, leaving the state vulnerable to the same forces it helped cultivate decades ago during the Afghan war. The article questions whether international mediators like Qatar, Turkiye, and Saudi Arabia have the capacity to influence Kabul's stance and wonders if diplomatic recognition or economic incentives could prompt a shift. The article closes with a sharp reminder that Pakistan must revise and implement its National Action Plan without delay. Beyond negotiations, it must confront the extremism it once fostered, seeking a true antidote to the ideological virus it helped spread. The article reflects how short-sighted policies can turn allies into adversaries.

Overview:

The article captures Pakistan's ongoing struggle to manage its turbulent ties with the Afghan Taliban and the TTP. The article exposes the paradoxes of Pakistan's past policies and their devastating consequences today. The article moves fluidly between military action, diplomacy, and ideology, highlighting a state trapped in the web of its own past choices. The narrative is not merely an account of failed talks but a broader warning against the cyclical nature of extremism and political opportunism. It suggests that unless Pakistan learns from history, it risks repeating the same costly mistakes.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's intricate struggle with the Afghan Taliban and the TTP, exposing how historical miscalculations have come full circle. The Author points out that Pakistan's military strikes and diplomatic efforts in Doha and Istanbul have only achieved temporary ceasefires, as the Afghan Taliban remain ideologically aligned with the TTP. The author underscores the irony that Pakistan once supported these militant factions to secure influence in Afghanistan, yet they have now turned into its greatest internal threat. He explains that the Haqqani group's dominance in the Taliban's defence and interior ministries has failed to restrain the TTP, resulting instead in a rise in cross-border attacks. The article also notes that international mediators such as Qatar, Turkiye, and Saudi Arabia are attempting to stabilize talks, but their ability to influence the Taliban remains limited. The article stresses that Pakistan must stop relying on external actors and instead strengthen its domestic counterterrorism strategy by fully implementing the National Action Plan. The Author warns that the extremism once cultivated to serve

geopolitical aims has now become an ideological virus that threatens Pakistan's stability, urging the state to find its own antidote through policy reform, self-accountability, and a break from the past mindset of "good versus bad Taliban."

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, internal security, and counterterrorism policy
- Current Affairs – Regional diplomacy, extremism, and national security
- International Relations – Role of mediators in conflict resolution and regional geopolitics
- Strategic Studies – The implications of militant sanctuaries and ideological warfare

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Afghanistan are holding talks to stop TTP fighters from attacking Pakistan from across the border. Pakistan has tried using force, but it has not worked because the Afghan Taliban and the TTP share the same ideology and friendship built during the war against the US. Pakistan once supported some of these groups, hoping they would protect its western border but now they have turned against it. The writer points out that other countries like Qatar and Turkiye are trying to help both sides find peace, but real progress is still uncertain. For example, even after the Doha agreement, attacks like the one in Hangu continued. The Author suggests that Pakistan should focus on its own counterterrorism plan called the National Action Plan instead of relying on others to control the situation.

Facts and Figures:

- Talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan were first held in Doha and later shifted to Istanbul.
- The Afghan Taliban's defence and interior ministries are controlled by the Haqqani faction.
- Thousands of Pakistanis have lost their lives in TTP-led terror attacks.
- Over 20 years of Pakistan's support to Afghan militant networks have now backfired.
- The National Action Plan was introduced in 2014 and revised in 2021.

To sum up, The article reminds that history often returns with a heavy price when its lessons are ignored. The analysis exposes the peril of policies rooted in short-term gains and ideological blindness. The writer compels readers to reflect on the bitter irony of Pakistan's situation, where old allies have become its fiercest enemies. He urges a shift from military fixes to intellectual and strategic renewal, warning that no nation can outgun the extremism it once nurtured. Only by confronting the roots of its own contradictions can Pakistan move toward lasting peace and reclaim control over its destiny.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Ceasefire – A suspension of fighting between opposing sides (synonym: truce, antonym: conflict)
- Ideological – Related to ideas or beliefs forming a political or social system (synonym: doctrinal, antonym: practical)
- Affinity – A natural liking or sympathy for something or someone (synonym: connection, antonym: aversion)
- Dilemma – A situation requiring a difficult choice (synonym: predicament, antonym: solution)
- Antagonise – To make someone hostile (synonym: provoke, antonym: pacify)
- Leverage – The power to influence outcomes (synonym: advantage, antonym: weakness)
- Irony – A contrast between expectation and reality (synonym: paradox, antonym: sincerity)

CHINA BUILDS SPACE ALLIANCES IN AFRICA AS TRUMP CUTS FOREIGN AID

Summary:

China's growing space alliances across Africa mark a pivotal moment in the 21st-century space race where technology, diplomacy, and strategy converge. Through projects like Egypt's Space City, Beijing is extending its influence under the guise of partnership and development. While African countries celebrate China's generous transfers of satellites, telescopes, and training, the fine print reveals that Beijing retains access to important surveillance data and maintains a constant presence in these facilities. Egypt's flagship satellite, MisrSat-2, though assembled locally, was largely built and launched in China, reflecting dependence rather than autonomy. This partnership underscores China's strategy of embedding itself within the technological infrastructure of developing nations to secure global leverage. Meanwhile, the United States once dominant in space diplomacy finds itself receding from the African scene as its foreign aid contracts and coordination falters, creating a vacuum China is eager to fill.

The article goes beyond the surface of scientific cooperation as it exposes how Beijing's space ambitions mirror its broader geopolitical aspirations. With 23 bilateral space partnerships across Africa and an eye on future moon bases, China is rewriting the rules of global power through its mastery of orbital technology. Its soft power narrative such as "no country left behind" masks a strategic bid for surveillance access and influence over military communications networks. Washington's inability to counter this expansion effectively has raised alarms in the Pentagon, which views these projects as potential security threats. Yet many African nations, weary of unfulfilled Western promises, are turning to Beijing's open checkbook and rapid delivery. As the moon becomes the next frontier of allegiance, this new cosmic rivalry reflects not just a contest for space, but for the hearts, data, and loyalties of nations on Earth.

Overview:

This article reveals how China's space diplomacy in Africa is reshaping global alliances. It shows that Beijing's strategy blends science with statecraft—merging economic investment, military advantage, and soft power influence. While the United States appears slow to respond, China's well-coordinated outreach in Africa is strengthening its position as a rising space power and redefining international relations in the process.

NOTES:

The article underlines China's calculated expansion into Africa's space sector as a blend of science, strategy, and soft power. It highlights projects like Egypt's Space City and the MisrSat-2 satellite as emblematic of Beijing's long-term plan to embed itself within Africa's technological and defence infrastructure. While African nations welcome the cooperation as a path to modernization, the deeper reality reveals China's continued control over surveillance data and system operations, ensuring its strategic foothold. The article traces China's 23 bilateral space partnerships across Africa, which have not only deepened technological interdependence but also reshaped geopolitical dynamics in the region. Simultaneously, it observes that the United States has lost its former dominance in space diplomacy due to dwindling aid and reduced engagement, allowing China to seize the narrative of partnership and progress. Through generous funding, rapid project delivery, and a compelling "no country left behind"

narrative, China is positioning itself as a benevolent yet dominant force, pursuing both prestige and power in equal measure. The article concludes that this growing space collaboration signifies a broader shift in the global order, where influence is no longer confined to Earth's borders but extends to the stars, reflecting a new form of 21st-century rivalry between superpowers.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations – Emerging global powers and geopolitical competition
- Current Affairs – Technology, diplomacy, and the new space race
- Pakistan Affairs – Implications of China's expanding influence for Pakistan's regional strategy
- Science and Technology – Space exploration and international cooperation

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that China is working with African countries like Egypt to build satellites and space facilities, but the technology mostly comes from China itself. This means that while Africa appears to be developing its own space programs, China still controls the core systems and data. For example, Egypt's MisrSat-2 satellite was assembled locally but built and launched in China. The United States once a leader in helping developing countries with technology has reduced its support, giving China an open field to expand. In simple terms, China is using space projects to strengthen friendships and increase its influence, much like lending someone tools but keeping the key to the toolbox.

Facts and Figures:

- China has established 23 bilateral space partnerships across Africa.
- Egypt's \$72 million MisrSat-2 satellite was assembled in Cairo but built and launched in China.
- China has pledged \$50 billion in loans and investments for African space and technology projects over the next three years.
- The U.S. currently operates only one NASA ground station in Africa, built in South Africa.
- China aims to become the world's leading space power by 2045, with plans to build a moon base and nuclear-powered spacecraft.

To wrap up, the article unveils a new era in global politics where the race for space mirrors the race for influence on Earth. China's growing footprint in Africa's space sector is not merely about science; it's about power, presence, and persuasion. As nations reach for the stars, their alliances on Earth are being redrawn. The dawn of this cosmic rivalry reminds the world that every satellite launched carries more than data—it carries ambition, strategy, and a vision of who will shape the future from above.

ACCOUNTABILITY ACROSS BORDERS

Summary:

The article shows Pakistan's mounting frustration with Afghanistan's unwillingness to curb cross-border terrorism. It powerfully captures Islamabad's growing impatience as it continues to lose innocent lives to militant attacks launched from Afghan soil. The writer underscores that Pakistan's stance is not one of hostility but a call for responsibility, urging Kabul to act as a partner in peace rather than an idle spectator. Afghanistan's diplomatic maneuvers including its tilt toward India are seen as distractions that neither change the facts on the ground nor absolve it of accountability. The article argues that exporting terror is not diplomacy but a blatant violation of sovereignty, and Pakistan reserves every right to safeguard its territory and people against such aggression.

The writer further emphasizes that Pakistan has long extended an olive branch—advocating dialogue, tightening border controls, and maintaining composure despite constant provocations. Yet patience has its limits. True stability in South Asia hinges on cooperation, not denial or blame-shifting. The editorial warns Afghanistan that peace cannot be imported nor sustained through political theatrics or selective friendships. Unless Kabul dismantles terror networks within its borders, it risks international isolation. On the other hand Pakistan must continue to assert its sovereignty with prudence and resolve.

Overview:

This article highlights Pakistan's diplomatic and security stance toward Afghanistan, emphasizing the need for accountability in cross-border terrorism. It calls for responsible state behavior, mutual respect, and regional collaboration to ensure lasting peace in South Asia. The editorial also underscores that Pakistan's restraint should not be misconstrued as weakness.

NOTES:

The article focuses on Pakistan's growing discontent over Afghanistan's failure to curb cross-border terrorism, which continues to claim innocent Pakistani lives. Pakistan urges Kabul to act responsibly and dismantle militant networks operating from its territory. Despite repeated diplomatic efforts, including peace overtures, strengthened border management, and calls for cooperation, Afghanistan's government appears unwilling to address the issue seriously, often deflecting blame or engaging in political theatrics. The article stresses that exporting terror cannot be disguised as diplomacy and that such behavior undermines Afghanistan's credibility on the global stage. Pakistan's patience though admirable but has limits and its restraint should not be mistaken for weakness. The writer emphasizes that true regional peace depends on mutual accountability and genuine collaboration not on hollow statements or shifting alliances. The article ultimately warns that if Afghanistan fails to take concrete action, it risks isolation, while Pakistan must continue defending its sovereignty with prudence and resolve.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign Policy of Pakistan, Pak-Afghan Relations, and Security Challenges
- Current Affairs: Counterterrorism, Regional Stability, and Cross-Border Conflicts
- International Relations: Sovereignty, Non-State Actors, and Regional Peace Mechanisms

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is frustrated with Afghanistan for not stopping militants who attack across the border. Pakistan has asked Afghanistan many times to cooperate in maintaining peace, but Kabul often denies the issue or blames others. Pakistan's government insists that its approach is defensive, not aggressive and aims to protect its people from terrorism. The writer urges Afghanistan to act responsibly, destroy terrorist bases within its land, and prove that it wants genuine peace. For example, Pakistan's past calls for border security and dialogue show its desire for stability, but without Afghanistan's cooperation, regional peace remains a distant dream.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has lost hundreds of lives in recent cross-border terror attacks from Afghan soil.
- The Foreign Office's statement marks one of the strongest diplomatic responses in 2025.
- Pakistan and Afghanistan share a 2,600 km border, making security coordination crucial.
- Pakistan has repeatedly provided humanitarian and trade support to Afghanistan despite tensions.

To sum up, the article reminds both nations that peace is a shared enterprise built on trust, not blame. Pakistan's measured firmness stands as a lesson in principled diplomacy—assertive yet restrained, resolute yet reasonable. Without mutual accountability, South Asia's dream of lasting peace will remain a mirage shimmering on the horizon.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Accountability – responsibility for actions; Synonym: answerability; Antonym: irresponsibility
- Sovereignty – supreme authority of a state; Synonym: autonomy; Antonym: subjugation
- Deflect – to divert or shift away; Synonym: evade; Antonym: confront
- Evasion – the act of avoiding something; Synonym: avoidance; Antonym: engagement
- Provocation – an action that incites response; Synonym: incitement; Antonym: pacification

A DANGEROUS COLLISION

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article captures the volatile tension between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban following one of the fiercest border clashes in recent memory. Pakistan's air and ground forces targeted militant hideouts inside Afghanistan after deadly attacks on its border posts, reportedly killing dozens of fighters and leaders of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The Taliban retaliated, claiming heavy Pakistani casualties and condemning the strikes as an assault on Afghan sovereignty. The author argues that Pakistan's patience has run thin due to Kabul's refusal to act against TTP sanctuaries, despite Islamabad's repeated warnings and evidence. This escalation has brought bilateral relations to their lowest point since the Taliban's return to power, freezing cross-border trade and halting diplomatic engagement. The situation worsened as Afghanistan's foreign minister visited India, strengthening New Delhi-Kabul ties and fuelling Islamabad's fears of a renewed strategic alignment against Pakistan.

Beyond the immediate clashes, the article takes a hard look at Pakistan's internal security flaws. The Author asserts that the roots of militancy lie not only across the border but also within Pakistan's own inconsistent counterterrorism policies. He criticizes the state's short-sighted decision to allow TTP fighters

back without preconditions and highlights the political instability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan as fertile ground for extremist resurgence. The trust gap between locals and security institutions has deepened, weakening Pakistan's fight against militancy. The author concludes that lasting peace cannot be achieved through airstrikes alone. Without political stability, public trust, and a coherent long-term strategy, Pakistan risks perpetuating a vicious cycle of violence where the guns may fall silent for a while but never for good.

Overview: The article highlights Pakistan's growing security dilemma marked by escalating tensions with Afghanistan and internal policy failures. It examines how regional alignments, weak governance, and political disunity have compounded the threat of terrorism and hindered sustainable peace.

NOTES:

The article underscores the intensifying hostilities between Pakistan and Afghanistan following one of the deadliest border clashes in years. Pakistan's air and ground operations targeted militant strongholds inside Afghan territory after a series of cross-border attacks killed several Pakistani soldiers. Kabul condemned these strikes as a violation of Afghan sovereignty, while Pakistan justified them as a necessary response to the Afghan Taliban's continued sheltering of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). This confrontation not only halted trade and diplomatic exchanges but also marked the lowest point in bilateral relations since the Taliban's return to power. Further fueling tensions, Afghanistan's foreign minister's visit to India was seen by Islamabad as a strategic tilt that could strengthen anti-Pakistan alignments in the region. The article also critically examines Pakistan's internal failings, arguing that the country's inconsistent counterterrorism approach, political turmoil in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and the controversial decision to reintegrate TTP militants without clear conditions have all undermined its fight against extremism. The Author stresses that the roots of militancy extend beyond Afghanistan and are deeply entangled with Pakistan's domestic instability and policy inconsistency. The trust deficit between local communities and state institutions has worsened, allowing extremist elements to exploit these divisions. The writer concludes that sustainable peace requires more than military might such as it demands political coherence, institutional reform, and regional diplomacy aimed at rebuilding trust and stability on both sides of the border.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, counterterrorism policy, political instability in KP and Balochistan
- Current Affairs: Regional security and diplomacy in South Asia
- International Relations: Cross-border militancy, India-Afghanistan-Pakistan triangle, regional power dynamics

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan and Afghanistan recently clashed after militants from Afghan territory attacked Pakistani soldiers. In response, Pakistan carried out airstrikes on Taliban hideouts inside Afghanistan. Both sides suffered casualties, and the border was closed, halting trade. The problem deepened because Afghanistan refused to take action against Pakistani Taliban (TTP) hiding within its borders. The writer argues that Pakistan should not only focus on military strikes but also fix its internal weaknesses, such as political instability in KP and Balochistan, which help militants grow stronger. For

example, when the TTP fighters were allowed back without conditions, it worsened the security situation. The article suggests that peace requires trust between the people and the government, not just weapons and operations.

Facts and Figures:

- 23 Pakistani troops martyred in recent clashes
- 200 Taliban and affiliated militants reportedly killed (ISPR)
- 8 border posts destroyed in crossfire
- Trade routes between Pakistan and Afghanistan closed temporarily
- Afghan foreign minister visited India during border escalation

Final Words:

This article serves as a stark reminder that Pakistan's war against militancy cannot be won by force alone. The battlefields may fall silent, but the deeper conflict—rooted in mistrust, poor governance, and political discord—continues to simmer. Unless Pakistan builds internal unity, strengthens civilian institutions, and pursues genuine regional diplomacy, peace will remain an illusion, and each border clash will only bring the nation back to the same dangerous collision.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Skirmish – a brief and unplanned fight; Synonym: clash; Antonym: truce
- Retaliate – to respond to an attack; Synonym: strike back; Antonym: forgive
- Sovereignty – the authority of a state to govern itself; Synonym: autonomy; Antonym: dependence
- Incursion – an attack or invasion; Synonym: assault; Antonym: retreat
- Existential – relating to existence or survival; Synonym: vital; Antonym: trivial

PAK-SAUDI ALLIANCE

Author: Moazzam Husain

Summary:

The article highlights Pakistan's emerging strategic and economic partnership with Saudi Arabia, following the 2025 Pakistan-Saudi mutual defence pact. The writer argues that this pact is not just a military alliance but a rare opportunity for Pakistan to align its security and economic goals. He proposes the creation of a "Military-Industrial Vector" (MIV) a joint enterprise merging Saudi Arabia's financial muscle, Vision 2030 ambitions, and investment in innovation with Pakistan's defense expertise and production capacity. This partnership could transform both nations into leaders in co-producing aircraft, drones, and defense technology for global markets. The author sees this model as a path to economic revival for Pakistan through export-led growth, while enabling Saudi Arabia to reduce dependence on oil and localize over half its defense spending.

At a deeper level, the article emphasizes that the MIV's true value lies in promoting innovation and strategic independence. Through joint research funds, both nations can co-develop advanced technologies like AI-driven warfare systems and satellite networks that can later benefit civilian sectors from flood monitoring in Pakistan to precision agriculture across the Gulf. The writer believes that this collaboration could discipline Pakistan's industrial planning by connecting capital, technology, and markets under one strategic framework. By complementing Pakistan's technical expertise with Saudi resources, both nations

can carve a new regional power axis and establish sustainable prosperity. If executed with clear intent and long-term vision, this alliance could not only reshape Pakistan's economy but also redefine regional industrial and technological landscapes.

Overview:

This article explores the Pakistan-Saudi mutual defence pact as a potential turning point that merges Pakistan's economic aspirations with its defense capabilities. It proposes an industrial framework that integrates technology, innovation, and strategic cooperation, laying the foundation for both nations to achieve long-term self-reliance and regional influence.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's evolving partnership with Saudi Arabia under the 2025 mutual defence pact, portraying it as a historic chance for Pakistan to align its economic and security interests. It emphasizes that this pact can go beyond military cooperation by introducing a Military-Industrial Vector (MIV) — a joint framework combining Saudi Arabia's financial strength, Vision 2030 ambitions, and technological innovation with Pakistan's defense expertise and production capabilities. This initiative can boost Pakistan's export-led growth, particularly through co-production of aircraft, drones, and defense technologies. The author further underscores the significance of innovation-driven collaboration where both nations can jointly develop advanced technologies like AI-powered defense systems, satellites, and data networks that would serve not only military purposes but also civilian needs such as flood management and agriculture. The article argues that such cooperation can discipline Pakistan's industrial planning, connect its capital and markets, and promote long-term strategic independence. It concludes that if implemented effectively, this alliance could reshape the regional industrial landscape, strengthen Pakistan's economic foundations, and transform both countries into global players in the defense and technology sectors.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic planning, Pakistan-Saudi relations, industrial development, and defense cooperation
- Current Affairs: Regional alliances, Vision 2030, defense economics, and technological collaboration
- International Relations: Strategic partnerships, economic diplomacy, and regional power blocs

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a defense agreement that could help both nations grow stronger economically and militarily. Pakistan, which has advanced expertise in making defense equipment, can work with Saudi Arabia, which has huge financial resources to create new industries that make aircraft, drones, and other technologies. For example, Pakistan's experience with the JF-17 fighter jet shows it can succeed in global defense markets. Together, both countries can also create technologies that help in peaceful fields like satellite communication, agriculture, and disaster management. The idea is that Saudi Arabia will provide investment and Pakistan will offer expertise, creating long-term benefits for both nations.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan-Saudi mutual defence pact signed in September 2025

- \$4.6 billion JF-17 aircraft export deal with Azerbaijan in 2025
- Saudi Arabia plans to localize over 50% of its military spending
- Pakistan's Defence Export Promotion Organisation and Aeronautical Complex identified as key operational anchors
- Saudi Public Investment Fund and General Authority for Military Industries to provide financial backing

To sum up, The article shows a transformative alliance that can turn Pakistan's economic ambitions into reality through strategic cooperation with Saudi Arabia. It envisions a future where security and prosperity walk hand in hand, powered by technology, innovation, and shared purpose. If pursued with consistency and foresight, this partnership could mark the dawn of a new industrial era, turning Pakistan from a consumer of defense products into a global producer, and from an economic struggle into a strategic innovator in the region.

EAST ALLIANCE

Summary:

The article highlights the growing rapprochement between Pakistan and Bangladesh, marking a refreshing shift from decades of diplomatic chill to a renewed era of cooperation. What began as a cautious reopening of communication has blossomed into a multidimensional partnership in trade, culture, linguistics, and education. It revives the shared historical bond between the two nations. The author emphasizes that while these cultural and economic connections serve as a solid foundation, the real measure of lasting friendship lies in strengthening military collaboration. The recent visit of General Sahir Shamshad Mirza to Bangladesh where he met military and political leadership including Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus signifies the seriousness of this engagement. This revival is not merely symbolic; it hints at strategic recalibration in South Asia, where Pakistan's military experience and Bangladesh's modernization aspirations converge.

Furthermore, the article points out that Pakistan's established defence capability, particularly its air force's track record against larger adversaries, positions it as a valuable partner for Bangladesh's military modernization. Reports suggesting Dhaka's potential interest in Chinese aircraft models such as the J-10C, already in use by Pakistan, reflect an evolving alignment that could reshape regional dynamics. The writer notes that while this development may unsettle India, it offers South Asia a chance for a more balanced power structure rooted in mutual respect and collaboration. Therefore, the emerging Pakistan-Bangladesh partnership not only signals strategic maturity but also opens the door for regional stability free from unilateral dominance and guided instead by shared interests and sovereign equality.

Overview:

This article provides a clear and forward-looking analysis of how Pakistan and Bangladesh are moving beyond the shadows of history to rebuild a pragmatic alliance. The author shows their cooperation as a timely and necessary evolution in South Asian geopolitics, stressing that defence collaboration can become the cornerstone of enduring regional peace and stability.

NOTES:

The article emphasizes the growing partnership between Pakistan and Bangladesh, marking a shift from decades of political estrangement to renewed cooperation built on trade, culture, and military collaboration. It highlights how Pakistan's military experience, particularly its air force's proven capability, positions it as a strong ally in Bangladesh's pursuit of defence modernization. The visit of General Sahir Shamshad Mirza to Dhaka and his meetings with top military officials and Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus symbolize the revival of trust and engagement at the highest level. The discussion about Bangladesh's potential interest in acquiring Chinese aircraft like the J-10C, already operated by Pakistan, shows strategic convergence that could redefine South Asia's balance of power. The article also notes that while India may feel challenged by this development, such cooperation paves the way for a more balanced and peaceful regional order grounded in sovereignty and mutual respect.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations – Regional Cooperation and Balance of Power in South Asia
- Current Affairs – Pakistan's Foreign Policy and Defence Diplomacy
- Pakistan Affairs – Evolution of Pakistan's Relations with Bangladesh
- Strategic Studies – Defence Modernization and Regional Security Framework

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how Pakistan and Bangladesh once divided by bitter history are finding new ground for friendship through education, trade, and especially military cooperation. This means they are learning to work together again in ways that help both nations grow stronger and safer. For example, Pakistan's air force experience can help Bangladesh upgrade its defence system, while Bangladesh can share its expertise in trade and development. Together, they can create a balance in South Asia that reduces tension and increases cooperation.

Facts and Figures:

- General Sahir Shamshad Mirza's visit to Bangladesh represents the highest-level military contact between the two countries in recent years.
- Pakistan's air force has been cited as a model of resilience and tactical excellence against larger adversaries.
- Bangladesh is reportedly considering the Chinese J-10C aircraft, already part of Pakistan's air fleet, signaling alignment in defence procurement.
- Enhanced military cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh could contribute to a more balanced power dynamic in South Asia, reducing India's regional dominance.

To wrap up, the article captures a turning point in Pakistan-Bangladesh relations — a moment when shared history is being transformed into shared purpose. By moving from estrangement to engagement, both nations are scripting a new chapter in South Asia's political narrative, one where partnership replaces rivalry and mutual progress triumphs over past grievances.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Rapprochement – the re-establishment of friendly relations (synonym: reconciliation, antonym: hostility)

- Hegemony – dominance or control by one state over others (synonym: supremacy, antonym: equality)
- Recalibration – adjustment or rebalancing of a strategy (synonym: realignment, antonym: rigidity)
- Resilient – able to withstand or recover quickly (synonym: robust, antonym: fragile)
- Sovereignty – the full right of a nation to govern itself (synonym: autonomy, antonym: dependency)

THE US-CHINA STRATEGIC MATURITY

Author: M A Hossain

Summary:

The article portrays the shifting balance of global power through the prism of U.S.-China relations, capturing how trade wars have evolved into tests of strategic maturity rather than mere economic disputes. It describes how Washington's reliance on tariffs under the Trump administration, now entrenched in policy, has failed to yield desired results, increasing costs for Americans while leaving trade deficits unchanged. Instead of succumbing to pressure, China has used the confrontation to strengthen its resolve—diversifying markets, investing in domestic innovation, and cultivating resilience against external shocks. The article argues that America's punitive approach reflects a crisis of confidence, mistaking coercion for strategy and alienating allies who see U.S. policy as erratic and self-serving. Meanwhile, China's patient and calculated restraint has turned adversity into advantage, reinforcing its role as a stable player in a fragmented world order.

The writer maintains that the real challenge for both powers lies not in economic supremacy but in demonstrating strategic foresight. He contends that Washington must move beyond zero-sum politics and rediscover the art of diplomacy anchored in reciprocity, realism, and respect. He notes the Switzerland talks are more than a negotiation. They are a referendum on how the United States perceives its global role: a self-assured leader capable of constructive engagement or a defensive power consumed by electoral calculations. The article concludes that progress in one domain must not be held hostage to conflicts in another. Only through maturity, trust-building, and disentangling politics from policy can both sides prevent rivalry from sliding into ruin and shape a cooperative international order grounded in stability and vision.

Overview:

This article reflects the deteriorating yet indispensable relationship between the world's two largest economies. It warns that without wisdom and restraint, both nations risk undermining global stability. The author underlines the need for pragmatic diplomacy, where competition coexists with cooperation, and national pride gives way to shared responsibility for the global order.

NOTES:

The article emphasizes the growing complexity of U.S.-China relations, where economic rivalry has transformed into a broader struggle for global influence and credibility. It highlights how Washington's overreliance on tariffs once aimed at correcting trade imbalances has backfired, increasing domestic costs and alienating allies, while China has adapted with resilience by diversifying trade routes, strengthening technological self-sufficiency, and showing strategic patience instead of retaliation. The writer

underscores that America's approach reflects a lack of coherent policy and strategic confidence, mistaking punishment for progress. In contrast, Beijing's restraint coupled with long-term planning positions it as a more stable actor in the global system. The article stresses that for genuine progress, both nations must decouple trade policy from political disputes and adopt realism and reciprocity in negotiations. The upcoming Switzerland talks are framed as a decisive test of Washington's global vision whether it can act as a confident leader promoting cooperative diplomacy or remain trapped in reactive policymaking driven by domestic politics. The author ultimately calls for strategic maturity, trust-building, and pragmatic engagement to prevent economic competition from escalating into global instability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations – Strategic competition and global economic diplomacy
- Current Affairs – U.S.-China relations and the impact of trade wars
- International Political Economy – Economic nationalism and globalization challenges
- Pakistan Affairs – Implications of major power rivalries for regional stability

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the United States and China are locked in a complicated relationship where both need each other yet compete for influence. The U.S. has imposed heavy taxes on Chinese goods, hoping to fix trade issues, but this has mostly hurt its own consumers instead. Instead of giving in China has worked harder to become self-reliant and expand its trade with other countries. The writer suggests that both sides should avoid mixing politics with trade and find common ground through discussion and patience. For example, reducing tariffs step by step while ensuring fair trade could help both nations rebuild trust and avoid global economic instability.

Facts and Figures:

- Tariffs imposed since 2018 have raised costs for the average American household by about \$1,300 per year.
- U.S. tariff rates on certain goods have reached as high as 145%.
- The U.S. trade deficit with China remains significant despite rerouting imports through Vietnam and Mexico.
- China continues to invest heavily in strategic sectors like semiconductors and artificial intelligence.

To put it simply, the article captures the essence of a defining moment in world politics when rivalry must give way to responsibility. It calls upon both Washington and Beijing to show restraint and wisdom, for true power lies not in confrontation but in the ability to coexist and cooperate. The message resonates beyond economics: maturity in strategy is the foundation of peace, and progress depends not on dominance but on dialogue that shapes a fair and stable global order.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Fragmented – divided or broken into parts (synonym: disjointed, antonym: unified)
- Capitulation – surrender under agreed conditions (synonym: submission, antonym: resistance)
- Punitive – intended to punish (synonym: disciplinary, antonym: lenient)
- Decoupling – separation of interconnected systems (synonym: disengagement, antonym: integration)

AFTER SO MUCH SHARED HISTORY, CONTINUING PAK-AFGHAN CLASHES ARE TRAGIC INDEED

Author: Javed Hafeez

Summary:

The article recalls how Pakistan once stood shoulder to shoulder with Afghanistan, helping dislodge Soviet forces and later hosting millions of Afghan refugees and Taliban families. When the Taliban returned to power in 2021, Islamabad anticipated peace and regional connectivity but was instead met with renewed hostility. The article explains that Pakistan's inclusive democracy, which values modern education and gender equality, cannot coexist with the Taliban's tribal and rigid ideology. The distinction once believed to exist between the Afghan Taliban and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has now faded, revealing two movements united in ideology but divided by geography.

The author notes that the insurgency in Pakistan's border districts, though decades old, has intensified as the TTP continues to attack Pakistan's defense forces, rejecting modernity and women's participation in society. Despite Pakistan's repeated diplomatic efforts, Kabul's reluctance to curb militancy has pushed Islamabad to the edge. The most recent Afghan attack on Pakistani border posts became the final straw, prompting a massive military response that captured 21 Afghan positions. The article commends Saudi Arabia and Qatar for swiftly mediating a ceasefire, calling it a much-needed pause in a tragic conflict between two Muslim neighbors bound by history and faith. The article urges Afghanistan's leadership to embrace cooperation over confrontation so that both nations can pursue development and prosperity.

Overview:

The article traces the collapse of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations following the Taliban's 2021 takeover, highlighting Pakistan's frustration over Kabul's inaction against cross-border terrorism. It explains how decades of support and hospitality have been repaid with aggression, testing Pakistan's patience and prompting a firm military response. The article underscores the diplomatic role of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in restoring calm, concluding that peace and stability in the region depend on mutual respect and responsible leadership.

NOTES:

The article highlights the paradox of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. The brotherly ties are strained by ideology and mistrust. Pakistan had expected cooperation and connectivity after NATO's withdrawal, but instead faced increasing attacks by the TTP, allegedly emboldened by Kabul's stance. Hafeez explains that while Pakistan's forces have repeatedly subdued the insurgency, the threat persists due to Afghanistan's failure to rein in militant elements. The Taliban's retrogressive views on education and gender equality clash sharply with Pakistan's modern democratic vision, deepening the divide. Pakistan's massive retaliation after the recent Afghan border attacks demonstrates the breaking point of its patience. The Author appreciates Saudi and Qatari diplomacy for halting the conflict and calls for a permanent peace framework based on dialogue and regional cooperation. He reminds both nations that continued hostility serves no one and that peace is the only viable path toward regional progress and shared prosperity.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, National security, Counterterrorism policy
- International Relations: Regional diplomacy, Mediation by Gulf states, South Asian geopolitics
- Current Affairs: Cross-border militancy, Taliban governance, Peace and conflict resolution

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that despite sharing religion and history, Pakistan and Afghanistan are now trapped in a cycle of mistrust. Pakistan once supported Afghanistan during wars and hoped for peace when the Taliban took over in 2021, but instead, violence increased. Afghan Taliban's influence encouraged the TTP to attack Pakistan, creating tension along the border. Pakistan tried to solve the issue peacefully but, after repeated attacks, responded militarily by capturing several Afghan posts. Saudi Arabia and Qatar then helped to stop the clashes. The writer stresses that both countries should focus on peace, trade, and development rather than fighting. For example, improving education and economic ties could bring long-term stability, while continued conflict only harms the poor on both sides.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan reportedly captured 21 Afghan border posts during its military retaliation.
- The TTP insurgency has lasted for over 20 years, causing thousands of civilian and military deaths.
- Saudi Arabia and Qatar played key roles in mediating peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Pakistan hosts more than 3 million Afghan refugees, reflecting decades of shared history and humanitarian support.

To sum up, The article reminds readers that the bonds of history and faith between Pakistan and Afghanistan are too deep to be buried under the rubble of conflict. The writer urges both nations to abandon the politics of blame and embrace diplomacy rooted in respect and shared destiny. Only through peace can these neighbors transform their turbulent border into a bridge of cooperation.

PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN ANNOUNCE 48-HOUR CEASEFIRE AFTER 'PRECISION STRIKES' ON KANDAHAR

Authors: Rehmat Mehsud & Waseem Abbasi

Summary:

The article shows Pakistan and Afghanistan's border crisis that reached its boiling point with intense clashes before both sides finally agreed to a 48-hour ceasefire. The fighting erupted when Pakistani forces launched precision strikes on Taliban strongholds in Kandahar, retaliating against coordinated assaults on border posts in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Pak-Afghan Friendship Gate was destroyed, and civilians were left stranded as both armies dug in along the frontier. The skirmishes followed the killing of 23 Pakistani soldiers and 58 Afghan troops in previous confrontations, plunging relations between Islamabad and Kabul into one of their lowest ebbs since the Taliban's takeover. Pakistan accused Kabul of harboring militants from the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), while the Afghan regime denied the allegations. The situation grew even more volatile as Afghanistan's foreign minister visited India, sparking fears in Islamabad of a widening regional threat.

The ceasefire brokered at the Taliban's request aims to provide a brief window for dialogue. Yet, beneath this fragile truce lies a deep mistrust that refuses to fade. Pakistan's military claimed to have destroyed

multiple Taliban posts and tanks, killing dozens of fighters, while Afghan officials reported civilian casualties, further muddying the narrative. Both sides continue to trade barbs, with Pakistan accusing Kabul and New Delhi of backing TTP-linked militants, a claim both reject. The article shows the irony of two neighboring Muslim countries locked in hostility while regional powers like Saudi Arabia urge restraint. As cross-border trade remains frozen and 800,000 Afghans already deported, the crisis stands as a grim reminder that peace built on temporary truces is no peace at all—it is merely calm before another storm.

Overview:

This article throws light on the recent cross-border flare-up between Pakistan and Afghanistan that briefly subsided after a 48-hour ceasefire. It highlights the deep-rooted mistrust, competing regional interests, and the human cost of geopolitical games, reminding readers that without genuine diplomacy, both nations risk being caught in an endless cycle of hostility and retaliation.

NOTES:

The article highlights the severe escalation of border tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan that culminated in a 48-hour ceasefire following Pakistan's precision strikes on Taliban positions in Kandahar. These strikes were carried out in retaliation for coordinated assaults on Pakistani border posts in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, resulting in significant military and civilian casualties. The destruction of the Pak-Afghan Friendship Gate and the stranding of civilians underscored the humanitarian toll of the conflict. Pakistan accused the Afghan Taliban regime of providing sanctuary to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an allegation Kabul vehemently denied. The situation further deteriorated when Afghanistan's foreign minister visited India, heightening Islamabad's concerns about regional alignment against it. Despite the ceasefire being brokered at the Taliban's request, both nations continue to trade accusations—Pakistan claiming to have destroyed Taliban posts and tanks while Kabul reported civilian deaths. With over 800,000 Afghans repatriated and cross-border trade halted, the conflict has intensified mistrust between the two neighboring Muslim countries. The article captures the irony of their continued hostility despite shared faith and geography, emphasizing that temporary truces cannot guarantee lasting peace without genuine dialogue, trust-building, and regional cooperation.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, border management, counterterrorism strategy
- Current Affairs: Regional security, foreign policy challenges
- International Relations: South Asian geopolitics, cross-border conflicts, diplomacy and conflict resolution

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains that Pakistan and Afghanistan recently agreed to stop fighting for 48 hours after heavy border clashes. Pakistan launched airstrikes on Taliban fighters in Kandahar because it accused them of attacking its border posts and helping the Pakistani Taliban (TTP). Both sides suffered heavy losses, and many civilians were caught in the middle. The temporary ceasefire is meant to create space for talks, but tensions are still high. Pakistan fears that India's growing ties with Afghanistan could threaten its security. For instance, over 800,000 Afghans have already been sent back since 2023, worsening relations. This situation shows how fragile peace can be when mistrust and politics overshadow human lives.

Facts and Figures:

- Ceasefire duration: 48 hours starting at 6 p.m.
- Pakistani soldiers killed in earlier clashes: 23
- Afghan troops killed (as claimed by Kabul): 58
- Afghan Taliban fighters killed in Pakistani strikes: 40–50 (as per ISPR)
- Afghans repatriated or deported since 2023: over 800,000
- Number of Taliban posts destroyed: 8 (as per ISPR)

To wrap up, The article shares the tragic irony of two neighboring nations caught in the crossfire of mistrust and militancy. It is a call for both Islamabad and Kabul to replace their reactive military responses with sincere diplomacy. Without addressing root causes such as terror sanctuaries, refugee tensions, and regional rivalries, the 48-hour ceasefire may only be a brief lull in a storm that continues to brew on both sides of the border.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Escalation – an increase in intensity; Synonym: intensification; Antonym: de-escalation
- Truce – an agreement to stop fighting; Synonym: ceasefire; Antonym: conflict
- Hostilities – acts of warfare; Synonym: aggression; Antonym: peace
- Repatriated – sent back to one’s country; Synonym: returned; Antonym: exiled
- Provocation – an action that causes anger; Synonym: incitement; Antonym: pacification

THE PAKISTAN-AFGHAN TALIBAN DUEL HAS REVEALED IRREPARABLE CRACKS

Author: Owais Tohid

Summary:

The relationship between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban has reached a breaking point, turning from uneasy coexistence into direct confrontation. What once seemed a diplomatic partnership built on ideological common ground has now erupted into bloodshed along the border. Pakistan accuses the Afghan Taliban of providing sanctuary to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), whose attacks have multiplied dramatically from 573 in 2021 to over 1,200 in 2023. The October 9 airstrike in Kabul, allegedly targeting TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud, sparked fierce retaliatory clashes, sharing a bitter truth: Pakistan’s long-held belief that a Taliban-led Afghanistan would serve its security interests was a grave miscalculation. The Afghan Taliban’s refusal to curb the TTP stems from deep ideological and historical bonds. The bonds forged in war, where the TTP stood shoulder to shoulder with the Taliban against U.S. and NATO forces. This duel has exposed a wider geopolitical chessboard where alliances shift like sand in a storm. As Pakistan finds itself confronting both Afghan hostility and Indian engagement in Kabul, regional dynamics grow ever more precarious. India’s re-entry into Afghanistan symbolized by the reopening of its embassy has raised alarm bells in Islamabad, already struggling to contain internal and external pressures. The Taliban, fractured by power struggles and crippled by economic collapse, remain trapped in their own web—torn between ideological loyalty and diplomatic necessity. Meanwhile, Pakistan faces the specter

of a two-front dilemma: terrorism from the west and strategic competition from the east. The Durand Line dispute, simmering since 1947 may soon resurface as a tool of political manipulation. Despite fleeting ceasefires and mediation efforts, the trust between both sides has worn thin, leaving behind wounds too deep to heal—an alliance once of convenience now consumed by its contradictions.

Overview:

The article unveils how Pakistan's expectations from the Taliban regime have crumbled under the weight of reality. Instead of bringing stability, the Taliban's rise in Afghanistan has emboldened militant networks like the TTP, aggravating Pakistan's security challenges. The writer underscores that ideological loyalty, geopolitical shifts, and economic desperation have driven Afghanistan and Pakistan into a spiral of mistrust and military hostility. The article also hints at how India's re-engagement in Kabul has deepened Pakistan's sense of encirclement.

NOTES:

The article highlights the fast-deteriorating relations between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban, which have shifted from uneasy cooperation to direct confrontation. Pakistan blames the Afghan Taliban for harboring the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a militant group responsible for hundreds of deadly attacks across Pakistan. The TTP's attacks surged from 573 in 2021 to over 1,200 in 2023, highlighting the growing threat. Tensions escalated after Pakistan's alleged airstrike in Kabul targeting TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud, which provoked fierce retaliatory assaults by Taliban forces on Pakistani military posts. The writer emphasizes that Pakistan misjudged the Taliban's ability and willingness to act against the TTP due to their ideological and historical kinship, as both groups fought alongside each other against U.S. and NATO troops. The situation has been further complicated by the Taliban's internal power struggles, economic crisis, and newfound ties with India—Pakistan's regional rival which has reopened its embassy in Kabul and seeks to expand its influence. Meanwhile, Pakistan faces daunting two-front challenges such as terrorism on its western border and diplomatic rivalry with India in the east. Despite temporary ceasefire efforts by Qatar, key crossings like Torkham and Chaman remain closed, damaging trade and deepening mistrust. The article concludes that this conflict signifies a major shift in Pakistan's foreign policy, signaling zero tolerance toward Taliban-backed militancy and revealing deep ideological and geopolitical cracks that may permanently redefine relations between the two neighbors.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs – Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, border management, foreign policy challenges.
- Current Affairs – Regional security, counterterrorism, and South Asian geopolitics.
- International Relations – Non-state actors, proxy warfare, and great-power competition in Afghanistan.

Notes for Beginners:

The tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan revolves mainly around the TTP, a militant group attacking Pakistan from Afghan soil. Pakistan once believed the Taliban would stop such attacks after taking over Kabul in 2021, but the opposite happened. The Taliban shares a deep ideological and historical connection with the TTP, making it reluctant to act against them. This has caused repeated cross-border skirmishes, airstrikes, and diplomatic fallout. Meanwhile, India's growing engagement with Afghanistan further

alarms Pakistan. The closed trade routes at Torkham and Chaman reflect how deteriorating ties affect ordinary citizens and economies on both sides.

Facts and Figures:

- TTP attacks rose from 573 in 2021 to 1,200 in 2023.
- The UN reported in 2024 that the TTP has 6,000–6,500 fighters in Afghanistan.
- India invested around \$3 billion in Afghanistan's reconstruction post-9/11.
- Temporary ceasefire brokered by Qatar, but border crossings remain closed.

To sum up, The article reflects how Pakistan's regional ambitions have backfired, turning allies into adversaries and ideological proximity into political peril. It shares the truth that in the ruthless game of regional politics, yesterday's partners can become today's foes. The Pakistan-Afghan Taliban relationship now hangs by a thread, threatened by mistrust, militant entanglements, and shifting alliances. It's a confrontation between illusion and reality, one that may reshape South Asia's strategic landscape for years to come.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Fraught – filled with tension or distress (Synonym: uneasy; Antonym: calm)
- Belligerence – aggressive or warlike behavior (Synonym: hostility; Antonym: peace)
- Porous – easily penetrable or open (Synonym: permeable; Antonym: sealed)
- Ideological bedrock – fundamental belief system (Synonym: core principle; Antonym: inconsistency)
- Vacillating – wavering between choices (Synonym: indecisive; Antonym: resolute)

AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN TENSIONS ARE STRANGLING REGIONAL PROSPERITY

Author: Dr. Vaqar Ahmed

Summary:

The article shows how persistent tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan are strangling the region's economic potential. Though a ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkiye has temporarily quieted the guns, the deep-rooted distrust between the two nations continues to erode hopes for sustainable peace. The article suggests how every clash across the Torkham and Chaman borders not only halts trade worth millions of dollars but also devastates the livelihoods of thousands who depend on daily cross-border commerce. The closures trigger inflation, spoilage of goods, and widespread unemployment, leaving nearly 55,000 people in border regions struggling to survive. Beyond these visible losses, the conflict diverts scarce funds from education, healthcare, and development toward military expenses, perpetuating poverty and stunting human capital. As schools close and aid deliveries stall, the border becomes a graveyard of opportunity where the promise of progress is buried beneath the rubble of political hostility. In its second half, the article urges both countries to seize this moment of silence as a turning point. The Author calls for trade-focused diplomacy, arguing that the path to stability lies not in militarization but in economic cooperation. He proposes the normalization of trade through digital customs clearance, the development of shared industrial zones, and the formalization of informal trade networks to boost legal revenue and job creation. He envisions the border transforming from a barrier into a bridge of shared

prosperity, where economic interdependence becomes the strongest defense against future conflict. In essence, the article reminds both nations that peace cannot grow from barbed wire, it must be built through trust, commerce, and a shared vision of regional prosperity.

Overview:

The article exposes the devastating economic fallout of Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions and emphasizes the need to pivot from militarized strategies toward economic collaboration. It underlines that regional prosperity depends on trade normalization, institutional reform, and people-to-people engagement rather than endless cycles of hostility.

NOTES:

The article highlights how persistent Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions have crippled trade, livelihoods, and regional stability. Despite a ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkiye, deep-rooted mistrust continues to undermine peace. Frequent closures of the Torkham and Chaman borders disrupt trade worth millions, inflate prices, and render nearly 55,000 border residents jobless. These conflicts divert limited resources from education, healthcare, and development toward military spending, worsening poverty and human suffering. The writer urges both governments to replace hostility with economic cooperation by normalizing trade, using digital customs clearance, and developing joint industrial zones. He argues that prosperity and peace are interlinked—turning borders into bridges of opportunity is the only sustainable path forward. The article ultimately stresses that regional progress depends on economic diplomacy, mutual trust, and a shared vision that prioritizes trade over turmoil.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – Regional cooperation and conflict management in South Asia
- Current Affairs – Pakistan-Afghanistan border conflict and trade diplomac
- Pakistan Affairs – Economic development and regional integration
- International Political Economy – The impact of security on economic growth

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Afghanistan are hurting their economies because of constant border clashes. Each time the Torkham or Chaman crossings close, thousands lose their jobs, and trade worth millions is disrupted. For example, goods like coal and agriculture products from Afghanistan and cement or textiles from Pakistan spoil or get stuck. This also pushes prices up and deepens poverty. The author suggests that both governments should focus on trade instead of military buildup by creating industrial zones and keeping borders open for commerce. When trade flows smoothly, it benefits everyone and reduces the chance of conflict.

Facts and Figures:

- Monthly Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral trade exceeds USD 300 million.
- Around USD 15 million worth of goods cross Torkham and Chaman daily.
- A single border closure affects the income of nearly 11,000 daily wage workers and about 55,000 of their dependents.
- The UN's World Food Programme has warned of worsening food insecurity in the border regions.
- The ceasefire between Pakistan and Afghanistan was brokered by Qatar and Turkiye.

To wrap up, The article reminds that peace cannot thrive amid economic ruin. The guns may have fallen silent, but unless both nations choose trade over turmoil and bridges over barriers, silence will be temporary. Prosperity and peace are two sides of the same coin. Only through shared economic growth can Pakistan and Afghanistan escape the vicious cycle of conflict and poverty that continues to haunt their future.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Ceasefire – Suspension of hostilities (Synonym: truce; Antonym: combat)
- Devastation – Severe destruction (Synonym: ruin; Antonym: restoration)
- Exacerbate – To make a problem worse (Synonym: aggravate; Antonym: alleviate)
- Fiscal – Related to government finances (Synonym: budgetary; Antonym: non-financial)
- Collateral – Secondary but related (Synonym: indirect; Antonym: primary)
- Humanitarian – Concerned with human welfare (Synonym: compassionate; Antonym: cruel)
- Revitalizing – Bringing back to life (Synonym: rejuvenating; Antonym: weakening)
- Formalize – Make official or structured (Synonym: institutionalize; Antonym: disorganize)
- Prosperity – State of success and well-being (Synonym: affluence; Antonym: poverty)
- Regressive – Moving backward or worsening (Synonym: retrogressive; Antonym: progressive)

The Express Tribune –

PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

Author: Talat Masood

Summary:

The article explores Pakistan's fragile state, gripped by political turmoil, economic stagnation, and institutional discord. The writer shows how political infighting and the absence of visionary leadership have crippled national direction, leaving Pakistan lagging behind its regional peers. The article stresses that despite frequent crises, the leadership seems unwilling to mend its ways, clinging to short-term fixes rather than long-term reform. The appointment of technocrats like Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb offers a glimmer of hope, yet the writer warns that interference and lack of political consensus could derail progress. The article also highlights that Pakistan's reliance on foreign aid particularly from the IMF has become habitual which is a crutch that weakens fiscal independence and fuels economic dependency.

The article calls for an overhaul of Pakistan's economic and educational structures, arguing that without prioritizing literacy, science, and technology, the nation will remain shackled by underdevelopment. The article emphasizes the urgency of expanding exports, rationalizing imports, and revitalizing industries to sustain growth. Moreover, the article examines the political elite's disregard for education which has left nearly a quarter of the population illiterate particularly in marginalized provinces like Balochistan and Sindh. The writer also underscores that democracy cannot flourish while the establishment overshadows civilian authority and the opposition is suppressed. The article warns that excluding PTI or ignoring democratic inclusivity could deepen alienation and instability. Ultimately, the message is clear that unless Pakistan's leaders rise above petty rivalries and embrace reform with sincerity and foresight, the country will continue to drift like a rudderless ship in turbulent seas.

Overview:

This article dissects Pakistan's multifaceted challenges, weaving together economic stagnation, educational decay, political polarization, and institutional imbalance. It underscores that genuine progress demands unity among political actors, prioritization of education, and reduction of reliance on external assistance. The author urges Pakistan's ruling class to abandon complacency and foster reform-oriented governance that ensures economic sovereignty, democratic integrity, and long-term national development.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's mounting political, economic, and institutional challenges. It shows how internal disunity and weak leadership have left the nation drifting without a clear direction. Talat Masood highlights that Pakistan's overreliance on IMF bailouts and foreign loans has turned into a chronic dependency that undermines self-sufficiency and long-term economic health. The writer stresses that political rivalries and short-term decision-making have paralyzed progress, while the dominance of the establishment over civilian institutions continues to erode democratic credibility. Despite the appointment of capable technocrats like Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, political interference and lack of consensus hinder meaningful reform. The author also explores the country's deteriorating education system, where nearly a quarter of the population remains illiterate particularly in neglected provinces like

Sindh and Balochistan, keeping Pakistan trapped in a cycle of underdevelopment. The article calls for comprehensive reform in education, industry, and governance, arguing that sustainable progress depends on unity, meritocracy, and foresight. The article concludes that unless Pakistan's leaders rise above expedient politics and prioritize national interest over personal gain, the country will remain stuck in the quagmire of instability, economic fragility, and social stagnation.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic Challenges, Political System, and Civil-Military Relations
- Current Affairs: IMF Programs, Education Policy, and Economic Reforms
- International Relations: Economic Diplomacy and Dependency Theory

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan faces serious problems because its leaders fight among themselves instead of solving national issues. The country depends too much on foreign loans like those from the IMF, which weakens its economy in the long run. The writer suggests that Pakistan can only move forward if it invests in education, especially for women, and develops industries to increase exports. For example, he points out that around 23% of Pakistan's population is still illiterate, making progress difficult. He also emphasizes that democracy can only work when all political parties including PTI are allowed to participate freely and institutions follow the constitution.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has approached the IMF 24 times for financial assistance.
- Nearly 23% of Pakistan's population remains illiterate.
- Education in rural areas of Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains severely underfunded.
- The industrial slowdown and closure of small and medium enterprises have increased unemployment.

In essence, the article reminds readers that no nation can prosper while its politics are in disarray, its economy dependent on loans, and its people deprived of education. The article urges policymakers to break free from inertia, bridge political divides, and steer Pakistan toward self-reliance, stability, and enlightened governance before the clock runs out.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Despondency – A state of low spirits; Synonym: gloom; Antonym: optimism
- Cohesion – Unity or togetherness; Synonym: solidarity; Antonym: division
- Paralyzing – Causing inability to act or progress; Synonym: crippling; Antonym: empowering
- Autonomy – Independence or self-governance; Synonym: sovereignty; Antonym: dependence
- Expediency – Convenience over morality; Synonym: pragmatism; Antonym: principle
- Ethos – The spirit or character of a community; Synonym: culture; Antonym: indifference
- Diffused – Spread or scattered; Synonym: dispersed; Antonym: concentrated
- Alienate – To make someone feel isolated; Synonym: estrange; Antonym: reconcile

PAK-US RELATIONS — A NEW BEGINNING

Author: Dr Raashid Wali Janjua

Summary:

The article examines South Asia's geopolitics where old wounds are being patched with promises of economic and strategic rebirth. The article portrays the renewed warmth between Islamabad and Washington under President Trump's second term after years of estrangement. The writer reveals this diplomatic revival as a move away from transactional dealings toward sustained cooperation in trade, security, and technology. Yet, he warns that their relationship, once a rollercoaster of shifting alliances from the Cold War to the War on Terror, continues to rest on uncertain ground. By analyzing the debates of scholars like Mearsheimer and Jeffrey Sachs, the author shows how the American outlook on China's rise indirectly reshapes Pakistan's position in the region. The author likens the evolving dynamics to a chessboard where the US seeks partners to balance power, while Pakistan, once sidelined, reclaims strategic value through economic resilience and geographic centrality.

In the second half, the article turns from theory to pragmatism. The author lays out a blueprint for partnership built not on dependence but on shared interests like counterterrorism cooperation, educational collaboration, and technology-driven growth. He sees hope in American investment in Pakistan's energy, IT, and agriculture sectors, and in corridors linking South and Central Asia that could bridge China and the US through Pakistan's soil. The narrative shows Pakistan not as a pawn in others' games but as a pivot for peace and connectivity. With 80 US firms already operating in Pakistan and competitive trade opportunities on the table, the writer urges Islamabad to seize this fleeting window before it closes. The article suggests that if Pakistan learns to turn its geography into strategy and its diplomacy into foresight, the Pak-US partnership may finally break free from the ghosts of its past and march toward a stable and productive future.

Overview:

The article highlights the recent revival of Pak-US ties. It emphasizes how the relationship is shifting from military dependence to economic cooperation. It explains how regional power politics, particularly the US-China rivalry and India's aggressive stance, have repositioned Pakistan as a potential bridge for regional peace and prosperity. The author underlines the opportunity for Pakistan to attract investment, strengthen its tech and education sectors, and forge a long-term strategic partnership with the US based on mutual respect and stability.

NOTES:

The article highlights the gradual transformation of Pak-US relations from a history of transactional military cooperation to a new era of strategic and economic partnership. The author explains that this renewed warmth, seen under President Trump's second tenure, marks a significant shift from the mistrust and dependency that once defined the alliance. He emphasizes that Pakistan's past ties with the US revolved around temporary geopolitical projects such as the Cold War, Afghan conflict, and the war on terror each ending abruptly once American interests shifted. However, the present phase is anchored in trade, technology, and peace-building rather than war or aid. The author underscores that global power politics particularly the US-China rivalry and India's assertive posture have again made Pakistan geopolitically relevant. The article also discusses Pakistan's evolving national security focus from

militarism to economics, human security, and connectivity. It presents practical avenues for cooperation in sectors like IT, hydel energy, agriculture, and education, suggesting the creation of a Pak-US IT and Education Corridor. The author views the recent US investments and tariff advantages for Pakistan as a golden opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations. He stresses that Pakistan must approach this partnership with foresight, pragmatism, and stability to avoid the cyclical breakdowns of the past. The overall message is, if Pakistan capitalizes on this diplomatic opening with strategic wisdom, it can turn its geopolitical location into an asset and emerge as a regional hub of peace and prosperity.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Foreign policy, Pak-US relations, national security and economic reforms
- Current Affairs – US-China rivalry, South Asian stability, regional connectivity
- International Relations – Strategic alliances, diplomacy, and changing global order

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how relations between Pakistan and the United States have improved under President Trump's leadership after many years of ups and downs. In the past, their friendship was based mainly on short-term needs like war cooperation. Now both countries are trying to build a long-term partnership focused on trade, education, and peace. The writer also describes how the US wants to balance China's growing power in Asia, and Pakistan's geographic position makes it an important partner again. Projects such as TAPI, CASA-1000, and other energy corridors could bring prosperity to the entire region if managed wisely. The author believes that Pakistan should use this chance to grow economically and build trust with the US through education, technology, and fair trade cooperation.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 80 US firms currently operate in Pakistan.
- Pakistan has 26 products with a competitive advantage in the US market.
- Projects like TAPI and CASA-1000 aim to link Central and South Asia through energy cooperation.
- The US had earlier shifted its focus toward the Indo-Pacific region, giving India strategic importance.
- The renewed Pak-US partnership is now based on peace, trade, and technology rather than military dependence.

To sum up, The article shows a moment of renewal in Pakistan's foreign relations. The article suggests that the future of Pak-US relations depends on vision, not nostalgia. If Pakistan plays its cards wisely, this new phase could transform it from a reactive state into a regional connector of peace and progress. The message is that Pakistan must rise beyond past dependence and turn diplomacy into development before this tide of opportunity ebbs away.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Bonhomie – friendly relationship; synonym: camaraderie; antonym: hostility
- Miasma – an unpleasant or oppressive atmosphere; synonym: cloud; antonym: clarity
- Trepidation – fear or anxiety about something; synonym: apprehension; antonym: confidence
- Hubris – excessive pride or arrogance; synonym: conceit; antonym: humility

FLOODS: HOW LONG WILL WE CONTINUE BEATING OUR CHEST?

Authors: Daud Khan & Ghasharib Shoukat

Summary:

Once again Pakistan finds itself caught in the relentless cycle of floods that sweep away lives, livelihoods, and hopes alike. This article highlights how each monsoon season brings the same old tragedies such as displaced families, dead livestock, submerged fields, and wrecked economies. Over a thousand people have perished and millions have been uprooted with losses touching \$2 billion. Despite abundant expertise, the country keeps drowning not only in water but also in negligence. The authors point out how mismanagement, encroachments, and elite manipulation have turned natural disasters into human-made catastrophes. While debates about India's role and climate change flare up, what truly sinks Pakistan is its inability to act upon lessons learned. After the 2022 floods, global pledges poured in over \$11 billion, yet the implementation ship ran aground, leaving only half the promised funds utilized. Like a broken record, promises echoed louder than progress as bureaucracy, corruption, and red tape clogged every channel meant to bring relief.

The article urges that the public sector's inefficiency must make way for collaborative frameworks with NGOs, local communities, and the private sector, who have proven their mettle in efficiency and delivery. The authors warn that unless policymakers rise above political squabbles and bureaucratic slumber, Pakistan will keep beating its chest after every deluge without ever learning to swim. The article suggests that the future remains in our hands if only we muster the courage to turn the tide and stop failing our people again.

Overview:

The article highlights Pakistan's recurring flood crises, analyzing systemic failures in governance, disaster management, and project implementation. It emphasizes misplaced priorities, lack of accountability, and dependence on external aid. The authors argue that the government's inefficiency should give way to stronger roles for NGOs, local organizations, and the private sector to rebuild resilience against future disasters.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's recurring flood disasters that repeatedly devastate lives, crops, and infrastructure while exposing the deep-rooted inefficiency within the country's governance system. It underlines that over 1,000 people have lost their lives, around three million have been displaced, and the total losses have reached \$2 billion. The floods, caused by heavy rains in northern Pakistan and Punjab, turned disastrous due to encroachments on floodplains, mismanagement, and elite interference. The authors recall the 2022 floods when the global community pledged over \$11 billion, yet only \$2.8 billion was effectively used because of bureaucratic hurdles, corruption, and poor planning. The article points to how meaningful reforms, early warning systems, and better water management strategies remain unimplemented. It stresses that the government alone cannot manage such crises, given its weak institutional capacity, frequent political meddling, and lack of technical expertise. Instead, the authors advocate involving NGOs, local communities, and the private sector, who can execute projects more efficiently and transparently. The article concludes by emphasizing that Pakistan must break free from its

cycle of lamentation and take proactive, collective action to prevent future catastrophes, reminding policymakers that the nation's future depends on courage, cooperation, and accountability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs – Governance challenges, flood management, and climate policies.
- Environmental Science – Climate change adaptation and natural disaster resilience.
- Current Affairs – International aid and Pakistan's global climate diplomacy.
- Public Administration – Institutional capacity and role of NGOs in development.

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how Pakistan's floods are not just natural disasters but reflections of administrative negligence. Despite foreign help after the 2022 floods, the money was poorly used due to inefficiency and corruption. For instance, \$11 billion was promised but only \$2.8 billion reached projects. It shows how government institutions fail to deliver because of political interference and lack of technical expertise. The authors suggest that NGOs and private sectors should take part in flood management since they work more efficiently. The key lesson is that Pakistan must shift from reactive cries for help to proactive planning and accountability.

Facts and Figures:

- 1,000 people killed and 3 million displaced
- Estimated loss: \$2 billion
- International pledges: \$11 billion (Geneva conference)
- Only \$2.8 billion of \$6.4 billion utilized for projects

To sum up, Pakistan's tragedy lies not in the floods themselves but in its failure to prepare for them. Unless we stop relying on borrowed sympathy and start fixing our house from within, every rain will rewrite the same story of despair. The time has come to rise above hollow rhetoric and build a future where resilience, not regret, defines our response to disaster.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Encroachment – Illegal occupation of land; Synonym: intrusion; Antonym: withdrawal
- Exacerbated – Made worse; Synonym: aggravated; Antonym: alleviated
- Abysmal – Extremely bad; Synonym: dreadful; Antonym: excellent
- Disbursed – Paid out funds; Synonym: allocated; Antonym: withheld
- Bureaucracy – Government system run by officials; Synonym: administration; Antonym: anarchy
- Carnage – Mass destruction or killing; Synonym: massacre; Antonym: peace
- Pledges – Promises or commitments; Synonym: assurances; Antonym: retractions

MOUNTING TERRORISM CHALLENGE AND GOVERNANCE CRISIS

Dr Syed Akhtar Ali Shah

Summary:

Pakistan's fight against terrorism has once again reached a boiling point, as revealed by the PICSS report showing a 27 percent spike in attacks during September 2025. The surge which left 77 dead and 124 injured shows state losing its grip over security. Militancy, once pushed to the wall by Operation Zarb-e-Azb, is now striking back with full force, expanding its reach from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan

to Punjab and Sindh. The article argues that each attack represents not just bloodshed but also a dent in the state's writ and credibility. The absence of a coherent policy and the hollow implementation of the National Action Plan have left the country sailing without a compass. Political bickering has taken precedence over national security, while weak law enforcement, poor border control, and lack of institutional harmony have allowed militant groups to regroup and operate freely. The situation, as the writer notes, is not a passing cloud—it is a storm gathering strength while the state looks the other way. The article highlights Pakistan's multi-layered crisis where terrorism, economic decline, and regional instability are feeding off each other like a vicious cycle. The Afghan Taliban's return to power has emboldened the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, turning cross-border terrorism into a structural challenge. Economic decay, unemployment, and inflation are giving extremists fertile ground to recruit the disillusioned youth. The author stresses that Pakistan's counterterrorism framework must be rebuilt brick by brick. It is reviving the National Action Plan with sincerity, resetting Afghan policy on pragmatic lines, and strengthening policing, intelligence, and the judiciary. He concludes with a warning that terrorism will keep returning like a recurring tide until the state finds its moral compass, unites its leadership, and reforms its institutions. Either confront the menace with clarity and resolve, or continue drifting toward chaos where non-state actors call the shots.

Overview:

The article captures Pakistan's growing terrorism challenge and the state's failure to confront it with unity and foresight. It reflects how political division, institutional decay, and regional instability have pushed Pakistan to the brink. The author calls for reviving the National Action Plan, strengthening governance, and reforming the criminal justice system, arguing that only a united and visionary approach can break this cycle of violence.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's alarming security crisis, revealing a 27 percent surge in terrorist attacks in September 2025, resulting in 77 deaths and 124 injuries. Militancy, which had previously been curbed by military operations has re-emerged strongly, expanding from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to Punjab and Sindh. The report highlights the government's failure to enforce the National Action Plan effectively, weakened law enforcement, political disunity, and poor border management as key factors behind the worsening situation. The Author argues that Pakistan's internal instability, economic deterioration, and regional tensions are fueling terrorism, while the return of the Afghan Taliban has emboldened the TTP to intensify cross-border attacks. He stresses the urgent need to rebuild the counterterrorism framework, revive the National Action Plan with sincerity, reform law enforcement and judicial institutions, and adopt a pragmatic Afghan policy. The author concludes that Pakistan's leadership must unite and act decisively as continued complacency will allow terrorism to strengthen and further undermine the state's authority and national security.

Related CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Internal security challenges, counterterrorism measures, institutional reforms
- Current Affairs: Political instability, regional terrorism, socio-economic roots of extremism
- International Relations: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, cross-border militancy, regional security

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that terrorism in Pakistan is once again on the rise, with a 27 percent increase in attacks reported in September 2025. Provinces like KP and Balochistan remain the most affected, but Punjab and Sindh are also facing growing threats. The main reason behind this resurgence is weak governance, political disunity, and the failure to properly implement the National Action Plan. The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan has allowed the TTP to regroup and launch attacks across the border. Pakistan's economic hardships such as inflation and unemployment make it easier for extremists to recruit young people. The author suggests rebuilding institutions, improving intelligence-sharing, and focusing on education and rule of law to counter extremist ideologies effectively.

Facts and Figures:

- 27% increase in terrorist attacks in September 2025 compared to August
- 77 people killed and 124 injured in 71 militant incidents
- National Action Plan introduced in 2014 remains largely unimplemented
- KP and Balochistan identified as primary epicenters of terrorism
- Economic collapse linked to rising extremism and recruitment trends

To sum up, the article makes clear that terrorism cannot be fought with bullets alone but through ideas, justice, and vision. The author reminds us that without unity, institutional strength, and consistency in policy, Pakistan will remain caught in a vicious cycle where every calm moment is only the silence before another storm. The need of the hour is not more speeches but genuine reform, so the state can reclaim its authority and lead the nation out of the shadows of fear and uncertainty.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Deteriorating – becoming worse in quality (Synonym: declining; Antonym: improving)
- Writ – authority or control (Synonym: command; Antonym: powerlessness)
- Episodic – irregular or occasional (Synonym: sporadic; Antonym: constant)
- Fragmented – divided or broken (Synonym: disjointed; Antonym: unified)
- Resurgence – revival after decline (Synonym: reappearance; Antonym: decline)

CLIMATE GOVERNANCE: POLITICS, PRETENTIONS AND PREDICAMENT

Author: Shahid Najam

Summary:

The article warns that the climate crisis has reached a point of no return due to reckless human activities and the greed-driven policies of industrialised nations. The world now hotter than ever with temperatures rising from 0.4°C to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is teetering on the edge of an ecological catastrophe. Floods, droughts, and unpredictable weather patterns have battered vulnerable countries with Pakistan standing at the epicentre of this unfolding tragedy. In just the first half of 2025, global losses touched \$162 billion while Pakistan's floods claimed over a thousand lives, wiped out millions of hectares of farmland and displaced millions. Yet, the world's major powers remain trapped in pretentious climate politics, offering hollow pledges and fragmented action plans. The writer lashes out at these nations for turning climate governance into a stage of political theatre rather than genuine reform. He reminds that the very

systems created to protect the planet—the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement—have become toothless, shackled by self-interest and consensus rules that favour the powerful.

The Author argues that climate governance must rise above bureaucratic stagnation and political expediency to embrace science-led, enforceable mechanisms. He urges Pakistan and other Global South countries to step up, form alliances, and push for reforms that replace consensus-based decisions with majority voting in global climate bodies. He calls for the creation of a robust, legally binding global framework that penalises non-compliance and ensures fair burden-sharing between rich and poor nations. At home, Pakistan must set its own house in order by bridging the gap between policies and practice, integrating government, private sector, and civil society efforts under one coherent climate strategy. The article reminds that climate change is not tomorrow's worry but today's war, one that will decide the fate of future generations unless tackled with foresight, unity, and scientific precision.

Overview:

The article highlights how the world especially developing nations like Pakistan is being pushed to the brink by climate inaction and inequitable global policies. It stresses the urgent need for a reformed, science-based global climate governance system that can enforce accountability and support climate-vulnerable countries.

NOTES:

The article emphasizes that humanity stands on the brink of environmental collapse due to greed, inaction, and policy failures. Rising global temperatures, now up to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, have triggered devastating floods, droughts, and extreme weather events. It is hitting developing nations like Pakistan the hardest. With over a thousand deaths, millions displaced, and vast agricultural losses in 2025 alone, the country symbolizes the human cost of global neglect. The writer condemns industrialized nations for treating climate negotiations as political theatre rather than a moral duty, noting that frameworks like the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement have lost their effectiveness. He advocates for replacing consensus-based decision-making with majority voting to accelerate reforms and ensure accountability. The Author insists on creating a legally binding, science-driven system to enforce fair burden-sharing between rich and poor nations. Domestically, Pakistan must strengthen policy implementation through unified efforts involving the government, private sector, and civil society. Ultimately, the article urges immediate, collective, and science-based action before climate change becomes an irreversible catastrophe.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Climate policy, environmental governance, and sustainable development in Pakistan
- Current Affairs: Global climate negotiations, South-South cooperation, and policy reforms
- International Relations: Global climate agreements, North-South divide, and diplomacy on climate justice

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the world is heating up dangerously due to human actions like burning fossil fuels and cutting forests. This has caused floods, droughts, and rising sea levels that especially hurt countries like Pakistan. For example, in 2025 Pakistan faced floods that destroyed over 12,000 houses and damaged

most of its cotton and rice crops. The writer says rich countries are not taking enough responsibility for their role in climate change and that global agreements like the Paris Agreement are not working effectively. He advises that Pakistan should work with other developing countries to create a stronger global climate system that can enforce real change, while also improving its national policies by uniting government, private sector, and local communities to fight climate change together.

Facts and Figures:

- Global losses from climate disasters in early 2025: \$162 billion
- Pakistan's 2025 floods killed 1,006 people and 6,509 livestock
- Over 2.2 million hectares of farmland destroyed
- Temperature rise since pre-industrial era: from 0.4°C to 1.5°C
- Only 13 of 195 countries submitted updated emission targets by February 2025

To wrap up, this article strikes at the conscience of global leadership and exposes the hollowness of climate politics. It demands that the world replace empty promises with decisive action grounded in science and fairness. For Pakistan, the message is clear—it can no longer afford complacency or fragmented responses. Climate change is not just an environmental issue but a national survival challenge. If Pakistan and the Global South unite, reform global systems, and strengthen domestic institutions, they may still turn the tide.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Anthropogenic – caused by human activity (Synonym: human-made; Antonym: natural)
- Deglaciation – melting of glaciers (Synonym: thawing; Antonym: freezing)
- Ominous – threatening or foreboding (Synonym: menacing; Antonym: hopeful)
- Myopic – short-sighted or narrow-minded (Synonym: limited; Antonym: farsighted)
- Dereliction – neglect of duty (Synonym: negligence; Antonym: diligence)

TALIBAN'S ILLUSION OF POWER AND THE COST OF AFGHAN DUPLICITY

Author: Durdana Najam

Summary:

The article shows the illusion of Taliban power and the heavy toll of Afghanistan's duplicity toward Pakistan. It reveals like a tale of betrayal, where Pakistan's goodwill and patience have been met with unprovoked aggression and deceit. The recent border attacks that claimed the lives of 23 Pakistani soldiers became the last straw, prompting Islamabad to send a clear message that restraint is not weakness. Pakistan's once-friendly hand has been bitten repeatedly by a regime that shelters terror groups such as TTP, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS-K, all while pretending to seek peace. The Taliban's refusal to recognize the Durand Line, its repressive domestic policies, and its growing tilt toward India reveal that its so-called "power" is an illusion sustained by chaos, not by governance.

The writer highlights a shifting regional dynamic where Pakistan, long a proponent of peace, is now forced to adopt a deterrence posture similar to India's—an irony that cuts deep. The Taliban's endorsement of India's stance on Kashmir during Foreign Minister Muttaqi's visit to New Delhi signals a new level of

betrayal. This Indo-Afghan nexus fueled by India's tactical and logistical support to anti-Pakistan militants has made Afghanistan a hub of instability. Pakistan's message is now crystal clear that friendship cannot be one-sided, and sovereignty comes with responsibility. If Kabul continues down this road of duplicity, it risks isolation and self-destruction. The time for illusions is over and the Taliban must choose between peace through accountability or ruin through arrogance.

Overview:

The article highlights the deteriorating Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship under Taliban rule. It exposes the contradictions in Kabul's foreign policy, the rise of cross-border terrorism, and the dangerous India-Afghanistan nexus undermining Pakistan's regional interests. The writer argues that Pakistan's patience has limits and warns that continued Afghan hostility will be met with a doctrine of calibrated deterrence.

NOTES:

The article explores the reality of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations under the Taliban's rule. It reveals how Kabul's duplicity and aggressive posture have strained ties beyond repair. It highlights that despite Pakistan's consistent efforts like ranging from humanitarian aid to diplomatic engagement, the Taliban have allowed Afghan soil to become a breeding ground for terrorism, sheltering groups like TTP, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS-K. The recent border attack that martyred 23 Pakistani soldiers became the breaking point, pushing Islamabad to adopt a new doctrine of calibrated deterrence, signaling that restraint should not be mistaken for weakness. The writer underscores that the Taliban's refusal to recognize the Durand Line, their suppression of women and dissent, and their deepening alignment with India expose the hollowness of their so-called "power." The endorsement of India's stance on Kashmir by the Taliban foreign minister during his visit to New Delhi further reveals their willingness to serve as a pawn in regional politics. Pakistan, once the strongest advocate of Afghan stability, now finds itself forced to protect its sovereignty through assertive means. The article stresses that friendship cannot be one-sided; Afghanistan must act responsibly, dismantle terror sanctuaries, and honor its regional commitments. Otherwise, it risks political isolation and the erosion of its already fragile legitimacy.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's foreign policy, regional relations, and border management
- Current Affairs: Counterterrorism, Indo-Afghan ties, and regional security dynamics
- International Relations: Strategic alliances, sovereignty, and South Asian geopolitics

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan and Afghanistan's relationship has worsened since the Taliban regained power in 2021. Despite Pakistan's help such as trade, aid, and diplomacy, the Taliban have allowed militants to attack Pakistan from Afghan soil. For example, in October 2025, 23 Pakistani soldiers were killed in a cross-border attack, which led Pakistan to retaliate. The Taliban's growing friendship with India and their support for anti-Pakistan groups like TTP and BLA have further damaged ties. The writer suggests that Pakistan may now respond strongly to any future aggression. Simply put, the message is that Afghanistan must act responsibly if it wants peace and international respect.

Facts and Figures:

- 23 Pakistani soldiers martyred in the October 2025 border attack
- Over 200 militants killed in Pakistan's counteraction

- Pakistan ranked 2nd most-affected country in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2025
- TTP attacks increased by 90% in 2025
- Multiple militant groups, including Al-Qaeda, ISIS-K, TTP, BLA, and BLF, operate freely in Afghanistan

To sum up, the article reveals the Taliban's illusion of power and calls out their duplicity that endangers not just Pakistan but regional peace. Pakistan's shift toward calibrated deterrence reflects a policy born out of necessity, not aggression. According to the Author sovereignty demands responsibility, and betrayal has consequences. Afghanistan now stands at a critical path: choose cooperation and peace, or persist in denial and face isolation.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Duplicity – deceitfulness or double-dealing (Synonym: deception; Antonym: honesty)
- Skirmish – a brief or minor conflict (Synonym: clash; Antonym: truce)
- Facade – a false appearance (Synonym: pretense; Antonym: reality)
- Coercion – use of force to obtain compliance (Synonym: compulsion; Antonym: consent)
- Extortion – obtaining something by threats (Synonym: blackmail; Antonym: generosity)

IMPENDING PAK-AFGHAN TALKS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Author Imtiaz Gul

Summary:

The article provides in-depth analysis of the strained Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship and the challenges that loom over the impending Doha talks. It argues that the tensions between the two neighbors have entered a dangerous phase marked by border closures, militant incursions, and the growing influence of extremist groups operating from both sides. The writer highlights how border disruptions have crippled local trade, disrupted daily life, and deepened mistrust among border communities. He draws attention to the unchecked operations of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Afghanistan and warns that the presence of such groups poses not only a national security threat to Pakistan but also a regional concern. Moreover, the rise of non-state actors like the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) within Pakistan itself is identified as an internal menace that must be confronted through the rule of law, not appeasement. He asserts that the crackdown in Muridke was necessary and long overdue, emphasizing that public safety must never be sacrificed at the altar of political expediency.

The article calls for a pragmatic and patient approach rooted in strategic foresight rather than emotional reactions. The Author warns against border closures, public humiliation of Afghans, or reactionary policies that only worsen animosities. Pakistan must maintain moral and diplomatic high ground by keeping borders open, encouraging trade, and engaging Afghanistan through dialogue and consensus with regional stakeholders. The article suggests lessons from NATO's failed war in Afghanistan to remind policymakers that military might alone cannot ensure lasting peace. Instead, the way forward lies in diplomacy, economic cooperation, and decisive action against extremist elements that have long dictated Pakistan's internal and external policies. The state must reclaim its authority, silence violent religio-political groups, and shape a foreign policy guided by law, stability, and moral integrity rather than ideology.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's evolving policy toward Afghanistan amid rising militancy, border conflicts, and internal instability. It advocates for restraint, rule of law, and regional cooperation as the foundation of a sustainable foreign policy, rejecting reactive measures and ideological decision-making.

NOTES:

The article highlights Pakistan's increasingly strained relations with Afghanistan, emphasizing how border closures, militant incursions, and the influence of extremist groups have worsened tensions. The Author points out that the activities of TTP in Afghanistan and the rise of groups like TLP within Pakistan threaten both national and regional stability. He criticizes the government's previous policy of appeasement and underscores the need for strict action through the rule of law. The closure of borders has not only disrupted trade but also deepened mistrust among the people living along the frontier. The Author urges Pakistan to adopt a balanced and patient foreign policy built on dialogue, trade, and cooperation instead of emotional or reactionary decisions. He stresses that military measures alone cannot ensure peace and that Pakistan must learn from NATO's failure in Afghanistan. According to Author, the state must reclaim its authority by dismantling violent groups, maintaining moral and diplomatic integrity, and pursuing a long-term strategy based on law, stability, and regional harmony rather than ideology or expediency.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs – Foreign policy, border management, and internal security
- Current Affairs – Extremism, counterterrorism, and regional stability
- International Relations – South Asian geopolitics and conflict resolution

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan and Afghanistan's relationship is becoming tense due to repeated border closures and militant attacks. Many extremists like TTP use Afghan soil to attack Pakistan, while groups like TLP inside Pakistan create domestic unrest. The writer suggests that Pakistan should not respond emotionally or close borders but must handle issues through law, dialogue, and trade. He also says Pakistan should treat Afghans respectfully and avoid actions that increase hatred. For example, instead of stopping visa services or trade, Pakistan should maintain people-to-people contact and ensure national policy is based on justice, not revenge.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan-Afghanistan border closed three times in 2025 due to political tension
- Hundreds of cross-border attacks claimed by TTP in 2025
- Over 200 trade trucks stranded during recent border shutdowns
- TLP protests since 2017 have caused dozens of deaths and nationwide disruption
- Pakistan's military superiority acknowledged but cautioned against overreliance on force

To sum up, the article calls for maturity in Pakistan's Afghan policy, emphasizing that wisdom, patience, and adherence to law are stronger than reactionary aggression. The writer urges the state to rise above ideological politics and protect its citizens by neutralizing extremist elements. According to the writer, peace cannot be achieved through coercion but through dialogue grounded in dignity, law, and long-term vision.

THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND COLD WAR

Author: Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

The article explores a compelling narrative on the dawn of what the Author calls the Second Cold War, triggered by Donald Trump's policies that reshaped global power dynamics. It traces the historical trajectory of the First Cold War, born out of post-World War II rivalries between Washington and Moscow, and connects it to the modern confrontation between the United States and China. The writer recalls how institutions such as the UN, IMF, and World Bank once aimed to establish collective global order, only to see those ideals undermined by rising unilateralism and economic nationalism. He revisits America's earlier alliances like NATO, CENTO, and SEATO, which once contained Soviet expansion, but now sees a shift toward a new kind of conflict—one fought not through arms but through economic and technological might. This new rivalry began with Trump's trade war, which sought to subdue China's growing influence through punitive tariffs, a strategy that misfired when Beijing retaliated with rare-earth restrictions—a masterstroke that threatened the very foundation of America's technological supremacy. In the second half, the Author shows how China, having learned from decades of Western dominance, weaponized its control over rare-earth minerals to assert geopolitical leverage. By halting exports of these vital elements, China struck at the heart of U.S. industries from electric cars to missiles and jet engines, demonstrating its unrivaled command over strategic resources. The move, Burki argues, is not a knee-jerk reaction but a calculated assertion of long-term dominance in global manufacturing and technology. Analysts interpret China's policy as a declaration of intent to control the future flow of modern technology. With 70% of rare-earth production and 90% of processing under its belt, Beijing has turned economic tools into instruments of power. The suggests that just as the First Cold War shaped the 20th century's geopolitics, the Second Cold War may define the 21st but this time with economics, technology, and resources as its primary battlegrounds rather than nuclear arms.

Overview:

The article provides a historical and analytical account of how U.S.-China rivalry has evolved into a new form of Cold War. It emphasizes economic coercion, technological dominance, and strategic resource control as defining features of modern global power politics, revealing how nations now fight wars without weapons but with trade sanctions, tariffs, and mineral embargoes.

NOTES:

The article highlights the emergence of a Second Cold War, ignited by Donald Trump's aggressive trade policies and China's strategic retaliation through rare-earth restrictions. The Author shows similarities between the post-World War II rivalry of the U.S. and USSR and the current power struggle between Washington and Beijing. It emphasizes how global conflicts have shifted from military to economic and technological fronts. The article recalls the establishment of international institutions like the UN, IMF, and World Bank, initially meant to ensure global cooperation, now overshadowed by unilateral actions and economic nationalism. Trump's trade war, aimed at weakening China's influence through heavy tariffs, backfired when Beijing responded by weaponizing its dominance over rare-earth minerals, essential for modern industries like aviation, electronics, and defense. The writer stresses that this move was not impulsive but a calculated demonstration of China's intent to command the global technological

order. With 70% of the world's rare-earth production and 90% of its processing under its control, China has turned economic resources into instruments of power. The article concludes that just as the First Cold War defined the 20th century, this new one which is fought through trade wars, technology, and strategic resources will shape the geopolitics of the 21st century, where control over minerals and innovation replaces nuclear arsenals as the ultimate weapon of dominance.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations – Power politics, U.S.-China relations, global order transformation
- Current Affairs – Trade wars, rare-earth diplomacy, and global economic rivalries
- Pakistan Affairs – Geopolitical implications for South Asia and Pakistan's economic diplomacy

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how the world is entering a new Cold War between America and China. Trump started a trade war to hurt China's economy by raising import taxes, but China responded smartly by restricting rare-earth exports, materials vital for making phones, electric cars, and military equipment. This gave China a powerful advantage since it controls most of the world's supply. The writer compares this rivalry to the old U.S.-Soviet conflict but says the new one is about economics, not weapons. For example, when China blocked these minerals, it hit America's industries hard which shows how trade can now be used like a weapon.

Facts and Figures:

- China produces 70% of global rare-earth minerals and processes 90% of them
- Export restrictions to the U.S. began in early November 2025
- Rare earths are essential for jets, missiles, electric vehicles, and semiconductors
- Trump's trade war began in 2017 and escalated into economic retaliation by China
- The U.S. previously led Cold War alliances like NATO, SEATO, and CENTO

To sum up, the article reminds that global conflicts are no longer fought on battlefields but in boardrooms and markets. The Second Cold War, as the Author calls it, mirrors the first in intensity but differs in nature because its weapons are trade restrictions and technological monopolies rather than tanks and missiles. The writer's analysis underlines a truth of our time that the nation that controls resources and technology controls the future.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Unilateralism – action by one state without others' consent (Synonym: autocracy; Antonym: multilateralism)
- Retaliation – counterattack in response to harm (Synonym: reprisal; Antonym: forgiveness)
- Dominance – power or influence over others (Synonym: supremacy; Antonym: subordination)
- Coercion – forceful persuasion (Synonym: compulsion; Antonym: consent)
- Multinational – involving several nations (Synonym: international; Antonym: domestic)

CHINA AND AMERICA — COMPETITIVE COEXISTENCE

Author: Inam Ul Haque

Summary:

The article explores the evolving Sino-American rivalry, portraying it not as an impending clash but as a competition rooted in scale, strategy, and vision. The writer underscores that while the United States retains leadership in many critical sectors, China's unparalleled capacity, vast production scale, and long-term planning have made it a formidable global contender. He notes that China now leads in industrial output, technology, and energy production, surpassing America in several key areas such as manufacturing, electric batteries, and artificial intelligence. Despite demographic challenges and debt concerns, Beijing's strategy of patience and self-reliance continues to bear fruit. The author also stresses that China's economic model blends Confucian harmony with modern pragmatism, reflecting a belief in peaceful rise and cooperative coexistence rather than military confrontation, especially regarding Taiwan. The article concludes that the West must adapt to China's rise not through hostility but through strategic diplomacy and realistic engagement. Analysts argue that Washington should revamp its alliances, strengthen collective leverage, and accept coexistence as a sustainable path forward. The article highlights how Chinese leadership's emphasis on harmony, innovation, and global partnership could lead to a more stable world order if the U.S. responds with wisdom rather than fear. Ultimately, the writer contends that the contest between these two giants is not about domination but endurance, where measured competition and diplomatic restraint will determine the future of global stability.

Overview:

This article critically examines the nature of U.S.-China rivalry, defining it as a struggle for strategic coexistence rather than open conflict. It reflects on the balance of power, technological advancement, and diplomatic foresight that shape global dynamics today. The author shows China as a patient power with an eye on the long game, contrasting it with an America caught in political distractions. His argument urges statesmanship, not sabre-rattling, as the key to navigating this century's defining relationship.

NOTES:

The article highlights the shifting dynamics of U.S.-China relations, portraying their rivalry as a test of endurance and strategy rather than direct confrontation. It underscores how China's rise has been powered by massive industrial output, technological advancement, and self-reliance, allowing it to surpass the U.S. in manufacturing, clean energy, and artificial intelligence. Despite facing demographic and debt challenges, China's disciplined long-term planning and Confucian-inspired pragmatism have fortified its position as a global powerhouse. In contrast, the U.S. is portrayed as reactive and politically distracted, relying heavily on alliances and tariffs without a coherent long-term vision. The writer points out that Washington must shift from containment to cooperation and embrace coexistence as the path to global stability. China's emphasis on harmony, innovation, and peaceful rise especially its restraint over Taiwan illustrates its preference for balance over aggression. The article concludes that future global leadership will be defined not by domination but by endurance, strategic diplomacy, and the ability to coexist in an interconnected world.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations – Great power competition and balance of power

- Current Affairs – Sino-U.S. rivalry and its global implications
- International Political Economy – Economic interdependence and trade diplomacy
- Pakistan Affairs – Shifting global order and its regional impact

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how China and America, the two biggest powers in the world are not likely to go to war but are competing to lead the future. China has grown stronger by producing more goods, developing new technology, and maintaining economic balance. The U.S., although still powerful, is losing ground in some areas because of its political divisions. The author says that both countries should cooperate rather than fight, because a conflict would harm the global economy. For instance, China avoids war over Taiwan, focusing instead on innovation, clean energy, and trade relations, which help it grow peacefully.

Facts and Figures:

- China's economy is 25% larger than that of the United States using World Bank methodology.
- China's global manufacturing share is 30%, while the U.S. stands at 15%, projected to decline to 11% by 2030.
- China produces 90% of solar panels, 75% of electric batteries, and nearly half of the world's chemicals.
- The combined economies of U.S. allies total around \$60 trillion compared to China's \$18 trillion GDP.

To sum up, The article captures the transformation of global politics from confrontation to calculated coexistence. It reveals that the path to peace lies not in rivalry but in responsible competition grounded in respect and realism. China's ascent, marked by discipline and endurance, and America's need for strategic diplomacy together shape the blueprint of the 21st century.

CHINA IS CATCHING UP WITH THE UNITED STATES

Author Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

China's economic rise once powered by cheap labor and mass manufacturing has now evolved into a technological revolution that challenges the United States on multiple fronts. Once the "world's factory," China has transformed into a hub of innovation, leading the race in electric vehicles, AI, robotics, quantum computing, and renewable energy. Its secret recipe lies in a strategic blend of state support and private enterprise, where local officials are rewarded for technological progress. Cities like Hefei have become success stories by investing boldly in research and development, turning from backwaters into industrial powerhouses within years. Companies like BYD, CATL, DJI, and LONGi are now household names in global innovation, leaving the U.S. scrambling to regain its competitive edge.

As the tide turns, experts like Autor and Hanson urge America to stop "fighting the last trade war" and adapt to the new one driven by innovation, not tariffs. They propose strategic cooperation with allies, domestic investment in advanced technologies, and government-backed research initiatives reminiscent of NASA's space race and the WWII science drive. However, under Trump's leadership, the U.S. risks losing its innovative muscle due to poor policy direction and misplaced priorities. A full-page national advertisement summed it up best: America's strength lies in science, but science cannot fund itself because

it needs visionary leadership. If America fails to reclaim its scientific edge, it may soon find itself running in China's shadow rather than leading the race.

Overview:

This article shows the seismic shift in global technological power from the United States to China. It underscores China's rise as the world's leading innovator, driven by intelligent state planning and private entrepreneurship. The article also examines America's waning research culture and its reliance on outdated protectionist measures, emphasizing the need for renewed investment in innovation and science-led governance.

NOTES:

The article highlights how China has transitioned from a manufacturing-based economy to a global leader in high-end innovation, outperforming the United States in most key technologies. It explains how Deng Xiaoping's market reforms opened China to foreign investment, laying the foundation for rapid industrialization. Through strong state support, risk-taking local governance, and a clear focus on technological development, China has emerged as a powerhouse in fields like electric vehicles, AI, robotics, and renewable energy. The article also discusses the "China Shock 2," which reflects China's evolution from a producer of cheap goods to an innovator setting global standards. Cities such as Hefei are cited as examples of how government-backed research and investment can turn underdeveloped areas into thriving industrial centers. The article contrasts this with America's declining innovation ecosystem under Trump's leadership, where political distractions and poor policymaking have weakened research capacity. Autor and Hanson suggest that the U.S. must revive government-sponsored science programs, collaborate with allies, and focus on sectors that ensure technological dominance. The author concludes that America's future competitiveness depends on visionary leadership, renewed investment in science, and a shift away from outdated protectionist tactics if it hopes to catch up with China's accelerating progress.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations – Sino-U.S. rivalry and power transition
- Current Affairs – Technological competition and global innovation race
- Pakistan Affairs – Lessons for Pakistan in technology-driven economic growth
- Economics – Industrial policy and innovation-based development models

Notes for Beginners:

China's success story shows how strategic government policies and innovation can completely transform a country's global standing. By focusing on research, supporting startups, and encouraging private-public partnerships, China has overtaken the U.S. in most key technologies. America, on the other hand, has been slow to respond, clinging to outdated strategies like tariffs instead of investing in science and technology. For instance, Chinese companies like BYD and CATL now dominate the electric vehicle market, while American innovation continues to decline under political interference. This teaches that nations prosper not by protectionism but by creativity and scientific advancement.

Facts and Figures:

- China now leads in 57 of 64 key technologies compared to the U.S. (ASPI Report).
- BYD, CATL, DJI, and LONGi — all under 30 years old — are world leaders in their sectors.

- China's EV industry grew to become the world's largest in less than a decade.
- America's scientific research funding has drastically declined in recent years, limiting innovation capacity.

To sum up, The article explores a changing world order where China once dismissed as a low-cost manufacturer has risen to become a technological giant. The U.S. burdened by political misjudgment and dwindling scientific focus risks losing its crown as the world's innovation leader. The message is that nations that fail to invest in science, technology, and forward-thinking policies will be left behind in the new global race of progress.

SINO-US RIVALRY — COLLUSION, COMPETITION, CONFLICT

Author Inam Ul Haque

Summary:

The article looks into the ever-evolving Sino-US rivalry that has become the defining feature of contemporary geopolitics. It explains that while China has emerged as a powerful economic force, it still lags behind the United States in terms of military alliances, technological dominance, and global influence. The United States maintains its edge with a GDP almost twice that of China's as well as supremacy in aerospace, biotechnology, and semiconductor industries. China, though advancing fast, remains dependent on fuel imports and burdened by demographic and structural weaknesses. Despite these disparities, the power gap is gradually closing, suggesting that a future multipolar world might soon replace the existing bipolar order.

The writer argues that an all-out conflict between the two powers is unlikely because both sides recognize that mutual destruction serves no one's interest. China, heavily integrated into the global economy, seeks stability rather than confrontation, while the United States prefers strategic competition short of war. The Taiwan issue, often portrayed as a flashpoint, is examined through a pragmatic lens, suggesting that it offers limited strategic gain for China and excessive cost for the US. The article concludes that the rivalry will likely remain a blend of collusion, competition, and calculated coexistence, where both nations jostle for influence without crossing the threshold of open conflict.

Overview:

This article presents an incisive assessment of the evolving Sino-US rivalry, illustrating how global power structures are shifting from unipolarity toward multipolarity. It highlights China's rise as a formidable challenger to American dominance, though still constrained by economic and demographic fragilities. The article also emphasizes the logic of mutual restraint, suggesting that both Beijing and Washington are bound by interdependence and global economic realities that make direct confrontation improbable.

NOTES:

The article highlights the complex and evolving rivalry between China and the United States, which defines the modern global power landscape. It emphasizes that while China has risen as an economic and technological power, it still trails behind the US in military strength, global alliances, and innovation leadership. The US continues to dominate in high-end sectors such as semiconductors, biotechnology, and aerospace, maintaining a GDP nearly double that of China's. However, China's rapid industrial and technological progress has narrowed this gap, hinting at a shift from a bipolar to a multipolar world order.

The writer notes that both nations are unlikely to engage in direct war due to their deep economic interdependence and mutual recognition that open conflict would be disastrous. The Taiwan issue often depicted as a flashpoint is interpreted as strategically costly for both sides, thus discouraging confrontation. The article also discusses how internal Challenges like China's aging population, real estate crisis, and dependence on imported fuel contrast with America's enduring institutional strength and innovative capacity. Ultimately, the author portrays the rivalry as one of controlled competition and coexistence where diplomacy, economic strategy, and technological advancement will determine global dominance rather than military aggression.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations – Great Power Rivalry, Global Power Transition
- Current Affairs – US-China Relations, Indo-Pacific Security, Taiwan Issue
- Pakistan Affairs – Implications of Sino-US Rivalry for South Asia

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains that the United States and China are locked in a long-term rivalry, but both are too interlinked to risk a full-scale war. China's economy is growing fast, yet it still depends on imported fuel and struggles with population challenges. The US remains stronger in advanced technologies like semiconductors and biotechnology. The issue of Taiwan, often seen as a trigger point, is unlikely to lead to war because both nations would suffer heavy losses. For example, the US still supports the "One China" policy to maintain peace, while China continues to avoid actions that could isolate it globally.

Facts and Figures:

- The US GDP is almost double that of China.
- China's housing vacancy rate is nearly 20 percent.
- The US holds 58 percent of the global semiconductor market share, while China's share is only 2.6 percent.
- Taiwan's TSMC produces 90 percent of the world's most advanced chips.
- China has accumulated more than one trillion dollars in debt from its rail projects.

To sum up, this article captures the delicate balance of competition and coexistence between China and the United States. It portrays a world where both powers, though rivals, remain bound by the threads of economic and strategic interdependence. The future will not be shaped by confrontation but by calculated diplomacy and pragmatic power management. The writer subtly reminds readers that in this chess game of nations, wisdom often triumphs over aggression and foresight outweighs force.

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